



The Role of Water in the Environment from the Perspective of the Holy Quran

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Abstract

In the Holy Quran, water is introduced as a divine blessing and mercy, with its function in creation and its role in the environment emphasized prominently. Numerous Quranic verses highlight the direct dependence of all living beings on water, underscoring its vital significance in sustaining the ecosystem. This study seeks to analyze and explain the unparalleled role of water in various environmental domains based on Quranic references. As the source of life, water's cycle in nature not only manifests the astonishing power of God but also plays a fundamental role in essential processes such as nourishment, hygiene, public health, agriculture, and more.

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Introduction

Water is a compound formed by the combination of hydrogen and oxygen, with the chemical formula H_2O . Each water molecule consists of three atoms: two hydrogen atoms and one oxygen atom. Water has the second-highest surface tension after mercury, which allows it to support objects heavier than itself. This property has been instrumental in maritime navigation throughout human history. In nature, water exists in three states: gas, liquid, and solid. At sea level, pure water freezes at $0^{\circ}C$, transforming into ice, and boils at $100^{\circ}C$, turning into steam.

The origin and primary source of water have long been a subject of interest and debate among scientists. The prevailing theory suggests that around four billion years ago, as Earth's crust cooled, the necessary conditions for the combination of hydrogen and oxygen emerged. Vast clouds of vapor enveloping the planet condensed into torrential rains, which poured down for thousands of years, filling Earth's depressions (Mousavi Bojnourdi, n.d: 1/1). This perspective can be aligned with Quranic descriptions of water being sent down from the sky and settled on Earth (Quran 23:18). A portion of this water formed seas and oceans, some seeped into the Earth's layers, creating deep underground reservoirs, while another portion remained at higher levels, accessible to humans in various forms.

A significant portion of the Earth's water is in continuous circulation through a well-regulated system known as the hydrological cycle. This cycle ensures the movement of water between the land and the atmosphere, playing a crucial role in sustaining life. This water serves as a fundamental resource for human survival, providing essential support in the form of rain, rivers, springs, wells, and qanats, which supply water to both humans and other living organisms.

The Frequency of Water in the Quran

The Quran addresses topics related to water using various terms. The Arabic word "*Mā'*" (water) appears 63 times in the Quran. Other related terms include: "*Saqā*" (to give water) 25 times, "*Sharib*" (to drink) 39 times, "*Ghayth*" (rain/relief) 3 times, "*Wadaq*" (drizzle) 2 times, "*Ghusl*" (washing) 3 times, "*Ma'īn*" (flowing water) 4 times, "*Gharaq*" (drowning) 22 times, "*Ayn*"

(spring/fountain) 20 times, "*Nahr*" (river) 54 times, and "*Bahr*" (sea) 41 times.

These verses indicate that water is a divine blessing, mercy, and source of abundance. All life of every living being depends on water, and the Divine Throne is established upon water. The Quran highlights the natural water cycle and its diverse roles in fertilizing and reviving the earth, greening nature, germination of multicolored plants, and formation of pastures, farmlands, and orchards with various trees and fruits.

The Quran also refers to the descent of water onto high mountains, the provision of pure drinking water for humans and animals, the formation of rivers and streams, and the subjugation of seas for human benefit. The Quran also addresses various sources and reservoirs of water—such as seas, rivers, springs, and wells—and underscores water's role in the physical and psychological purification and hygiene of human beings.

Additionally, some verses explore historical aspects of water, the emergence of extraordinary water phenomena, the drowning of past oppressive nations, and the presence of water in the Hereafter, either as a heavenly blessing or a form of torment in Hell. In all these instances, the Quran presents precise references to scientific aspects of water, reinforcing guidance and educational objectives by directing human attention from material causes of water provision to its true source—God, the Almighty.

The Significance of Water in the Quran

In the Quran, water is described as a divine blessing (*ni'mah*), mercy (*rahmah*), abundance (*barakah*), and sustenance (*rizq*) from God. These descriptions highlight the fundamental role of water in the Quranic worldview. Additionally, the Quran mentions that God's Throne (*'Arsh*) was established upon water and that all living beings depend on it for survival. These references further emphasize the vital importance of water in sustaining life.

1. Water: A Divine Blessing

The Quran, after mentioning the creation of the heavens and the earth, emphasizes water as a divine blessing with direct and indirect benefits for humanity:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً... وَإِنْ تَعُدُّوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ لَا تَحْصُوهَا
إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَظَلُومٌ كَفَّارٌ

"It is Allah who created the heavens and the earth, and He sends down water from the sky... If you enumerate Allah's blessings, you will not be able to count them. Indeed, man is most unfair and ungrateful!" (Quran 14:32, 34)

Verses 48–50 of Quran 25 highlight the significance of pure water, its role in reviving dead lands, and its provision for both humans and animals. The Quran calls upon people to reflect on this divine blessing:

وَلَقَدْ صَرَّفْنَا بِهِمْ يُدْذِرُوا فَآبِي أَكْثَرُ النَّاسِ إِلَّا كُفُورًا

"Certainly, We distribute it among them so that they may take admonition. But most people are only intent on ingratitude."

Similarly, Quran 7:57-58 invites people to be grateful for this blessing:

كَذَلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ الْآيَاتِ لِقَوْمٍ يُشْكُرُونَ

"Thus, do We paraphrase the signs variously for a people who give thanks."

The Quran 56:68-70 urges reflection on drinking water and emphasizes that it is God alone who sends down pure water. The verses also warn that He has the power to make it bitter and undrinkable (Ashari, 1985: 60–61):

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ * أَأَنْتُمْ أَنْزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنْزِلُونَ * لَوْ نَشَاءُ جَعَلْنَاهُ
أُجَاجًا فَلَوْلَا تَشْكُرُونَ

"Have you considered the water that you drink? Is it you who sent it down from the rain clouds, or is it We who bring [it] down? If We wish We can make it bitter. Then why do you not give thanks?"

Additionally, Quran 35:12 mentions the two types of seas—one salty and one fresh—and the various benefits they provide, emphasizing the necessity of gratitude for this divine provision.

2. Water: A Heavenly Blessing

In Quran 7:96, water is described as a heavenly blessing (*barakah*):

وَلَوْ أَنَّ أَهْلَ الْقُرَى آمَنُوا وَاتَّقَوْا لَفَتَحْنَا عَلَيْهِم بَرَكَاتٍ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَلَكِن كَذَّبُوا
فَأَخَذْنَا هُمْ بِمَا كَانُوا يَكْسِبُونَ

"If the people of the towns had been faithful and Godwary, We would have opened to them blessings from the heaven and the earth. But they denied; so We seized them because of what they used to earn."

Similarly, in Quran 50:9, rainwater is referred to as a blessed water (*mā' mubārak*):

وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُبَارَكًا فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ جَنَّاتٍ وَحَبَّ الْحَصِيدِ

"We send down from the sky salubrious water, with which We grow gardens and the grain which is harvested."

3. Water: A Divine Provision

In numerous Quranic verses, water is referred to as *rizq* (provision), highlighting its fundamental role in sustaining human livelihood. In Quran 51:22), it is stated:

"وَفِي السَّمَاءِ رِزْقُكُمْ وَمَا تُوعَدُونَ"

"And in the sky is your provision and what you are promised."

The infallible Imams (Ahl al-Bayt) have interpreted the term *rizq* in this verse as referring specifically to rain. Imam Ali (peace be upon him) narrates from the Messenger of God (peace and blessings be upon him and his family) that the intended meaning of *rizq* in this verse is indeed rainfall (Suyūṭī, 1404 AH: 6/114).

The Quran 45:5 explicitly refers to rainwater as *rizq*:

"وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ رِزْقٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا"

"In the provision that Allah sends down from the sky, with which He revives the earth after its death."

Similarly, in Quran 2:60, water is described as divine sustenance:

"كُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا مِنْ رِزْقِ اللَّهِ وَلَا تَعَثُّوا فِي الْأَرْضِ مُفْسِدِينَ"

"Eat and drink of Allah's provision, and do not act wickedly on the earth, causing corruption."

Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) explained to his disciple Mufaḍḍal the essential role of water in human life: *"Know, O Mufaḍḍal! Bread and water form the foundation of human sustenance; observe how meticulously they have been arranged by divine wisdom."*

4. Water: A Divine Mercy

The Quran describes water as a manifestation of divine mercy:

"وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ يُرْسِلَ الرِّيحَ مُبَشِّرَاتٍ وَلِيُذِيقَكُمْ مِنْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَلِتَجْرِيَ الْفُلُكُ بِأَمْرِهِ وَلِتَبْتَغُوا مِنْ فَضْلِهِ وَلَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ"

"And of His signs is that He sends the winds as bearers of good news and to let you taste of His mercy, and that the ships may sail by His command, and that you may seek of His bounty, and so that you may give [Him] thanks." (Quran 30:46)

Most Quranic exegetes interpret the term *mubashshirāt* (bearers of good news) as winds that herald rainfall, while *rahmat* (mercy) refers to the rain itself (Ṭabarsī, 1372 AH: 8/483; Rāzī, 1420 AH: 25/107).

Similarly, in Quran 7:57, rain is explicitly described as divine mercy, and the winds are introduced as harbingers of this mercy:

"وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ"

"It is He who sends forth the winds as harbingers of His mercy."

The Quranic exegetes consistently interpret *rahmat* in this verse as rainfall.

The Water Cycle in the Natural Environment

The Quran provides a depiction of the natural water cycle through various verses. Based on Qur'anic teachings, the natural water cycle is formed through the process of cloud formation, the movement of clouds by winds, the descent of water from the clouds, the storage of water in natural underground reservoirs, and the flow of stored water across the earth's surface.

1. Cloud Formation

Clouds develop gradually over time and through various stages:

"هُوَ الَّذِي يُرِيكُمُ الْبَرْقَ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا وَيُنْشِئُ السَّحَابَ الثِّقَالَ"

"It is He who shows you the lightning, inspiring fear and hope, and He produces the clouds heavy [with rain]." (Quran 13:12)

The term "يُنْشِئُ" (*yunshi*) is derived from "نشأ" (*nash*), meaning gradual growth and emergence (Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, 1412 AH: 807). The first stage of cloud formation involves the evaporation of surface water on Earth by the sun's heat:

"وَجَعَلْنَا سِرَاجًا وَهَّاجًا * وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا"

"And make [the sun for] a radiant lamp? And send down water pouring from the rain-clouds." (Quran 78:13-14)

The reference to rainfall in this verse—preceded by mention of the sun as a source of warmth—likely points to the causal relationship between the sun's heat, the evaporation of water, and the subsequent precipitation of rain.

The second stage is the aggregation and compaction of scattered clouds. This process is described in Quran 24:43:

"أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَرْجِي سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ رُكَامًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ وَ يُزَلُّ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنْ بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُ عَنْ مَنْ يَشَاءُ يَكَادُ سَنَا بَرْقُهُ يَذْهَبُ بِالْأَبْصَارِ"

"Have you not regarded that Allah drives the clouds, then He composes them, then He piles them up, whereat you see the rain issuing from its midst? And He sends down hail from the sky, out of the mountains that are in it, and He strikes with it whomever He wishes, and turns it away from whomever He wishes. The brilliance of its lightening almost takes away the sight."

In this verse, the compaction of clouds is indicated by the terms "رُكَام" (*rukām*) meaning dense layers of clouds, and "جِبَال" (*jibāl*) meaning mountain-like clouds. Shaykh Ṭūsī interprets "رُكَام" as densely packed clouds, "وَدْق" (*wadq*) as rain droplets, and "جِبَال" as mountainous cloud formations (Ṭūsī, n.d: 7/446).

Some exegetes believe this verse highlights an important scientific reality: when viewed from above, clouds resemble mountains with peaks and valleys. Those who have observed clouds from aircraft can witness this phenomenon. Accordingly, the verse could mean that God sends down hail from sky-high cloud formations resembling mountains (Makārim Shīrāzī, 1374 SH: 14/504). These varied descriptions in the Quran indicate the diversity of cloud formations.

2. The Movement of Clouds by Winds

The Quran highlights several functions of the wind, one of which is its role in connecting and moving clouds:

اللَّهُ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَّاحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَيَبْسُطُهُ فِي السَّمَاءِ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَيَجْعَلُهُ كِسْفًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ فَإِذَا أَصَابَ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ إِذَا هُمْ يَسْتَبْشِرُونَ

"It is Allah who sends the winds. Then they generate a cloud, then He spreads it as He wishes in the sky, and forms it into

fragments, whereat you see the rain issuing from its midst. Then, when He strikes with it whomever of His servants that He wishes, behold, they rejoice." (Quran 30:48)

Another verse mentions winds as heralds of rain:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَّاحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ حَتَّى إِذَا أَقْلَّتْ سَحَابًا ثِقَالًا سُقْنَاهُ لِبَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ فَأَنْزَلْنَا بِهِ الْمَاءَ فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ كَذَلِكَ نُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَى لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ

"It is He who sends forth the winds as harbingers of His mercy. When they bear [rain-] laden clouds, We drive them toward a dead land and send down water on it, and with it, We bring forth all kinds of crops. Thus, shall We raise the dead; maybe you will take admonition." (Quran 7:57)

From this verse, several key points can be inferred:

1. Winds serve as harbingers of rain.
2. The winds possess great force, capable of moving massive and water-laden clouds.
3. Through these winds and clouds, God revives barren lands with rainfall.
4. Rainwater facilitates the growth of various fruits.
5. The revival of the dead earth and the fruition of its fruits serve as evidence for the possibility of resurrection and the revival of the dead on the Day of Judgment.

Another role attributed to the wind is that of fertilization:

وَأَرْسَلْنَا الرِّيَّاحَ لَوَاقِحَ

"And We send the fertilizing winds." (Quran 15:22)

Regarding this fertilization, scholars have proposed two interpretations:

1. Winds fertilize clouds, leading to rain formation.
2. Winds transport pollen to fertilize plants and trees (Ṭabarsī, 1372 AH: 6/514; Rāzī, 1420 AH: 19/134; Ṭūsī, n.d: 6/329).

Mullā Faṭḥullah Kāshānī acknowledges plant fertilization as a possibility (Kāshānī, 1336 SH: 5/158). Aḥmad Maḥmūd Suleiman also interprets the verse as referring to plant fertilization and categorizes wind as one of the primary pollination agents (Maḥmūd Suleiman, 1360 SH: 24-26).

Among the earliest scholars who interpreted this verse as

referring to cloud fertilization is Al-Ṭabarsī (Ṭabarsī, 1372 AH: 6/514). Contemporary scholars like Makārim Shīrāzī (Makārim Shīrāzī, 1374 SH: 11/61), Mehdi Bāzargān (Bāzargān, nd: 59, 126), and Aḥmad Amīn (Amīn, 1361 SH: 57) have interpreted this verse as an allusion to the fertilization of clouds by the wind. Some contemporary scholars interpret this verse as referring to the fertilization of both plants and clouds, arguing that it unveils two major mysteries of the created order. They further consider this interpretation a manifestation of the Quran's scientific miraculousness (Sādāt, 1357 SH: 35).

3. The Descent of Water from Clouds

The Quran employs two expressions in reference to atmospheric precipitation. Based on the apparent wording of most of these verses, water is portrayed as descending from the sky:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لَكُمْ مِنْهُ شَرَابٌ وَمِنْهُ شَجَرٌ فِيهِ تُسِيمُونَ

"It is He Who sends down water from the sky: from it you get your drink and with it are [sustained] the plants wherein you pasture your herds." (Quran 16:10)

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَتُصْبِحُ الْأَرْضُ مُخْضَرَّةً إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ

"Have you not regarded that Allah sends down water from the sky, whereupon the earth turns green? Indeed, Allah is all-attentive, all-aware." (Quran 22:63)

وَالَّذِي نَزَّلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَنْشَرْنَا بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَيْتًا كَذَلِكَ تُخْرَجُونَ

"And who sent down water from the sky in a measured manner, and We revived with it a dead country. Likewise, you shall be raised [from the dead]." (Quran 43:11)

Several Quranic verses explicitly mention that water descends from clouds:

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ الْمُعْصِرَاتِ مَاءً ثَجَّاجًا

"And send down water pouring from the rain-clouds." (Quran 78:14)

Exegetes of the past century, acknowledging the self-evident nature of water descending from clouds, have interpreted the term *samā'* (sky) metaphorically as referring to clouds, and have explained the phenomenon of rainfall in line with the dominant scientific theory. However, among them, two primary interpretations of the term "*as-samā'*" can be identified.

Earlier renowned exegetes adhered to the apparent meaning of the words and considered the sky the origin of rain. For instance, Ṭabarī, in his exegesis of verses 2: 16, 22; 6:199, 7:57; and 22:63, states that rain falls from the sky. In the interpretation of Quran 23:18, he narrates a similar statement from Ibn Jurayj. However, from his explanation of Quran 25:48 and 24:43, particularly what he quotes from ‘Amr ibn ‘Ubayd al-Laythī, it can be inferred that clouds are the source of rain, and the term "*samā*" refers to the clouds (Ṭabarī, 1412 AH: 18/118).

Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, in various sections of *al-Tibyān*, also considers the sky as the origin of rain (Ṭūsī, n.d: 7/395) but mentions that the term "*as-samā*" in verses about rainfall refers to clouds (Ibid). The interpretations offered by al-Ṭabarī and al-Ṭūsī concerning the 'mountains of hail' suggest that the dominant view among most exegetes is that rain originates from the heavens (Ibid, n.d: 2/256, 257).

Al-Zamakhsharī, in his interpretation of Quran 39:21 and 78:14, apart from presenting several opinions of earlier exegetes, such as Qatāda and Mujāhid, yet aligns with the mainstream exegetical stance (Zamakhsharī, 1407 AH: 3/246; 4/122, 682).

Although al-Ṭabarsī at times describes the sky as the source of rain (Ṭabarsī, 1372 AH: 4/148), in explaining most verses, he interprets the term "*as-samā*" as clouds. He asserts that referring to the sky instead of clouds serves poetic elegance and rhetorical beauty. Additionally, he cites the view of natural philosophers who consider clouds as the result of evaporations rising from the earth, quoting ‘Alī ibn ‘Īsā al-Rummānī, who states that while this theory is not definitive, there is no rational or scriptural objection to it (Ṭabarsī, 1372 AH: 1/61, 245; 2/341).

Al-Bayḍāwī interprets "*as-samā*" as clouds, the celestial sphere, or cosmic factors causing the evaporation of earthly moisture. However, he asserts that according to the apparent meaning of the Quranic verses, rain descends from the sky onto the clouds and then falls onto the earth.

Among the exegetes, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī has extensively analyzed the verses regarding rainfall. According to him, based on Quranic verses, Allah creates rain in the sky, then sends it down upon the clouds, from where it falls onto the earth (Rāzī, 1420 AH: 2/111; 4/223; 13/105, 107; 24/90). He attributes a similar opinion to Abū ‘Alī al-Jamālī, who maintained that

departing from the apparent meaning of Quranic texts is only justified if an impossibility in celestial rainfall is demonstrated (Ibid, 13/83).

Al-Rāzī criticizes those who interpret "*as-samā'*" as "*as-sahāb*" [cloud], considering rain a result of evaporation from the earth and seas (Ibid, 23/268). He finds no justification for deviating from the explicit text of the Quran (Ibid, 24/566). However, in his interpretation of Quran 14:32, he acknowledges this view due to external observations, considering the debate unnecessary (Ibid, 19/96).

Al-Majlisī, in interpreting the verses on rain, frequently cites al-Rāzī's opinion favorably while also noting the duality in his exegetical approach on this subject (Majlisī, 1404 AH: 56/344-370).

4. Water Storage in Underground Reservoirs

The Quran describes rainfall as a precisely measured event, with water being strategically stored in underground reservoirs:

"وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَسْكَنَّاهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّا عَلَى ذَهَابٍ بِهِ لَقَادِرُونَ"

"We sent down water from the sky in a measured manner, and We lodged it within the ground, and We are indeed able to take it away." (Quran 23:18)

The Quranic exegetes have paid special attention to the words *bi-qadar* and *fa-askannāhu* and most of them interpret *bi-qadar* to mean a *precise measure*, ensuring that rainfall is neither excessive, which could harm the land, nor insufficient, which could lead to drought (Rāzī, 1420 AH: 23/268; Ṭabarsī, 1372 AH: 7/162; Ṭūsī, n.d: 7/356; Ālūsī 1415 AH: 9/221; Zamakhsharī, 1407 AH: 3/179). Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī emphasizes that *bi-qadar* refers to divine planning, ensuring that not even a single drop falls beyond what is required by divine wisdom (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1417 AH: 15/23).

The expression "*fa-askannāhu fī al-arḍ*" (*We lodged it within the ground*) is understood as a reference to the natural storage of water in underground reservoirs. Some exegetes in the interpretation of the verse highlight the dual-layered structure of the earth: a permeable layer allowing water to seep down and an impermeable layer preventing excessive loss into deeper layers. If the earth were entirely permeable, rainwater would drain too deep to be accessible, and if it were entirely impermeable, rainwater would remain on the surface, becoming stagnant and contaminated. God Almighty has arranged the earth in such a way

that waters are stored in underground reservoirs and made accessible through springs, wells, and qanāts (Makārim Shīrāzī, 1374 SH: 14/217).

In the Tafsīr of Ali ibn Ibrahim al-Qummī, he quoted Imam al-Bāqir (AS), explaining that rainfall infiltrates the earth and resurfaces as rivers, springs, and wells, providing water for human use (Qummī, 1367 SH: 2/91). Both Ālūsī and Allāmah Majlisī argue that this verse contradicts the philosophers' theory that underground water originates from the condensation of trapped subterranean vapors. Instead, the Quran asserts that underground water reserves originate directly from rainfall (Ālūsī 1415 AH: 9/221).

The verse *"And We send the fertilizing winds and send down water from the sky providing it for you to drink and you are not maintainers of its resources"* (Quran 15:22) also indicates that God, the Exalted, has so ordered nature that rainwater penetrates the earth and is stored in natural underground reservoirs—something that human beings are incapable of accomplishing on their own. However, to achieve this purpose, water must be stored—and it is only God who can store it in the natural reservoirs of the earth.

Ṭabarsī, in his Tafsīr, elaborates: *"O people! You are not the ones preserving this water. Rather, God safeguards it in oceans and seas, sends it down as rain, then stores it in vast underground reservoirs, making it flow through springs and wells as needed"* (Ṭabarsī, 1372 AH: 6/514) "

Similarly, another verse states:

"أَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا مَاءَهَا وَمَرْعَاهَا"

"[He] brought forth from it its water and pastures." (Quran 79:31)

This verse, along with the ones that follow, suggests that God stores a portion of the waters within the earth and brings it forth to meet the needs of human beings and animals. From the perspective of a contemporary exegete, God brings forth from the earth the waters of rain and snow, which are stored in it like vast and numerous reservoirs, through springs, rivers, wells, and qanāts (Shariatī, 1346 SH: 45).

5. Surface Water Flow

The final stage in the natural water cycle involves the

movement of rainwater on the earth's surface. According to the Quran, some of this water is stored underground and later emerges through springs and qanats:

"أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَلَكَهُ يَنْبِيعَ فِي الْأَرْضِ"

"Have you not seen that Allah sends down water from the sky, then He conducts it through the ground as springs." (Quran 39:21)

Several insights can be drawn from this noble verse:

1. Rainwater infiltrates the earth gradually, percolating into the ground and merging with the large subterranean reservoirs in which water is stored. The word *sulūk* conveys this meaning. *Sulūk* denotes a gradual and progressive motion, and in this context, it refers to the slow and steady infiltration of water into the earth—an effect arising from the nature of both the earth's surface and rainfall. Rain descends gently and drop-by-drop, rather than all at once, thereby allowing it to penetrate the soil with ease. According to Imam Ṣādiq (peace be upon him), when God willed that rain should descend from above, He decreed that it fall drop by drop so that it might penetrate the earth and be absorbed into it to irrigate the land.

2. Stored water eventually resurfaces as springs, wells, and qanats. This process is described in various hadiths. 'Allāmah Majlisī, after citing and interpreting relevant verses and presenting numerous traditions (Majlisī, 1404 AH: 6/23-50), states that many philosophers and sages believe the cause of the bubbling and flow of *qanāts* and springs lies in the entrapment of vapor within the earth, due to its lightness, the vacuum, and the spaces between its particles, it moves in a particular direction and, as a result of the cold air, transforms into water mixed with vapor.

When this vapor-laden water accumulates to the extent that the earth can no longer contain it, the pressure causes the earth to split open, and the water flows onto the surface in the form of springs. If the pressure is lower, the water merely bubbles up without flowing, resulting in stagnant springs. And if the density and pressure are even less than this, the water does not bubble up at all, and to access it one must remove the overlying barrier and dig a well.

'Allāmah al-Majlisī adds that Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī held a

different view on this matter. According to him, the waters of snow and rain infiltrate the earth, and through this infiltration, the storage of water in natural subterranean reservoirs increases, thereby enriching aquifers and leading to the formation of springs, qanāts, and wells. It appears that Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī derived this view from Ibn Sīnā in his book *al-Najāt* (Ibid: 60/ 50).

Mufaḍḍal reported Imam Ṣādiq (peace be upon him) to have explained thus: "O Mufaḍḍal! The mountains, formed from rock and clay—though some perceive them as useless—are essential. Snow accumulates on them, melts gradually, and seeps into the earth, feeding abundant springs. These springs then merge to form rivers, explaining why mountain regions are so lush" (Ibid: 3/127).

Similarly, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) states, in a saying to this effect, that God the Exalted caused the springs to emerge from the highlands and made them flow through the plains and expansive deserts (Ibid: 16: 57).

In explaining this statement, Majlisī, drawing upon other traditions, writes that springs originate from water stored beneath the earth. However, since mountains serve as the source of the formation of rivers and springs, traditions often mention mountains and springs together (Ibid: 6/23-50).

The exegetes also believe that this verse clearly indicates that the waters of springs are the same waters that have descended from the sky and have been stored in the earth (Ṭūsī, n.d: 9/19; Ālūsī 1415 AH: 12/244; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1417 AH: 17/255; Ibn 'Āshūr, n.d: 24/62; Ṭabarsī, 1372 AH: 8/773).

Another portion of atmospheric precipitation flows across the surface of the earth, with valleys and waterways each channeling the rainwater according to their respective capacities:

"أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَسَالَتْ أَوْدِيَةٌ بِقَدَرِهَا"

"He sent down water from the sky whereat the valleys are flooded to [the extent] their capacity." (Quran 13:17)

The Role of Water in Human Life

Water: The Origin of Life

According to Quranic teachings, water is both the source of life and its sustenance. In verse 30 of Quran 21, it states:

"وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ"

"And We made every living thing out of water. Will they not then have faith?"

Similarly, verse 45 of Quran 24 states:

"وَاللَّهُ خَلَقَ كُلَّ دَابَّةٍ مِنْ مَّاءٍ"

"Allah created every animal from water."

And verse 54 of Quran 25:

"وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ مِنَ الْمَاءِ بَشَرًا"

"It is He Who created the human being from water."

Some Quranic exegetes interpret the expression *ja'alnā* in the sense of *khalaqnā*, meaning "We created," indicating that water is the fundamental element in the creation of living beings—whether as semen or in a more general sense. Sayyid Quṭb believes that this verse presents a profound truth that modern scientists consider a major scientific discovery: the first cradle of life was water (Shādhilī, 1412 AH: 4/2376).

Others interpret "*ja'alnā*" as "*aḥyaynā*" (We gave life), indicating that water is not only the source of creation but also essential for sustaining life. Ṭabarsī supports this view, quoting a narration from Imam Ṣādiq (peace be upon him) who said: "*The taste of water is the taste of life*" (Ṭabarsī, 1372 AH: 7/72)

Some have also interpreted the verse in light of scientific discoveries. According to the findings of modern science, the most essential component of a cell is water, which is present in all living beings—from animals to plants—and plays a fundamental role in all internal actions and reactions within living organisms (Junaid, 1419 AH: 206).

ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī holds that the connection between life and water—which has become clear today through modern scientific investigations—is an enduring miracle of the Qur'an (Ṭabāṭabāʾī, 1417 AH: 14/279).

The Role of Water in Human and Animal Nutrition

Numerous Quranic verses highlight the role of water in providing sustenance for both humans and animals. In verse 27 of Quran 32, Allah states:

"أَوَلَمْ يَرَوْا أَنَّا نَسُوقُ الْمَاءَ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ الْجُرُزِ فَنُخْرِجُ بِهِ زَرْعًا تَأْكُلُ مِنْهُ أَنْعَامُهُمْ وَأَنْفُسُهُمْ أَفَلَا يُبْصِرُونَ"

"Do they not see that We carry water to the parched earth and with it We bring forth crops, from which they eat, themselves and their cattle? Will they not then see?"

In several other verses as well, God the Exalted has mentioned the role of water in sustaining both human nourishment and animal feed, placing them side by side:

"إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَاءٍ أَنْزَلْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ"

"The parable of the life of this world is that of water which We send down from the sky. It mingles with the earth's vegetation from which humans and cattle eat." (Quran 10:24)

And:

*"وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِّنْ نَّبَاتٍ شَتَّى * كُلُوا وَارْعَوْا أَنْعَامَكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي النَّهْيِ"*

"And [We] sent down water from the sky, and with it We brought forth various kinds of vegetation. 'Eat and pasture your cattle.' There are indeed signs in that for those who have sense." (Quran 20:53-54)

Some verses specifically address the role of water in providing nourishment exclusively for human beings. Verse 32 of Quran 14 states:

"وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ"

"And He sends down water from the sky and with it, He brings forth crops for your sustenance." A similar verse appears in Quran 2:22.

In several verses, God the Exalted refers to the provision of drinking water for both humans and animals together.

*"وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً طَهُورًا * لِنُحْيِيَ بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَّيْتًا وَنُسْقِيَهُ مِمَّا خَلَقْنَا أَنْعَامًا وَأَنَاسِيَّ كَثِيرًا"*

"And it is He who sends the winds as harbingers of His mercy, and We send down from the sky purifying water, with which We revive a dead country and provide water to many of the cattle and humans We have created." (Quran 25:48-49)

Some verses focus specifically on the role of water in providing drinking water for human beings:

"فَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَسْقَيْنَاكُمُوهُ وَمَا أَنْتُمْ لَهُ بِخَازِنِينَ"

"And [We] send down water from the sky providing it for you

to drink and you are not maintainers of its resources." (Quran 15:22)

In verse 27 of Quran 77, the Quran mentions how Allah provides humans with fresh drinking water from the mountains:

"وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ شَاخِحَاتٍ وَأَسْقَيْنَاكُمْ مَاءً فُرَاتًا"

"And [We] set in it lofty [and] firm mountains, and given you agreeable water to drink?"

On the other hand, an example of searching for and requesting water by humans can be seen in Quran 7:160 and 2:60. In the first verse, the people of Moses asked him for drinking water: "...When his people asked him for water..." In the second verse, Moses prays to God for water for his people. Following God's command, he strikes his staff against a rock, and twelve springs gush forth, providing drinking water for the Israelites:

وَإِذِ اسْتَسْقَىٰ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ فَقُلْنَا اضْرِبْ بِعَصَاكَ الْحَجَرَ فَانْفَجَرَتْ مِنْهُ اثْنَتَا عَشْرَةَ عَيْنًا

"And when Moses prayed for water for his people, We said, 'Strike the rock with your staff.' Thereat twelve fountains gushed forth from it; every tribe came to know its drinking-place. 'Eat and drink of Allah's provision, and do not act wickedly on the earth, causing corruption.'"

The Almighty, in Quran 16:10, declares that the utilization of water is a universal right:

هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لَكُمْ مِنْهُ شَرَابٌ

"It is He who sends down water from the sky: from it, you get your drink."

Some verses highlight the role of water in quenching the thirst of livestock. An example of this can be found in Quran 28:23-25. The first verse narrates that when Moses arrived at the well of Madyan, he found a group of people watering their livestock. He also noticed two women standing aside, keeping their sheep away from the well. He approached them and asked why they were not watering their flock. They replied that they were waiting for the shepherds to leave:

وَلَمَّا وَرَدَ مَاءَ مَدْيَنَ وَجَدَ عَلَيْهِ أُمَّةً مِّنَ النَّاسِ يَسْقُونَ وَوَجَدَ مِنْ دُونِهِمُ امْرَأَتَيْنِ تَذُودَانِ قَالَ

مَا خَطْبُكُمَا قَالَتَا لَا نَسْقِي حَتَّىٰ يُصْدِرَ الرِّعَاءُ

"When he arrived at the well of Midian, he found there a throng of people watering [their flocks], and he found, besides them, two

women holding back [their flock]. He said, 'What is your business?' They said, 'We do not water [our flock] until the shepherds have driven out [their flocks], ..."

According to the next verse, Moses stepped forward, drew water from the well, and watered the flock for the two women:

فَسَقَى لَهُمَا ثُمَّ تَوَلَّى إِلَى الظِّلِّ فَقَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لِمَا أَنْزَلْتَ إِلَيَّ مِنْ خَيْرٍ فَقِيرٌ

"So he watered [their flock] for them. Then he withdrew toward the shade and said, 'My Lord! I am indeed in need of any good You may send down to me!'"

Fresh Water: A Marvelous Manifestation of Divine Power

In Quran 25:53, reference is made to the non-mixing of sweet and salty seas, despite their adjacency. In doing so, the verse highlights one of the wondrous manifestations of divine power in the created world and draws human attention to the benefit of this unparalleled blessing:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَرَجَ الْبَحْرَيْنِ هَذَا عَذْبٌ فُرَاتٌ وَهَذَا مِلْحٌ أُجَاجٌ وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَهُمَا بَرْزَخًا وَحِجْرًا مَحْجُورًا

"It is He who merged the two seas: this one sweet and agreeable, and that one briny and bitter, and between the two He set a barrier and a forbidding hindrance."

Furthermore, God Almighty calls upon those who deny resurrection to reflect on drinking water and how it is made accessible to them, as a means to recognize divine power:

أَفَرَأَيْتُمُ الْمَاءَ الَّذِي تَشْرَبُونَ * أَأَنْتُمْ أَنْزَلْتُمُوهُ مِنَ الْمُزْنِ أَمْ نَحْنُ الْمُنْزِلُونَ * لَوْ نَشَاءُ جَعَلْنَاهُ أُجَاجًا فَلَوْلَا تَشْكُرُونَ

"Have you considered the water that you drink? Is it you who bring it down from the rain cloud, or is it We who bring [it] down? If We wish We can make it bitter. Then why do you not give thanks?" (Quran 56:68-70)

These verses emphasize the critical role of drinking water in human life, the fact that clouds and rain serve as sources of fresh, drinkable water on Earth, and that water is a blessing worthy of gratitude. They also highlight God's absolute power to turn sweet water into salty and bitter if He so wills.

In the sayings of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), water is described as the best drink both in this world and the Hereafter (Hurr al-‘Āmilī, 1412 AH: 17/27,187). Some narrations even mention the pleasure of drinking cool water (Kulayni, 1365 SH:

6/382). Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (AS) is reported to have said:

"مَنْ تَلَذَّذَ بِالْمَاءِ فِي الدُّنْيَا لَذَّذَهُ اللَّهُ مِنْ أَشْرِيَةِ الْجَنَّةِ"

"Whoever enjoys drinking water in this world, Allah, the Almighty, will let him taste the delights of the drinks of Paradise" (Al-Qummī, n.d: 184).

Allāmah Majlisī, in explaining the meaning of *"talazzaz"* (enjoyment) in this narration, offers two interpretations:

1. The first interpretation is that one should consciously recognize and be grateful for the pleasure of drinking water.
2. The second is that "enjoyment" refers to drinking water slowly and mindfully to fully appreciate its taste.

In another narration from Imam Ali al-Riḍa (AS), it is stated thus: *"I derive great pleasure from drinking water!"* (Majlisī, 1404 AH: 66/455)

Allāmah Majlisī explains that this narration suggests the recommendation of drinking plenty of water (Ibid). In some narrations, strong emphasis is placed on giving water to the thirsty. For example, in a ḥadīth from Imam al-Ṣādiq (peace be upon him), quenching the thirst of a person is described as the best form of charity" (Ṭūsī, 1412 AH: 4/138).

The Importance of Drinking Water in Ancient Societies

The story of water distribution between the people and the she-camel of Prophet Ṣāliḥ (a.s) demonstrates how crucial drinking water was to ancient societies. As described in Quran 54:27-28, Allah commanded Prophet Ṣāliḥ (a.s) to inform his people that the village's water was to be divided between them and the she-camel, with each having their designated turn to drink. However, they ignored this divine warning, slaughtered the she-camel, and were consequently struck by divine punishment:

إِنَّا مُرْسِلُوا النَّاقَةَ فِتْنَةً لَهُمْ فَارْتَبِعْهُمْ وَاضْطَبِرْ * وَنَبِّئُهُمْ أَنَّ الْمَاءَ قِسْمَةٌ بَيْنَهُمْ كُلٌّ شَرْبٌ مَحْظَرٌ

"We are sending the She-camel as a trial for them; so watch them and be steadfast. Inform them that the water is to be shared between them; each of them showing up at his turn."

The Role of Water in Hygiene and Health

The connection between clean water and the revival of lands, as well as its necessity for both humans and animals, goes beyond

individual hygiene. It underscores water's role in public health, environmental purification, and the creation of a pollution-free ecosystem that safeguards both nature and society.

The Hygienic Role of Water

Several Quranic verses emphasize the purity and purifying nature of water, as well as its hygienic role. In Quran 25:48, Allah states:

"وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً طَهُورًا"

"And We send down from the sky purifying water."

Most exegetes interpret the word "*tahūr*" as an emphatic form indicating both purity and the ability to purify (Ṭūsī, n.d: 7/496; Ṭabarī, 1412 AH: 7/267; Ibn 'Āshūr, n.d: 19/69; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1417 AH: 15/226). However, Zamakhsharī rejects the notion of emphasis, interpreting it either as an adjective meaning pure or as a noun meaning a tool for purification (Zamakhsharī, 1407 AH: 3/286; Qurṭubī, 1364 SH: 14/39). The purpose of the descent of purifying water (mā' ṭahūr) is described as reviving the dead land and providing drinking water for both livestock and human beings:

"لِنُحْيِيَ بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَّيْتًا وَنُسْقِيَهُ مِمَّا خَلَقْنَا أَنْعَامًا وَأَنَاسِيَّ كَثِيرًا"

"With which We revive a dead country and provide water to many of the cattle and humans We have created." (Quran 25:49)

Some scholars, drawing from modern scientific findings, have noted that rainwater not only cleanses the leaves of trees but also removes airborne microbes. Once it flows on the ground, it washes away contaminants, carrying them into rivers, seas, or underground reservoirs (Bāzargān, 1347 SH: 22).

Quran 8:11 explicitly emphasizes the purifying function of water:

"إِذْ يُغَشِّيكُمُ التُّعَاسُ أَمَنَةً مِنْهُ وَيُنَزِّلُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُم بِهِ وَيُذْهِبَ

عَنْكُم رِجْزَ الشَّيْطَانِ وَلِيَرْبِطَ عَلَى قُلُوبِكُمْ وَيُثَبِّتَ بِهِ الْأَقْدَامَ"

"When He covered you with a trance as a [sense of] security from Him, and He sent down water from the sky to purify you with it, and to repel from you the defilement of Satan, and to fortify your hearts, and to make [your] feet steady with it."

Although this verse refers specifically to God's favor upon the Muslim army at the Battle of Badr, its broader implications encompass both physical hygiene and spiritual purification. The reference to *removing the evil of Satan* could indicate either the effects of Satan's whispers (Ṭūsī, n.d: 5/86) or spiritual impurity

from nocturnal emissions, or both (Ṭabarsī, 1372 AH: 4/806). In any case, it highlights a form of spiritual cleansing.

Water also plays a vital role in acts of worship, such as prayer, where ritual purification (wudu) is a prerequisite. In Quran 5:6, Allah commands believers to wash their faces and hands up to the elbows, wipe their heads, and wipe their feet up to the ankles before prayer. These injunctions emphasize not only the physical but also the spiritual dimensions of purification.

The infallible leaders (Ahl al-Bayt) have also underscored the significance of water in purification and hygiene. Imam Ali (a.s) states that one of God's favors to the Prophet (PBUH) during the Heavenly Ascension [Mi'rāj] was the revelation that *"I have made water a purifier from impurities for your Ummah and have lifted the burdens of previous nations regarding purification* (Ṭabarī, 1416 AH: 1/221)."

The emphasis on washing hands before and after eating, along with the washing of fruits before their consumption, serves as a clear indication of water's function in maintaining hygiene. Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq (a.s) advised: *"Whenever you purify yourself and perform wudu, approach water as you approach God's mercy, for He has made water the key to nearness and intimate supplication. Just as His mercy washes away sins, water cleanses external impurities."*

The Imam also cited two Qur'anic verses:

"وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً طَهُورًا"

"And We send down from the sky purifying water" (Quran 25: 48)

"وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيًّا"

"And We made every living thing out of water?" (Quran 21:30)

He then explained:

"Just as Allah revives all earthly blessings with water, He has also made His mercy and grace the source of spiritual vitality. Therefore, one must reflect on the clarity, softness, purity, and blessing of water, as well as its harmonious interaction with all things, and use it to cleanse the limbs that Allah has commanded to be purified. If water is used with reverence, its benefits will soon be fully realized" (Imam Ja'far al-Ṣādiq, 1983: 128; Majlisī, 1404 AH: 8/340).

The Healing Role of Water

The Quran references the role of water in healing diseases. In

verses 41 and 42 of Quran 38, the case of Prophet Ayyūb (Job) is described, where he lamented his suffering to his Lord. It was then revealed to him: "[We told him:] 'Stamp your foot on the ground; this [ensuing spring] will be a cooling bath and drink.'" (Quran 38:42). Consequently, the illness departed from Job (Ayyūb):

"وَأَذْكُرْ عَبْدَنَا أَيُّوبَ إِذْ نَادَىٰ رَبَّهُ أَنِّي مَسَّنِيَ الشَّيْطَانُ بِنُصْبٍ وَعَذَابٍ * ارْكُضْ بِرِجْلِكَ هَذَا مُغْتَسَلٌ بَارِدٌ وَشَرَابٌ"

Although the apparent meaning of the verse describes the miraculous emergence of water for Ayyūb, it does not negate the potential healing properties of water or its specific types.

In Quran 3:97, Allah mentions "clear signs" present in Mecca:

"فِيهِ آيَاتٌ بَيِّنَاتٌ"

Undoubtedly, one of these clear signs is the Zamzam water. Numerous hadiths from the Prophet (PBUH) and the infallible Imams (a.s) emphasize that Zamzam water is a source of healing and disease removal. Other narrations also discuss the benefits and potential harms of drinking large or small amounts of water, as well as consuming warm or cold water (Majlisi, 1404 AH: 63/445-481).

If we consider treatment in a broader sense—encompassing anything that significantly affects human physical health—other Quranic verses can also be interpreted as highlighting this role of water. For instance, Quran 50:9 states:

"وَنَزَّلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً مُّبَارَكًا"

"And We sent down blessed water from the sky"—which implies the great benefits and virtues of rainwater.

Similarly, Quran 8:11 states:

"وَيُنَزِّلُ عَلَيْكُمْ مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لِّيُطَهِّرَكُم بِهِ وَيُذْهِبَ عَنْكُمُ رِجْسَ الشَّيْطَانِ"

"And He sent down upon you rain from the sky to cleanse you and remove from you the filth of Satan"

Imam Ali (AS), referencing this verse, said: "Drink from the water of the sky, for it purifies the body and removes diseases" (Majlisi, 1404 AH: 63/453; Al-Qummī, 1416 AH: 636).

There are multiple narrations from the infallible Imams (a.s) regarding the medicinal properties of rainwater. For example, the Prophet (PBUH) said: "Jibra'il (Gabriel) introduced me to a cure, with which I would never need any other medicine." When asked

about this cure, he (PBUH) replied: "It is rainwater before it reaches the ground" (Hurr al-ʿĀmilī, 1412 AH: 17/210).

Additionally, narrations mention the therapeutic properties of Nisān water [water collected during the month of Nisān in the lunar calendar] (Nūrī, 1408 AH: 17/32). Reciting Surah Al-Fatihah or other Quranic verses over water has also been recommended as a method of healing (Kulaynī, 1365 SH: 6/356; Huwayzī, 1373 SH: 3/427).

The Role of Water in Agriculture

The Quran frequently emphasizes the role of water in making the land fertile and producing crops, fruits, diverse plants, strong trees, forests, and pastures.

1. Water and Land Fertility

Allah repeatedly emphasizes the role of water in reviving the land, as stated in multiple verses, including Quran 2:164; 16: 65; 29: 63; 30: 24, and 43:11:

"وَاللَّهُ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَةً لِّقَوْمٍ يَسْمَعُونَ"

"And Allah sent down water from the sky, reviving the earth after its death. Indeed, in that, is a sign for those who listen." (Quran 16: 65)

The majority of Qur'anic exegetes have understood the revival of the earth to be an allegorical reference to the growth of plant life (Tūsī, n.d: 6/398; Ṭabarsī, 1372 AH: 6/569; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1417 AH: 12/288; Ālūsī 1415 AH: 7/414; Ibn ʿĀshūr, n.d: 13/159).

Other verses also highlight the role of water in land fertility, such as Quran 41:39 and Quran 22:5:

"وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْتَ تَرَى الْأَرْضَ خَاشِعَةً فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ"

"Among His signs, is that you see the earth desolate; but when We send down water upon it, it stirs and swells." (Quran 41:39)

"وَتَرَى الْأَرْضَ هَامِدَةً فَإِذَا أَنْزَلْنَا عَلَيْهَا الْمَاءَ اهْتَزَّتْ وَرَبَتْ وَأَنْبَتَتْ مِنْ كُلِّ رَوْحٍ يَهْبِجُ"

"And you see the earth torpid, yet when We send down water upon it, it stirs and swells, and grows every delightful kind [of plant]." (Quran 22:5)

2. Water and Agricultural Products

Numerous verses in the Quran emphasize the role of water in the growth of agricultural products, diverse plants, and lush trees:

"أَنَّا صَبَبْنَا الْمَاءَ صَبًّا * ثُمَّ شَقَقْنَا الْأَرْضَ شَقًّا * فَأَنبَتْنَا فِيهَا حَبًّا * وَعَيْنَبًا وَقَضْبًا * وَزَيْتُونًا
وَحُلًّا * وَحَدَائِقَ غُلْبًا * وَفَاكِهَةً وَأَبًّا * مَتَاعًا لَّكُمْ وَلِأَنْعَامِكُمْ"

"We pour down plenteous water [from the sky], then We split the earth making fissures in it and make the grain grow in it, as well as vines and vegetables, olives and date palms, and densely-planted gardens, fruits, and pastures, as a sustenance for you and your livestock." (Quran 80:25-32)

Several exegetes have pointed out that the specific mention of grains, plants, and certain fruits in this verse is due to their significant benefits (Ālūsī 1415 AH: 15/249; Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1417 AH: 20/209). Similarly, in Quran 6:99, the Quran underscores that water is the fundamental source for the growth of plants, agricultural products, and various fruits, considering it a divine sign:

"وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ نَبَاتَ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهُ خَضِرًا نُّخْرِجُ مِنْهُ
حَبًّا مُتَرَاكِبًا وَمِنَ النَّخْلِ مِن طَلْعِهَا قِنْوَانٌ دَانِيَةٌ وَجَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ أَعْنَابٍ وَالزَّيْتُونَ وَالرُّمَّانَ مُشْتَبِهًا
وَغَيْرَ مُتَشَابِهٍ انظُرُوا إِلَى ثَمَرِهِ إِذَا أَثْمَرَ وَيَنْعِهِ إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكُمْ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يُؤْمِنُونَ"

"It is He who sends down water from the sky and brings forth with it every kind of growing thing. Then from it, We bring forth vegetation from which We produce the grain, in clusters, and from the palm-tree, from the spathes of it, low-hanging clusters [of dates], and gardens of grapes, olives, and pomegranates, similar and dissimilar. Look at its fruit as it fructifies and ripens. Indeed, there are signs in that for a people who have faith."

In this verse, the Quran first generally emphasizes the role of water in the growth of all vegetation and then provides specific examples of different types of plants.

Other verses in the Quran also highlight water as the cause of producing various pairs of vegetation:

"وَأَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِّن نَّبَاتٍ شَتَّى "

"And sent down water from the sky, and with it We brought forth various kinds of vegetation." (Quran 20:53)

"وَأَنزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَنبَتْنَا فِيهَا مِن كُلِّ زَوْجٍ كَرِيمٍ"

"And We sent down water from the sky and caused every splendid kind [of plant] to grow in it." (Quran 31:10)

Early exegetes interpreted the term "pairs" here as referring to different species and varieties of plants, illustrating that water is the source of life for diverse vegetation with various colors, tastes,

and properties. However, Allāmah Ṭabāṭabā'ī suggests that the verse may also allude to the presence of male and female genders among plants (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1417 AH: 14/170).

In Quran 31:10, the plants that grow due to water are described as “*noble pairs*”. In interpreting, the Quranic exegetes have used expressions such as value (Ālūsī 1415 AH: 11/65), countless benefits and utilities (Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1417 AH: 16/216), purity of produce (Ṭabarsī, 1372 AH: 8/489), wholesome growth, and pleasant taste and fragrance (Ṭūsī, n.d: 8/273). Furthermore, the Quran presents a profound analogy of the role of water in vegetation in verses such as Quran 18: 45 and 10:24:

"وَاضْرِبْ لَهُم مَّثَلِ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا أَهْرَأْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ فَأَصْبَحَ هَشِيمًا تَذْرُوهُ الرِّيَّاحُ ۚ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ مُّقْتَدِرًا"

"Draw for them the parable of the life of this world: [It is] like the water We send down from the sky. Then the earth's vegetation mingles with it. Then it becomes chaff, scattered by the wind. And Allah has power over all things."

إِنَّمَا مَثَلُ الْحَيَاةِ الدُّنْيَا كَمَا أَهْرَأْنَاهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ فَاخْتَلَطَ بِهِ نَبَاتُ الْأَرْضِ مِمَّا يَأْكُلُ النَّاسُ وَالْأَنْعَامُ...

"The parable of the life of this world is that of water which We send down from the sky. It mingles with the earth's vegetation from which humans and cattle eat..."

In 22:63, the Quran directly appeals to human perception, asking:

"أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَتُصْبِحُ الْأَرْضُ مُخْضَرَّةً ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ"

"Have you not regarded that Allah sends down water from the sky, whereupon the earth turns green? Indeed, Allah is all-attentive, all-aware."

This verse not only affirms water as the cause of the earth's greenery but also implies that reflecting upon natural phenomena leads humanity toward monotheism. The concluding phrase, “*Indeed Allah is all-attentive, all-aware,*” signifies that sending down water and bringing forth greenery from it is a testament to God's meticulous knowledge and wisdom.

Imam Ali (peace be upon him) beautifully describes the role of water in the growth of plants and agricultural produce. According to him, God sends forth successive caravans of clouds to embrace the earth like a caring mother. The cold southern winds play their role in milking these clouds—releasing their raindrops as nourishing milk for nature. It is as if the earth's breast has been pierced, and through

its rainfall, it quenches the thirsty land. Like a nursing cloud, it envelops the earth under its rain-laden breast and releases the burden it carries. As a result, vegetation sprouts from barren lands, and greenery emerges even from the barren mountains.

Now, the earth, adorned with blossoms and plants, rejoices in its renewal, boasting of its elegant attire of blossoms and its dazzling adornments of vibrant vegetation (Imam Ali, Sermon 90).

3. Water and the Emergence of Gardens, Fruits, and Forests

The Almighty God, in numerous verses, emphasizes the role of water in the formation of beautiful gardens and diverse, colorful fruits. In Quran 27:60, He reminds us of the role of water in creating lush gardens, stressing that all these phenomena occur by divine will, and humankind is incapable of making trees grow on its own:

"وَأَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَنْبَتْنَا بِهِ حَدَائِقَ ذَاتَ بَهْجَةٍ مَا كَانَ لَكُمْ أَنْ تُنبِتُوا شَجَرَهَا"

"And [He] sends down for you water from the sky, whereby We grow delightful gardens, whose trees you could never cause to grow...?"

In 80:30, the Quran highlights the role of water in the formation of gardens with strong trees: *"And densely-planted gardens."*

In Quran 7:57, after stating that God causes all kinds of fruits to grow with water, emphasis is also placed on a theological matter: namely, that the same God Who is capable of bringing forth diverse fruits from the earth through water is likewise capable of reviving the dead after death:

"وَهُوَ الَّذِي يُرْسِلُ الرِّيَّاحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ ۖ حَتَّىٰ إِذَا أَقْلَّتْ سَحَابًا ثِقَالًا سُفِّتَ لِبَدٌ مَّيِّتٌ فَأَنْزَلْنَا بِهِ الْمَاءَ فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ مِنْ كُلِّ الثَّمَرَاتِ ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ نُخْرِجُ الْمَوْتَىٰ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَذَكَّرُونَ"

"It is He who sends forth the winds as harbingers of His mercy. When they bear [rain-] laden clouds, We drive them toward a dead land and send down water on it, and with it, We bring forth all kinds of crops. Thus, shall We raise the dead; maybe you will take admonition."

In several verses, in addition to affirming that water is the cause of the growth of various fruits, it is also emphasized that God Almighty has created these fruits as a means of sustenance and provision for His servants: *"And He sends down water from the sky and with it, He*

brings forth crops for your sustenance." (Quran 14:32)

Quran 35:27 emphasizes God's power to create colorful fruits from colorless water: *"Have you not regarded that Allah sends down water from the sky, with which We produce fruits of diverse hues."*

4. Water and the Formation of Pastures

The Quran, in numerous verses, discusses water and its relationship with the emergence of pastures. In Quran 16:10, it states:

"هُوَ الَّذِي أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً لَكُمْ مِنْهُ شَرَابٌ وَمِنْهُ شَجَرٌ فِيهِ تُسِيمُونَ"

"It is He who sends down water from the sky: from it you get your drink and with it are [sustained] the plants wherein you pasture your herds."

In verses 25 and 26 of Quran 80, it says: *"We pour down plentiful water [from the sky], then We split the earth making fissures in it."*

The word 'abb appears only once in the Qur'an and refers to wild and regenerating vegetation or pastureland upon which livestock graze; it is thus understood to mean 'pasture' (Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, 1412 AH: 2; Ṭabarī, 1412 AH: 30/37). Imam Ali (AS) is reported to have explained this term in the verse *"Fākihātān wa abban"* as referring to wild plants and grazing fields (Shaykh al-Mufid, 1413 AH: 1/200).

Conclusion

Water and its role in the environment have a significant presence in the Quran, where it is described using terms such as *blessing*, *mercy*, *abundance*, and *sustenance*, underscoring its vital importance in creation.

The Quran highlights the natural water cycle and its various functions in fertilizing and reviving the land, greening nature, growing colorful plants, and creating pastures, farms, and gardens with diverse trees and fruits.

From an Islamic perspective, water is both the origin of life and its sustaining force. Modern science confirms that water is the primary component of all living cells, playing an essential role in the survival of all organisms. The close relationship between the environment and water is regarded as a lasting divine miracle.

The Quran reminds us of the importance of water for past nations and considers drinking water for both humans and animals

as one of the most wondrous manifestations of divine power in creation, encouraging people to appreciate this invaluable blessing. The health and purification properties of water are also emphasized in several Quranic verses, highlighting its role in hygiene and well-being. Overall, the Quran repeatedly stresses the significance of water in fertilizing the earth, and growing agricultural produce, fruits, diverse plants, strong trees, forests, and pastures.

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