

Religious motivations to preserve water: an Islamic perspective

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ABSTRACT

Water has a special place in the world's culture and religion. There are numerous rituals in different religions that revolve around water. Sustainable water use, which is supported by all the major religions, is essential to maintain water security and healthy environment where the scarcity of fresh water is looming due to climate change. There is a potential for religions to play an important role in preserving water. Moreover, religious centres can contribute to water preservation considerably since there is a high water demand in these centres, and there is a possibility to adopt water conservation measures in these centres. For example, there are 200 mosques/Islamic centres in New South Wales (NSW), and approximately 22,000 people visit these mosques for daily prayers. The anecdotal evidence shows that around 50% of these attendees do ablution (wudu) at the mosque. There is evidence that approximately eight litres of water are used for a single ablution. Therefore, the water demand for these mosques/centres is approximately 888,000 litres every day for ablution alone. With this

background, this masters research aims to explore how rainwater harvesting can be used to save water in the Islamic centres/mosques in Australia. For this study, St Marys Islamic Centre (NSW) is selected as the study site. A water balance model is developed to estimate the reliability of a rainwater harvesting system in fulfilling the water demand in this centre. Also, a survey will be conducted among the visitors of this Islamic centre to understand their views on rainwater harvesting at the place of worship. Several Islamic motivational tools such as Friday sermons and weekly teaching sessions will be used to educate and influence the mosque visitors. All the water related texts from the Holy Quran and Sunnah will be gathered and interpreted to motivate the mosque visitors. It is anticipated that the outcomes of this research will promote water conservation in places of worship across the world. The idea of a green mosque has been introduced in few countries. However, this will be the first study on this direction in Australia, which will save water at the places of worship. A conference paper has been published on this study and two journal articles will be written.