



Education on Environmental and Ecological Literacy: An Islamic Perspective



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Talk outline



1. Why is ecological literacy important?
 2. Islamic perspective on ecological literacy
 3. Past and current practices in Islam and in Muslim countries/communities
 - Malaysia, Indonesia, Iran, Muslims in the UK, South Africa, Zanzibar and Tanzania
 4. How do we build ecological literacy among our youths and the public in general?
 5. Conclusion
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Why Is Ecological literacy Important?

We have only one planet. From Islamic perspective, taking care of the ecosystem is an amanah.

What is ecological literacy?



Having an understanding of and respect for the ecosystem and create sustainable relationships between human communities and the natural surroundings





A decorative border of tropical foliage and a flower. It includes several large green monstera leaves with characteristic splits, several feathery green palm fronds, and a single vibrant red hibiscus flower with yellow stamens. These elements are arranged around a central white rectangular box.

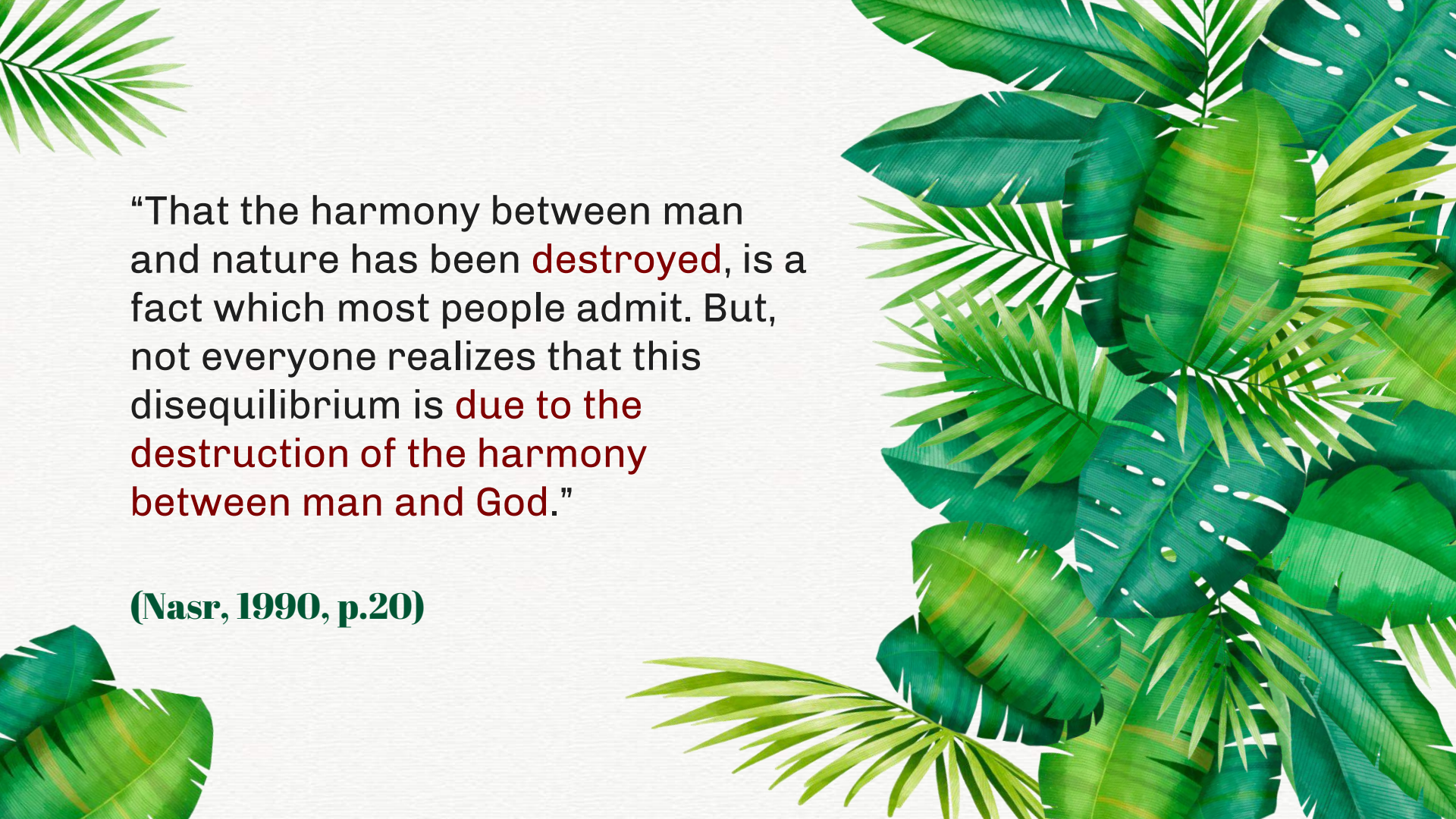
(2)

**Islamic perspective
on ecological literacy**



A renowned Islamic philosopher, Prof Dr. Syed Hossein Nasr (1990) stated that:

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- **Nature**, which encapsulates environment and ecological health, in general **has its own divinity connection** which cannot be separated from material and physical world that a modern man has only focused on today
 - It has its own metaphysical connection in the sense that the **nature should appear to be a respected subject that man should pay to and not to dominate it** like what have been **prevailed in the teachings of Christianity, Buddhism and what more by Islam.**
- 



The image features a white background with decorative tropical foliage in the corners. In the top-left, there is a small branch of a palm-like plant with several long, thin, green leaves. In the bottom-left, a portion of a large, green, deeply lobed leaf, similar to a Monstera, is visible. On the right side, there is a large, dense cluster of various tropical plants, including several large, green, deeply lobed leaves and several feathery palm fronds. The text is positioned in the upper-left area of the white space.

“That the harmony between man and nature has been **destroyed**, is a fact which most people admit. But, not everyone realizes that this disequilibrium is **due to the destruction of the harmony between man and God.**”

(Nasr, 1990, p.20)




Prof Dr. Syed Muhammad Naquib al-Attas:

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- Nature is as part of cosmos (world) which is opposite to the meaning of chaos. That means, **cosmos or nature as part of cosmos has its own system and balance that are in harmony with the will of Allah.**
 - The coming of secularization which started in Europe had disrupted the balance in nature when justice was not placed in the proper place – loss of adab (Al-Attas, 2001).
 - Hence, when **nature is not whr it should be**, not respected nor being understood properly according to *Shari'ah*, **imbalances occur.**
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From the experience of Prophet and his *Sahabah*



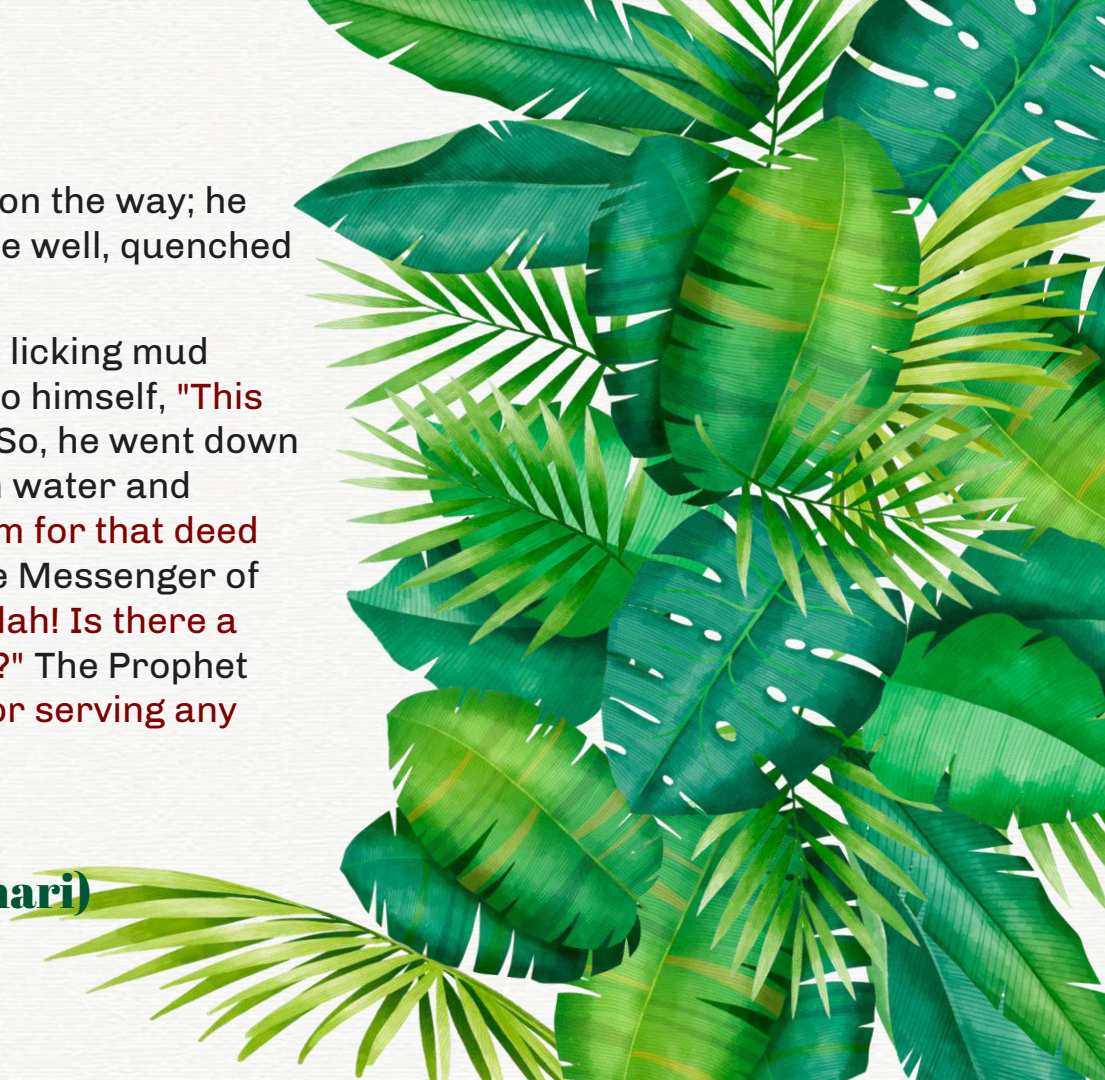
- "If any Muslim plants a tree or sows a field, and a human, bird or animal eats from it, it shall be reckoned as charity from him" (Bukhari & Muslim)
- "If the day of resurrection comes upon any one of you while he has a seedling in his hand, let him plant it." (Bukhari)
- During the reign of the 4th caliphate, Ali Abi Talib also has advised to a man who had reclaimed an abandoned land by saying, "Partake of it gladly, so long as you are a benefactor, not a despoiler; a cultivator, not a destroyer"
- During the time of Abu Bakr as the first caliph, he instructed the armies when going to war in Syria, to not harm women, children and the infirm. In addition to that, he stressed that they should not harm animals, devastating crops or cut down trees while even in war.



"A man felt very thirsty while he was on the way; he came across a well. He went down the well, quenched his thirst and came out.

Meanwhile he saw a dog panting and licking mud because of excessive thirst. He said to himself, "**This dog is suffering from thirst as I did.**" So, he went down the well again and filled his shoe with water and watered it. **Allah was pleased with him for that deed and forgave him.**" The people with the Messenger of Allah (pbuh) said, "**O Messenger of Allah! Is there a reward for us in serving the animals?**" The Prophet (pbuh) said, "**Yes, there is a reward for serving any animate (living being).**"

(Hadith narrated by Bukhari)





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**Past and current
practices in Islam and
in Muslim countries**

Study cases and examples from 6 countries:



i) Malaysia



Outlined many national educational plans

To map the path of its educational system implementing green-based curriculum (Norddin & Jandra, 2017)



Adjusted curriculum in The National Education Curriculum

To include green-based technology and environmental concern in the module to coincide with national objectives of Green Technology Policy (Dasar Teknologi Hijau) (Norddin & Jandra, 2017)



11th and 12th Malaysia Plan blueprint

The 11th MP blueprint encourages the local universities to collaborate with the industries on Green Technology and nowadays in 12th MP, it promotes the universities to bring this theme in the global stage



Islamic Finance course

Teaching courses on green-financing is now introduced in many Islamic Finance courses in Malaysia including IIUM like green sukuk



Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in universities

In IIUM, **Sejahtera Academic Framework (SAF)** is incorporated in both curriculum and co-curriculum.

IIUM was the first Malaysian and Islamic university to win the **Green Gown Award in 2020** for **Best Sustainable Institution category** – green initiatives in achieving SDGs but aligned to *maqasid shariah*

Eg: Malaysian Peaceful Environment Organization (GRASS Malaysia)



- **Laskar Alam** is a training module which aims to develop a group of environmental activists who have the characteristics of ulul 'albab (men of discernment)
- It was co-designed by panels from environmental organizations; Rimba and Pertubuhan Alam Sekitar Sejahtera Malaysia (GRASS Malaysia), International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS), Department of Sociology and Anthropology, International Islamic University Malaysia (SOCA IIUM), Student Activity Training and Development Center, Universiti Selangor (COMNET UNISEL)
- There are four levels in this module and consists of three main parts: (1) environmental theology, (2) sustainability science and (3) environmental morality with additional skills appropriate to each level.

Anjuran
Dengan Kerjasama

PERTANDINGAN INOVASI KAYAK BOTOL

PET BOTTLE RACE 3.0

UNISEL BESTARI JAYA | 2 Disember 2017 | Sabtu | 8 pagi hingga 1 petang

DAFTAR SEGERA
RM50/GRUP
MINIMUM 2 ORANG
MAKSIMUM 5 ORANG

• Mestihai 011-29149794
• Fathin 014-2933304



TEMPAT PERTAMA
RM1000

TEMPAT KEDUA
RM700

TEMPAT KETIGA
RM500

i) Indonesia



Ecological curriculum in *Pesantren*

- **Pesantren** is a type of religious schools focusing on religious education like learning al-Quran and memorizing it.
- Ministry of Environment in collaboration with the Ministry of Religious Affairs signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to launch programs *eco-pesantren* that combined the Tahfidzul Quran with environmental concern curriculum
- Such *pesantren* is called Eco-Pesantren Tahfidzul Qur'an. Example of those *pesantren* are can be found at Pengging, Boyolali and many more
- Nisa et al., (2017) stated that several noticeable green-based projects in the *pesantren* are
 - a) Gardens at every land around the buildings
 - b) Vertical garden
 - c) Barrier
 - d) Roof garden
 - e) Garden and farm



Participation by religious council in ecological preservation effort

- An effort of collaboration between **Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI)** through its **Lembaga Pemuliaan Lingkungan Hidup & Sumber Daya Alam (LPLHSDA)** with **Pusat Pengajian Islam (PPI) Universitas Nasional** and several other **NGO's** have been established
- The aim is to educate the mass of people from Islamic teaching on the importance of preserving those endangered animals that are taking shelters in the rich Indonesian natural tropical ecosystems

iii) Iran



Ecological curriculum in *Pesantren*

- Green front of Iran (*Jabheh-ye Sabz-e-Iran*), an environmental NGO (ENGEO) has initiated the effort to seek amalgamation between Islamic teaching with Quranic verses and hadith to promote green message and care to environment
- They also seek to **increase environmental knowledge among Imams** since they have influence on Muslim communities

iv) United Kingdom



The role of mosques in Cambridge

- The green effort through Islamic teaching is done by the **Muslim communities in the UK**
- The *maktab* (quranic mosque schools) teaches religious values while indirectly mentions the **concern on environmental care and loves towards nature** in their curriculums.



Islam and Citizenship Education (ICE) project

- Prepares a citizenship module for Muslim schools **incorporating Islamic guidance in all aspects**. The module includes '**Islam and Environment**' as notes to teachers and students

v) South Africa



Youth Environment Schools (YES)

- It is a **city-wide environmental initiative** that are joined by local Muslim learners actively
- It also participates in nation-wide Green Schools programme, an annual greening competition amongst Muslim schools to **encourage them to care for the environment.**




Misali Environmental Ethics project

- An **ecoIslamic initiative**
- It is based on plethora collaborations from several international environmental organizations to **address marine conservation through religious ethics**

vi) Zanzibar, Tanzania





**“And do not commit abuse
on the earth, spreading
corruption.” (Qur’an, 2:60)**



A decorative border of tropical foliage surrounds the central text. It includes several large, dark green monstera leaves with characteristic splits, and several palm fronds with long, thin, light green leaflets. A single, vibrant red hibiscus flower with yellow stamens is positioned in the upper right corner of the border.

(4)

How do we build ecological literacy among our youths and the public in general?

A book entitled ***Ecoliterate: How Educators are Cultivating Emotional, Social and Ecological Intelligence***, by Daniel Goleman, Lisa Bennett and Zenobia Barlow of Centre for Ecoliteracy (2013) states that:

There are 5 steps need to be done.



(1) Develop empathy for all forms of life

- a) Students can be shown books with illustration
- b) With the help of videos (cat/dog) where animals are suffering
- c) Through “direct contact with other living things” (2012), such as by keeping live plants and animals in the classroom; taking field trips to nature areas, zoos, botanical gardens
- d) Transforming the classroom into an ocean habitat, ripe with coral, jellyfish, leopard sharks, octopi, and deep-sea divers. An aquarium can be placed. If not the real animals, **at least symbols and pictures can be placed in the classroom.**

A book entitled ***Ecoliterate: How Educators are Cultivating Emotional, Social and Ecological Intelligence***, by Daniel Goleman, Lisa Bennett and Zenobia Barlow of Centre for Ecoliteracy (2013) stated that:

- a) Teaching needs to **include real world encounter**
- b) Students can be **given the task of doing some easy community work** like picking up plastic trashes from roadside/sea beach.



**(2) Embrace
sustainability as a
community practice**

A book entitled ***Ecoliterate: How Educators are Cultivating Emotional, Social and Ecological Intelligence***, by Daniel Goleman, Lisa Bennett and Zenobia Barlow of Centre for Ecoliteracy (2013) stated that:



(3) Make the invisible visible

- a) To clarify the long-term human impact on climate, we need to show students facts, statistics and documentaries on how humans are disrupting the ecosystem.
- b) We can use phenomenal web-based tools, such as Google Earth, to enable students to “travel” virtually and view the landscape in other regions and countries.
- c) Through social networking websites (Facebook, Instagram etc), students can also communicate directly with citizens of distant areas and learn firsthand what the others are experiencing.

A book entitled ***Ecoliterate: How Educators are Cultivating Emotional, Social and Ecological Intelligence***, by Daniel Goleman, Lisa Bennett and Zenobia Barlow of Centre for Ecoliteracy (2013) states that:

- a) Students can be given some **video games or puzzle** games to show how one small unintended action can have negative influence on the whole game/puzzle.
- b) They can be taught **how day-to-day simple actions like using extra water, using plastic bag et cetera can impact the environment.**



**(4) Anticipate
unintended
consequences**

A book entitled ***Ecoliterate: How Educators are Cultivating Emotional, Social and Ecological Intelligence***, by Daniel Goleman, Lisa Bennett and Zenobia Barlow of Centre for Ecoliteracy (2013) stated that:



(5) Understand how nature sustains life

- a) Teach them to “**take only what they need** [from nature] and to adjust their behavior in times of boom or bust”. **To do this, we can give them home lesson to note down everything they eat and drink in one week.** Putting together data from all students, it can be shown to them practically how much we taking from nature just for food.
- b) **An ecoliterate or environmentalist** can be invited in the class and teach them how to lead a balanced life with nature.



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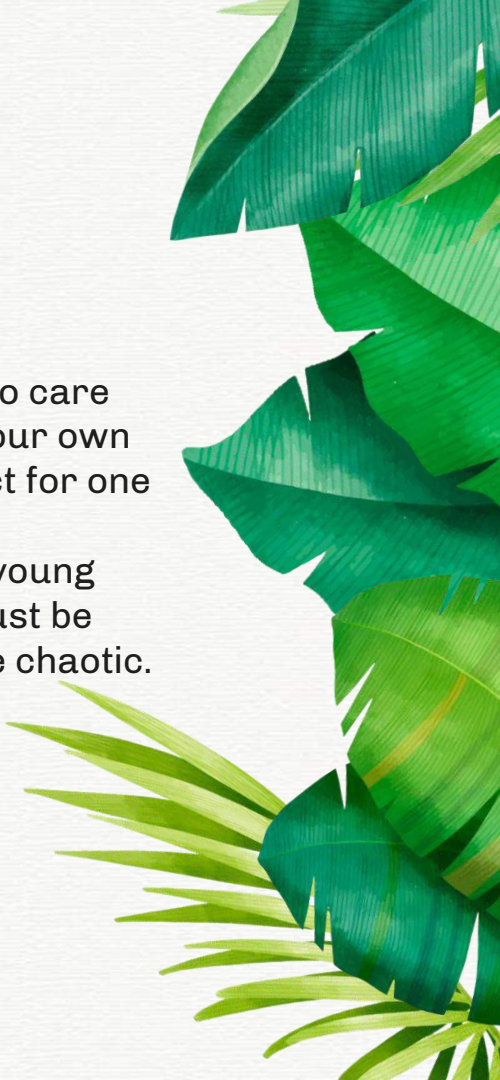
Conclusion

We have one planet and that it is a divine trust on us to care for it. The destruction of nature is a reflection of our own ties with God, our ties with nature and our respect for one another.

The way forward is to teach ecological literacy from young and religious consciousness in relation to that must be incorporated. A world where God is absent will be chaotic.

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A decorative border of various tropical leaves, including Monstera and palm fronds, framing the central text. The leaves are in shades of green and teal, with some showing natural holes and patterns.

Thanks



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