

FEATURES OF THE EARTH IN THE QUR'AN: FOCUSING ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND HUMAN BEINGS

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1. Introduction

In this paper, we consider the view of nature in the Islamic world. Islam was born in the arid and semi-arid regions of the Arabian Peninsula, and is a widely practiced faith centered on the Middle East. While the natural environment in this region is harsh, it is also a beautiful and comfortable environment overflowing with nature, with an abundance of flowers, fruit trees, and fountains in both public and domestic spaces.

Therefore, we analyze and clarify the features of the Earth described in the Qur'an, which plays a decisive role in the formation of the Islamic worldview. Choosing from among the elements of nature, this paper focuses on the Earth: this is where human beings live and is a foundation comprising a variety of natural elements, including mountains, rivers, and trees. Moreover, even among the creations of God, the creation of the heavens and the Earth are considered to be special. This paper will clarify the relations between God and human beings, and to consider how this relationship is understood.

2. Research text and Methodology

Research text: 451 Arabic verses were analyzed, including *ارض (الارض)*, which literally means "the Earth," but which we translate hereinafter to mean "the Earth verses." When analyzing the Earth verses, we used "The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an" [1]. The Qur'an comprises 114 chapters known with each chapter comprising multiple verses. In listing each of the Qur'an verses, the numbers of the chapter and the verse are written in the form "chapter: verse."

Method of analysis:

1) Extraction of the descriptions indicating the Earth "E", God "G", Human beings "H" and the following 4 themes from the descriptions of the Earth verses. The 4 themes are :

- Relationship between the Earth and God is $R(E,G)$;
- Relationship between the Earth and human beings is $R(E,H)$;
- Relationship of the Earth as the place where God and human beings act is $R(E(G, H))$;
and
- State of the Earth is $S(E)$.

The how to extract is illustrated by examples (Fig. 1, 2).

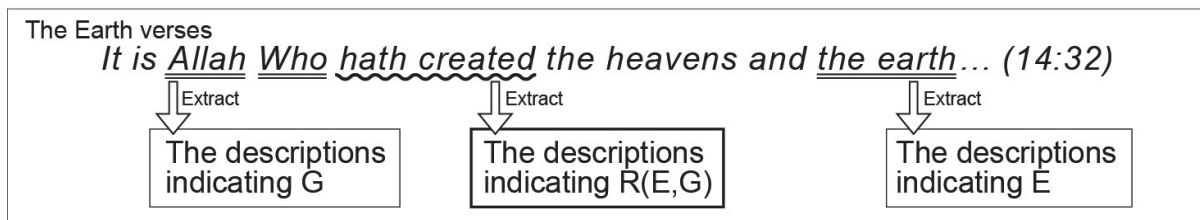


Fig. 1: An Example: Extraction of the descriptions indicating G, E and R(E,G)

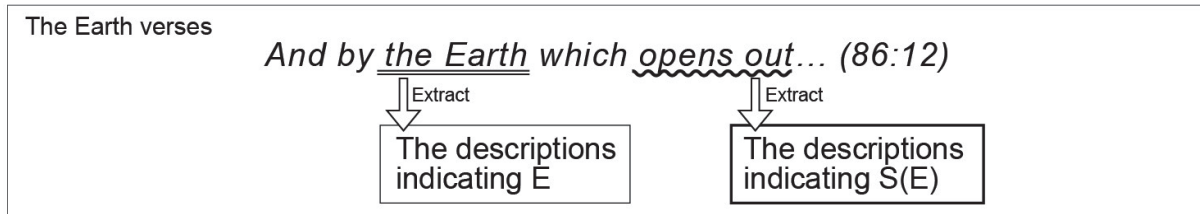


Fig. 2: An Example: Extraction of the descriptions indicating E and S(E)

2) According to the descriptions were extracted, The Earth verses that were similar in content of descriptions to one of 4 themes were summarized and called the “Types of Earth”.

3) In each of 4 themes, features of the Earth are discussed and clarified on the basis of the “Types of Earth”.

3. Type of Earth

From the results of the analysis, the “Types of Earth” were extracted. The content of each of the “Types of Earth” and the Earth verses belonging to each of the “Types of Earth” are as shown below (Table 1).

The “Types of Earth” that are similar in content to R(E,G) were the following 16 types:

- (1) the Earth that God created;
- (2) the Earth that God has dominion over;
- (3) the Earth that God is the Lord of;
- (4) the Earth that God spreads out over;
- (5) the Earth that God sends down rain onto;
- (6) the Earth that God gives life to;
- (7) the Earth on which God sets firm mountains;
- (8) the Earth that God blesses;
- (9) the Earth that God destroys;
- (10) the Earth that God made the resting place for human beings;
- (11) the Earth where God exists;
- (12) those on the Earth belong to God;
- (13) those on the Earth are known by God;
- (14) those on the Earth praise the Glory of God;
- (15) those on the Earth bow down to God; and
- (16) those on the Earth are produced by God.

Table 1: The list that shows the "Types of Earth", the Earth verses belonging to the "Types of Earth" and the numbers of the Earth verses in each of 4 themes.

Themes	Types of Earth	The descriptions indicating each theme with similar contents	The Earth verses belonging to the Types of Earth	Number of verses
R(E,G)	(1)	created, hath created, has created, Creator, the creation, Maker	2:29, 2:117, 2:164, 6:1, 6:101, 6:14, 6:73, 6:79, 7:54, 9:36, 10:3, 10:6, 11:7, 12:101, 14:10, 14:19, 14:32, 15:85, 16:3, 17:99, 20:4, 21:16, 21:56, 25:59, 27:60, 29:44, 29:61, 30:22, 30:8, 31:25, 32:4, 35:1, 38:27, 39:38, 39:46, 39:5, 40:57, 41:9, 42:11, 42:29, 43:9, 44:38, 44:39, 45:22, 46:3, 46:33, 50:38, 57:4, 64:3, 65:12	50
	(2)	belongth the dominion, doth belong the dominion, belongs the dominion	2:107, 3:189, 5:17, 5:18, 5:40, 5:120, 7:158, 9:116, 24:42, 25:2, 39:44, 42:49, 43:85, 45:27, 48:14, 57:2, 57:5, 85:9	18
	(3)	the Lord of ...the earth	13:16, 17:102, 18:14, 19:65, 21:56, 26:24, 37:5, 38:66, 43:82, 44:7, 45:36, 51:23, 78:37	13
	(4)	spread out, flatted out, expanse, has made...as a carpet	13:3, 15:19, 50:7, 51:48, 55:10, 67:15, 71:19, 77:25, 78:6, 79:30, 84:3, 88:20, 91:6	13
	(5)	sends down rain, send down rain, pour down rain, do drive rain	2:164, 16:65, 18:45, 22:5, 22:63, 23:18, 29:63, 30:24, 31:10, 32:27, 39:21, 41:39, 43:11	13
	(6)	gives life, revive, raise to life	2:164, 16:65, 29:63, 30:19, 30:24, 30:50, 35:9, 36:33, 43:11, 45:5, 57:17	11
	(7)	set up on the earth mountains, has make the earth firm	16:15, 21:31, 31:10, 27:61	4
	(8)	sent down Our blessings, have blessed, had blessed, bestowed blessings on	7:137, 21:71, 21:81, 41:10	4
	(9)	gradually reduce, will be but His handful, split the earth in fragments	13:41, 39:67, 80:26	3
	(10)	has made the earth your couch, has made as a resting place	2:22, 40:64	2
	(11)	is...on	6:3, 43:84	2
	(12)	belong, belongs, belongth, do belong, doth belong	2:116, 2:255, 2:284, 3:109, 3:129, 3:180, 4:126, 4:131, 4:132, 4:171, 6:12, 7:128, 10:55, 10:66, 10:68, 11:123, 14:2, 16:52, 16:77, 20:6, 21:19, 22:64, 24:64, 30:26, 30:27, 31:26, 34:1, 39:63, 42:4, 42:12, 42:53, 48:7, 53:31, 57:10, 63:7	35
	(13)	know, knows,hath knowledge, nothing is hidden, doth know	2:33, 3:5, 3:29, 5:97, 6:59, 10:18, 14:38, 17:55, 18:26, 22:70, 25:6, 27:65, 29:52, 34:2, 35:38, 49:16, 49:18, 50:4, 58:7, 64:4	20
	(14)	declare, do celebrate, let it declare, doth declare	17:44, 24:41, 57:1, 59:1, 59:24, 61:1, 62:1, 64:1	8
	(15)	bow down in worship, doth obeisance, do prostrate	3:83, 13:15, 16:49, 22:18	4
	(16)	have produced, has multiplied	2:267, 16:13, 26:7	3
R(E,H)	(17)	inherit, inheriors of, heirs of	6:165, 7:100, 7:137, 21:105, 27:62, 33:27	6
	(18)	produced...from, multiplied... through, bring...out of	11:61, 23:79, 53:32, 67:24, 71:17	5
	(19)	sustains, sustenance depenth, gives you sustenance, gives you sustenance,	10:31, 11:6, 27:64, 34:24, 35:3	5
	(20)	are signs	45:3, 51:20	2
	(21)	see, behold	7:185, 10:101	2
	(22)	work mischief, make mischief, do mischief, behaved with insolence, walk in insolence, wrong-doing, arrogance, were arrogantly, do evil	2:11, 2:27, 2:60, 2:205, 3:196, 5:32, 5:33, 5:64, 7:56, 7:74, 7:85, 7:127, 7:146, 10:23, 10:83, 11:64, 11:85, 11:116, 12:73, 13:25, 17:37, 17:4, 26:152, 26:183, 27:48, 28:19, 28:39, 28:4, 28:77, 28:83, 29:36, 29:39, 31:18, 35:43, 38:28, 40:75, 41:15, 42:42, 46:20, 47:22	40
	(23)	travel, traveling, are journeying	3:137, 3:156, 4:101, 5:106, 6:11, 12:109, 16:36, 22:46, 27:69, 29:20, 30:9, 30:42, 35:44, 40:21, 40:82, 47:10, 73:20	17
	(24)	drive out, get out, scare...off, remove	7:110, 17:76, 17:103, 14:13, 20:57, 20:63, 26:35	7
	(25)	abide in, will be your dwelling place, Dwell securely, habitation	2:36, 4:100, 7:24, 7:74, 14:14, 17:104	6
	(26)	cannot frustrate, can by no means frustrate	24:57, 29:22, 35:44, 42:31, 46:32, 72:12	6
R(E,G,H)	(27)	make you inheritors, made you heirs, grant them... inheritance	7:129, 10:14, 24:55, 35:39	4
	(28)	create a vicegerent, did indeed make thee a vicegerent	2:30, 38:26	2
S(E)	(29)	slipt asunder, is moved, open out, is pounded to power	19:90, 50:44, 69:14, 86:12, 89:21	5
	(30)	be shaken, shakes, will be in violent	56:4, 67:16, 73:14, 99:1	4
	(31)	wide, speciousness, specious	9:25, 9:118, 29:56, 39:10	4
	(32)	a Garden whose width ...of the earth	3:133, 57:21	2

The "Types of Earth" that are similar in content to R(E,H) were the following 9 types:

- (17) the Earth that human beings are the inheritors of;
- (18) the Earth that creates human beings;
- (19) the Earth from which human beings receive sustenance;
- (20) the Earth on which there are signs to human beings;
- (21) the Earth that human beings behold.

- (22) the Earth on which human beings make mischief;
- (23) the Earth on which human beings travel;
- (24) the Earth that human beings get out of;
- (25) the Earth which human beings live on; and

The “Earth” that are similar in content to R(E(G,H)) were the following 3 types:

- (26) the Earth as a place where human beings must not frustrate the plans of God;
- (27) the Earth that God made human beings the inheritors of; and
- (28) the Earth that God made human beings the vicegerents of.

The “Types of Earth” that are similar in content to S(E) were the following 4 types:

- (29) the Earth shakes;
- (30) the Earth is destroyed;
- (31) the Earth is spaciousness; and
- (32) the Earth is a wide paradise.

4. Conclusion

From the analysis of the 451 Earth verses, it was possible to extract 32 “Types of Earth.” The features of the Earth are shown below.

1) R(E,G) relationship between the Earth and God: The extracted features relate that God: created the Earth(1); has dominion over it(2); is the Lord of it(3); spreads out over it(4); sends down rain onto it(5); gives it life(6); sets firm mountains on it(7); blesses it(8); destroys it(9); makes it the resting place for human beings(10); and exists on the Earth(11). Moreover, the extracted features relate that the things of the Earth: belong to God(12); are known by God(13); praise the Glory of God(14); bow down to God(15); and are produced by God(16).

2) R(E,H) relationship between the Earth and human beings: The following features were extracted: human beings are the inheritors of the Earth(17); God created human beings from the Earth(18); human beings receive God’s sustenance from the Earth(19); there are signs to human beings on the Earth(20); and human beings behold the Earth(21). Moreover, the extracted features relate that human beings: make mischief on the Earth(22); travel on the Earth(23); are to get out of the Earth(24); and live on the Earth(25).

3) R(E(G,H) relationship of the Earth as a place where God and human beings act: The extracted features relate that the Earth is a place: where human beings must not frustrate the plans of God(26); that human beings inherit from God(27); and of which God has made human beings the vicegerents(28).

4) S(E) states of the Earth: The features extracted were that the Earth is extremely spacious(29) and that it is a wide paradise(30). Moreover, when the Final Judgment approaches(31), the Earth will shake and be destroyed(32).

References

- [1] Yusuf Ali, Abdullah. The Meaning of the Holy Qur’an. Pacific Publishing Studio. 2010