



Human Survival Beyond Earth: A Critical Analysis of Stephen Hawking's Cosmological Vision in Light of Quranic Discourses

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Abstract: *The question of whether humanity can survive beyond Earth has become central in contemporary scientific and philosophical debate. Stephen Hawking, one of the most influential theoretical physicists of the modern era, emphasized that humankind must eventually leave Earth to ensure its long-term survival. He identified existential threats such as asteroid collisions, nuclear war, climate change, and overpopulation as potential causes of human extinction. This article critically examines Hawking's arguments through a comparative analysis with Quranic discourse. The study explores how the Qur'an addresses humanity's cosmic role, the divine purpose of creation, and the boundaries of human exploration. While Hawking's outlook is grounded in material determinism and technological optimism, the Quranic worldview situates human progress within divine order and moral accountability. The paper concludes that both perspectives, despite their ontological differences, converge on the necessity of human responsibility toward survival and the preservation of life. A balanced approach between scientific advancement and divine guidance is proposed for humanity's sustainable future.*

Keywords: *Stephen Hawking; Human Survival; Quranic Discourse; Space Colonization; Cosmology; Religion and Science; Human Destiny*

Introduction

Human beings proved that now they could land on moon, very first time United States of America lands on moon and after many countries gain this same achievement. This indicates that human can go outer from earth atmosphere and they could also land on another planet. While from many years there are robots are moving on Mars which is sent by scientists. Currently researchers are studying about the atmosphere and environment of Mars. Scientists predicting about to make Mars a second home for humanity. So, there are many nations encourages that humanity should make other planets live able, because according to scientists it is necessary for mankind for their survival. Stephen Hawking was one of them and not only



he claims that is possible but also, he strongly encourages humanity to think and make progress in that direction.

Quran is the absolute guidance which is revealed by Allah. In this instance when man lands on moon, making progress about living on Mars and other planets, so what is the guidance by Quran and how Quran deals with it.

Can Human Survive Else Were from Earth?

It is very clear that humans are living outside from earth for months in space stations. As it is also mentioned by Hawking,

“Our experience with ISS, the International Space Station shows that it is absolutely possible for mankind to life for months away from earth.”¹

So, this shows that humans could survive outside from earth and after knowing this reality Hawking claims that in this experiment, we came to know that there are many ways for humanity to live outside from earth.

Why it is Necessary to Think about that?

There is a question arise that why Hawking and other scientist claim and insist humanity to work in this field. Stephen Hawking says that human should not put their all eggs in one basket, because if any bad things happen on this earth, all human species could be abolished. So, this intelligent specie has to take measures for other planets that if anything bad happens so all human race will not wipe out.

“According to me currently humanity is acting in extremely careless way about future on earth. Currently it is going well but in long run humanity could not put there all eggs in one basket or in just one planet. I just hope before anything bad happen we should have to escape from earth.”²

So, according to Stephen Hawking before anything bad happens humans should have to leave earth for survival. Because humanity achieved a very big goal with the help of technology by landing on moon.

“We gain great achievement to elevate humanity by lending on moon. In such a way we bring people and nations together.”³

Modern technology is in our grip so we have to use the technology and start to spread in all solar system and spread humanity, we have good start from our own solar system,

“The technology is almost in our grip, it is the time to study all solar system, and spreading out may be the only thing that saves us from ‘ourselves’. I am totally in the favor that human should leave earth.”⁴

So, according to Stephen Hawking it is extremely good for humanity to spread in all our solar system and make other planets also destination for humanity.

Asteroid Collision

Hawking also said that one of the biggest threats to the planet is natural disastrous such as asteroid collision and we have not any defense against it. Because history tells us that all dinosaurs were abolished because of an asteroid collision.

“An asteroid collision which we have no defense, last time on earth, such a great disaster occurred and all dinosaurs were killed.⁵

Stephen Hawking assuming such thing could happen, so humanity need to take precautions. Because he was atheist so according to him there is not any planned universe this all is happening by randomness.

Climate Change

Stephen Hawking was very concerned by the issue of climate change. Because the atmosphere of earth is continuously changing, with the advancement of technology humans also faces consequences. There are lot of ice which is melted from the top of mountains, lot of disturbance in ozone layer, and there is also a huge release in carbon dioxide gas which is very severely affecting the living creatures.

“The next issue is climate change which causes great release of carbon dioxide and effect our planet with extreme weather.⁶

Overpopulation

Hawking also addresses the issue of overpopulation on earth. Because population is rapidly growing and according to him in next few hundred years there would be no place remain on earth to live. So, this is one of the biggest issues that humans should have to move on another planet and start living.

“Physical resources are drained at very rapid level, our population on earth is continuously increasing at alarming rate.⁷

So, this issue is also highlighted by other scientists and according to them this issue should be deal very urgently.

Nuclear War

Stephen Hawking also gives a reason to shift humanity to other planet because there is a great threat on earth of nuclear war and if once it started it could may abolish all living organisms on earth.

“Most alarming them is all, nuclear war. We have the technological power to destroy every living creature on earth. I believe before ‘Armageddon’ it is the best way to move and make human life possible on another planet.⁸

So, this is the biggest threat to humanity because many countries are developing nuclear weapons and it could cause the ‘Final War’ for humanity.

Human Colonization on Other Planets

Being an excellent theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking suggest the idea of human colonization in space and on other planets. Because humans are living from millions of years on earth and because of all above mentioned threats humans should have to make final step in this way.

“Human colonization on other planets is no longer science fiction. It is science fact. Humans are existing on earth from millions of years and being a civilization from 10,000 years.... we humans have no other substitute to do that.”⁹

It is also a fact that with the advancement of technology humans are facing such extreme dangers. So, according to Hawking it is only the light in this darkness.

Quranic Discourse on Human Settlement Beyond Earth

Quran is the final and absolute guidance from Almighty Allah; it guides in all dimensions. Quran claims itself that it is the finale divine book which is revealed for the guidance of humanity.

﴿بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ ۝ أَحْمَدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ ۝﴾¹⁰

“In the name of Allah; Who is the most Beneficent, the most Merciful. Praise be to Allah. The Cherisher and Sustainer of the Worlds;”

﴿إِنَّ هَذَا الْقُرْآنَ يَهْدِي لِلَّتِي هِيَ أَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ الَّذِينَ يَعْمَلُونَ الصَّالِحَاتِ أَنَّ لَهُمْ أَجْرًا كَبِيرًا ۝﴾¹¹

“Verily this Qur-ān Doth guide to that Which is most right (or stable), And giveth the glad tidings To the Believers who work Deeds of righteousness, That they shall have A magnificent reward ;”

Quran declares itself an absolute and final guidance. It says that this book is the guidance for all humanity.

﴿وَيَوْمَ نُبْعَثُ فِي كُلِّ أُمَّةٍ شَهِيدًا عَلَيْهِمْ مِّنْ أَنفُسِهِمْ ۖ وَجِئْنَا بِكَ شَهِيدًا عَلَىٰ هَؤُلَاءِ ۗ وَنَزَّلْنَا عَلَيْكَ الْكِتَابَ تِبْيَانًا لِّكُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُدًى وَرَحْمَةً وَبُشْرَىٰ لِلْمُسْلِمِينَ ۝﴾¹²

“One day We shall raise From all Peoples a witness Against them, from amongst themselves : And We shall bring thee As a witness against these (Thy people) : and We have sent down To thee the Book explaining All things, a Guide, a Mercy, And Glad Tidings to Muslims.”

Earth is The Primary Habitat for Humans

Quranic instance is that earth is specifically made for human’s survival. Allah has made this earth to show His authority and wiseness. Humans are sent on earth for testing. Very first man Adam was sent on this planet by Allah and from that first man all humanity starts. So, this shows the plane of Allah that He has created earth for humanity.

﴿الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا لَّعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ۝﴾¹³

“Yea, the same that) Has made for you The earth (like a carpet) Spread out, and has made For you roads (and channels) Therein, in order that ye May find guidance (on the way”

Quran also claims that Allah has made all necessities of humans on earth. Human basic needs are only present on earth. Such as food, clothes or cattle. As well as the atmosphere of earth is absolutely favorable for humans. Quran also described it as,

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَسَلَّكَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِنْ نَبَاتٍ شَتَّى ۚ كُلُوا وَارْعَوْا أَنْعَامَكُمْ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي النُّهَى ۝١٤

“He Who has made for you The earth like a carpet Spread out ; has enabled you To go about therein by roads (And channels) ; and has sent Down water from the sky.” With it have We produced Divers pairs of plants Each separate from the others. Eat (for yourselves) and pasture Your cattle : verily, in this Are Signs for men Endued with understanding.”

The basic plan which is mentioned In Quran about earth it is only the place of settlement for humanity.

وَالِى ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنْ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ ۖ هُوَ أَنْشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ ۚ إِنَّ رَبِّي قَرِيبٌ مُجِيبٌ ۝١٥

“To the Thamūd People (We sent) Sāliḥ, one Of their own brethren. He said : O my People ! Worship God : ye have No other god but Him. It is He Who hath produced you From the earth and settled you Therein : then ask forgiveness Of Him, and turn to Him (In repentance) : for my Lord Is (always) near, ready To answer.”

Quran also says that this earthly life is created by Allah only to test the humanity while those people who does good deeds will be rewarded while who does bad deeds will be punished. This all-beautiful mechanism on earth is only for to test the humanity.

إِنَّا جَعَلْنَا مَا عَلَى الْأَرْضِ زِينَةً لَهَا لِنَبْلُوهُمْ أَيُّهُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا ۝١٦

“That which is on earth We have made but as A glittering show for the earth, In order that We may test Them—as to which of them Are best in conduct.”

The Humans and Earth; Fixed Domain or Open for Explanation?

We are focusing on life of human outside from earth so if we see Quran, it challenges that if anyone from 'Jinn' or 'Mankind' could go beyond from the dimension of heaven they should go, but they couldn't. Quran claimed as,

يَا مَعْشَرَ الْجِنِّ وَالْإِنسِ إِنِ اسْتَطَعْتُمْ أَنْ تَنْفُذُوا مِنْ أَقْطَارِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ فَانفُذُوا ۚ لَا تَنْفُذُونَ إِلَّا بِسُلْطَانٍ ۝١٧

“O ye assembly of Jinns And men ! If it be Ye can pass beyond The zones of the heavens And the earth, pass ye ! Not without authority Shall ye be able to pass !”

According to it there are two possibilities; first is that anyone could not go beyond this all, or second is anyone could go but by extreme knowledge and wisdom.

Quran also insisted its believers that they should explore the universe, and they will find the sings of Allah.

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ لآيَاتٍ لِأُولِي الْأَلْبَابِ ○ ١٩١ - الَّذِينَ يَذْكُرُونَ اللَّهَ قِيَامًا وَقُعُودًا وَعَلَىٰ جُنُوبِهِمْ وَيَتَفَكَّرُونَ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ رَبَّنَا مَا خَلَقْتَ هَذَا بَاطِلًا سُبْحَانَكَ فَقِنَا عَذَابَ النَّارِ ○ 18

“Behold! in the creation of the heavens and the earth and the alternation of night and day there are indeed Signs for men of understanding. Men who celebrate the praises of God standing sitting and lying down on their sides and contemplate the (wonders of) creation in the heavens and the earth (with the thought): “Our Lord! not for naught hast Thou created (all) this! Glory to thee! Give us salvation from the penalty of the fire.”

So, these two verses encourage human knowledge to broader their dimension and go deep down in knowledge and try to understand the universe. In this point all philosophers either they belong to atheistic point of view or theistic doctrine are on same page.

Migration for Survival Does it Extend Beyond Earth?

If we see as whole, the Quranic doctrine encourages the migration and travel on earth. Quran strongly urges to people who are opposed, that they should have to migrate for their betterment and safety.

وَالَّذِينَ هَاجَرُوا فِي اللَّهِ مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا ظَلَمُوا لَنُبَوِّئَنَّهُمْ فِي الدُّنْيَا حَسَنَةً وَلَا جَزَاءَ الْآخِرَةِ أَكْبَرَ لَوْ كَانُوا يَعْلَمُونَ ○ 19

“To those who leave Their homes in the cause Of God, after suffering oppression,— We will assuredly give A goodly home in this world ; But truly the reward Of the Hereafter will be greater. If they only realise (this) !”

So, the migration in the time of neediness is noy only encouraged by Allah but also it is compulsory.

We can also analyze the story of Noah A.S., when he A.S. saved all believers from a great catastrophic event by the technology of that time.

وَحَمَلْنَاهُ عَلَىٰ ذَاتِ أَلْوَاحٍ وَدُسُرٍ ○ ١٤ - تَجْرِي بِأَعْيُنِنَا جَزَاءَ لِمَنْ كَانَ كُفِرَ ○ 20

“But We bore him On an (Ark) made of Broad planks and caulked With palm-fibre : She floats under our eyes (And care) : a recompense To one who had been Rejected (with scorn) !”

On analyzing this verse to use the technology of that time Noah A.S. the prophet of Allah saved the humanity. So, if migration would remain only option so we have the divine guidance in the story of Noah A.S.

The Cosmic Role of Humans in the Quran

The Quran declares that Allah has made humans on this earth as His 'Khalifah' vicegerents. So, humans are in charge by the divine order and the capacity of human is also gifted by Allah. Mind is its greatest gift from the Creator because it is the powerhouse and storage of knowledge and wisdom. It is also described by Allah that humans are only present on earth or came to life just for the test which is indulge upon them by their Creator.

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكَم خَلَائِفَ الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ فِي مَا آتَاكُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ 21

“It is He who hath made you (His) agents inheritors of the earth: He hath raised you in ranks some above others: that he may try you in the gifts He hath given you: for thy Lord is quick in punishment: yet He is indeed Oft-Forgiving Most Merciful.”

So, the authority comes with accountability humans must rule with justice and avoid corruption. Quran discourages destruction and urges mankind to do best for humanity.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَحْلُوا شَعَائِرَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا الْهَدْيَ وَلَا الْقَلَائِدَ وَلَا آمِينَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ يَبْتَغُونَ فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاَنُ قَوْمٍ أَن صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُوا وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ 22

“O ye who believe! violate not the sanctity of the Symbols of God nor of the Sacred Month nor of the animals brought for sacrifice nor the garlands that mark out such animals nor the people resorting to the Sacred House seeking of the bounty and good pleasure of their Lord. But when ye are clear of the Sacred Precincts and of pilgrim garb ye may hunt and let not the hatred of some people in (once) shutting you out of the Sacred Mosque lead you to transgression (and hostility on your part). Help ye one another in righteousness and piety but help ye not one another in sin and rancor: fear God: for God is strict in punishment.”

So, if this procedure which is mentioned by scientists is good and best for the survival of mankind, Quran orders its believers to do that thing and help to save humanity and secure its survival.

Human Responsibility: Improving Earth Rather Than Abandoning it

Despite from all debates if we see Quran, it claims that best and for most suitable place for humanity is earth so it is more preferable to improving earth rather to abandoning it. Because earth is specially made as best habitat for humans and it consist on best suitable environment for them.

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُم الْأَرْضَ ذُلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا مِن رِّزْقِهِ وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ 23

“It is He Who has Made the earth manageable For you, so traverse Ye through its tracts And enjoy of the Sustenance Which He furnishes : but Unto Him is the Resurrection.”

Quran also declared this earth as the gift for humans and great blessing; its environment is divinely prepared.

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهَادًا ۝ وَالْجِبَالَ أَوْتَادًا 24

“Have We not made The earth as a wide Expanse, And the mountains as pegs ?”

Quran strongly urges that it is the responsibility of humans to reclaim. So, there are many verses in Quran with indicates that how humanity go through the phenomena of improving the earth, because it is the foremost important duty of humans.

وَإِلَىٰ ثَمُودَ أَخَاهُمْ صَالِحًا قَالَ يَا قَوْمِ اعْبُدُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُمْ مِنِّ إِلَهٍ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوا لَهُ
ثُمَّ تَوْبُوا إِلَيْهِ إِنَّ رَبِّي قَرِيبٌ مُّجِيبٌ 25

“To the Thamūd People (We sent) Ṣāliḥ, one Of their own brethren. He said: O my People ! Worship God : ye have No other god but Him. It is He Who hath produced you From the earth and settled you Therein : then ask forgiveness Of Him, and turn to Him (In repentance) : for my Lord Is (always) near, ready To answer.”

End of Time and the Fate of Human Civilization

Quran does not stop from the long-term planning but this fact is also mentioned by Quran there is a specific time when all humanity will be abolished and after that the day of judgement will come. Quran describe it as the ultimate destiny of humanity.

يَوْمَ تُبَدَّلُ الْأَرْضُ غَيْرَ الْأَرْضِ وَالسَّمَاوَاتُ ۖ وَبَرَزُوا لِلَّهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ 26

“One day the Earth will be Changed to a different Earth, And so will be the Heavens, And (men) will be marshalled Forth, before God, the One, The Irresistible ;”

Quran also states the fixed time for the destruction of earth, so, any try or any solution which is describe by scientists will be on temporary bases.

يَسْأَلُونَكَ عَنِ السَّاعَةِ أَيَّانَ مُرْسَاهَا قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ رَبِّي لَا يُجَلِّيهَا لِوَقْتِهَا إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ ثَقُلَتْ فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ ۚ لَا تَأْتِيكُمْ إِلَّا بَغْتَةً ۚ يَسْأَلُونَكَ كَأَنَّكَ خَافِيٌۢ بِهَا ۚ قُلْ إِنَّمَا عِلْمُهَا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَ النَّاسِ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ 27

“They ask thee about the (final) hour when will be its appointed time? Say: The knowledge thereof is with my Lord (alone): none but He can reveal as to when it will occur. Heavy were its burden through the heavens and the earth. Only all of a sudden will it come to you. They ask thee as if thou wert eager in search thereof: Say: “The knowledge thereof is with God (alone) but most men know not.”

Although Quran also gives permission for that type of migration for the sake of humanity and its survival. But Quran also describe that the final authority is only belong to Allah and this all will be finished, humanity could not escape from its fate.

Conclusion

Stephen Hawking’s vision for humanity’s future beyond Earth is grounded in his recognition of the existential risks that threaten life on this planet. His call for space colonization reflects a profound concern for the continuity of human civilization through scientific and technological progress. The Qur’an, while presenting a theocentric worldview, also encourages exploration, knowledge, and the use of intellect as divine gifts. It acknowledges migration as a means of survival but reminds humanity that Earth was created as the primary and most suitable dwelling for humankind.

From a comparative perspective, both frameworks agree on human responsibility—whether as rational beings in Hawking’s view or as divinely appointed Khalifah in the Quranic

view—to preserve life and ensure the well-being of future generations. The Qur'an ultimately asserts that while human migration beyond Earth may be possible, it remains within the bounds of divine will and temporal limitation. Thus, the most ethical and rational path lies in harmonizing technological advancement with moral accountability, preserving Earth while exploring the cosmos under divine guidance.

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- ⁵ Hawking. *Brief Answers to the Big Questions*. 159
- ⁶ Hawking. *Brief Answers to the Big Questions*. 158
- ⁷ Hawking. *Brief Answers to the Big Questions*. 205
- ⁸ Hawking. *Brief Answers to the Big Questions*. 205
- ⁹ Hawking. *Brief Answers to the Big Questions*. 180
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- ¹² *Al-Qur'an, An-Nahl* 16:89
- ¹³ *Al-Qur'an, Az Zukhruf* 43:10
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- ¹⁵ *Al-Qur'an, Hud*, 11:61
- ¹⁶ *Al-Qur'an, Kahf*, 18:7
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- ¹⁹ *Al-Qur'an, An Nahl* 16:41
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- ²² *Al-Qur'an, Al Maida* 5:2
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- ²⁵ *Al-Qur'an, Hud*, 11:61
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²⁷ *Al-Qur'an, Al Araf* 7:187