

Environmental Morals In Islam Philosophical, Ethical, and Legal-Formal Exploration

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Introduction

If morality is defined as the values and norms preserved by individuals or groups in regulating behavior,¹ then many verses of the Qur'an and the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) containing moral values and respect of environment that have not been exposed to the surface, hence have not been implemented into practice by many Muslims. This is probably because the main concern in the practice of Islamic law is more related to religious law and *mu'amalah*, whereas moral values and laws concerning environment are not considered integrated within the Islamic teachings. In other words, the environmental issues are probably viewed to be purely worldly affairs (profane) and therefore do not entail any divine (sacred) dimension.

The subject is indeed not of the trivial as it involves issues of legal awareness, or even a legal conviction. It is not likely to change immediately, for it will take time to raise awareness and socialization. Even before the stage of socialization, a critical study and then a formulation of a

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¹The terms moral and ethics often tend to be leveled, whereas there is a slight difference in its technical application. The term moral or morality is employed on attitudes being assessed, while the term ethics is employed for studies on existing value system. (HeruSantosa, *LandasanEtisbagiPerkembanganTeknologi*, Tiara WacanaYogya, Yogyakarta, 2000, p. 9.

discourse are essentially required in order that it can be absorbed, criticized and developed by all members of the community, especially by that of the Muslim's. The first step, that is depth assessment, has been carried out by some scholars, and recently it is as well accomplished in a dissertation entitled *Islamic Legal Perspective on the Environment*.²This paper was prepared as a further development, a first stage, of the gigantic idea contained in the dissertation, precisely the implementation of Islamic law at all stages of environmental management. Only with Islamic moral guidelines as well as practice of Islamic law on the subject of environment can environmental damages be well treated.

This paper will highlight the aspects of morality and Islamic law relating to environmental issues. It is expected that this discussion will bring to light Islamic moral values to be referred to in terms of environmental management. Presentation of the current discussion comprises three sections: introduction, environmental moral principles, and concluding remarks.

Environmental Moral Principles

Previous studies have discovered eight moral-ethical principles which can be employed as value reference in environmental management. These principles are on the whole referred to as environmental morality.³ In a further study, another principle was discovered to make nine environmental moral principles as we are referring to in this discussion.

First of all is the principle of ownership, viewing that the entire universe belongs to God and is maintained as His creation. This principle is a manifestation of Muslim's

²See A. Qadir Gassing, *Perspektif Hukum Islam tentang Lingkungan Hidup*, (Dissertation), Graduate Studies Program of IAIN Syarif Hidayatullah, Jakarta, 2001.

³*Ibid.*, p.

tawhid(oneness of God) so that denial of this principle implies *kufr*(disbelief). This principle is also an inherent part of the Islamic creed sentence or the *Syabadab*, as the *Syabadab* is compared by the Qur'an to a tree with firm roots and its branches are soaring into the sky, yielding a bounty of delightful fruits all the time (QS Ibrahim, 14:24-25).

Recognition of the oneness of God, as revealed in the above verse, brings about a lot of implications, such as believing that every existence was created by God and belongs to Him. God's ownership of the whole universe is confirmed in the verse: "To God belongs all That is in the heaven And on earth" (QS al-Baqarah, 2 : 284).⁴

The word *li-Allah* (الله), which the above verse begins with is commonly translated as 'His belonging'. To many s of Qur'anic commentary the word is not only understood in the sense of 'belonging to Him', but also in the meaning of 'His creation' as well as 'His control and management'.⁵ Indeed, the entire universe is God's creation, His belonging, and moreover He is the Controller and the Manager, thus all beings submit to Him willingly or unwillingly. In view of that, "do they seek religions other than the religion of Allah, whereas only to Him all beings in heavens and on earth surrender, either by love or forced and only to God they are returned" (QS Ali ' Imran, 3:83).⁶

On the other hand, it should also be noted that the placement of the word *li-Allah* at the beginning of the verse implies a specialization so that the ownership, creation, and management of the universe is by God alone, not by other than Him. When there is besides Him who is claimed to possess or to manage, that must be on His blessing or permission, and

⁴ See also Q.S. al-Syura, 42 : 49

⁵ M. Quraish Shihab, Tafsir al-Mishbah, ...*op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 572.

⁶ See also Q.S. al-Ra'd, 13 : 15

therefore only temporarily applied. At a certain point of time what he own or manage will leave or he will leave them. This is the first moral-ethical principles.

Secondly is the principle of designation, viewing that the creation of the whole universe is intended for human nature. This principle is based on the words of God: "He is Allah, who created for you all that is on earth" (QS al-Baqarah, 229). How can you disbelieve, when Allah does not just turn you on in the world, but also prepare the means of life therein. He created for you everything on earth, so that your entire necessity for survival and comfort provided, and it is a proof of His Omnipotence.

According to Quraish Shihab this verse is identified by many scholars to be indicating that basically everything provided on earth is for human beings to utilize, except when there is certain restriction revealed through the Holy Book.⁷

This verse is supported by several other verses which declare that water, earth, plants, and other natural elements are all created for the benefit of humans and other living things. His words: "Then let man look at his Food,(And how We provide it):For that We pour forth water in abundance,and We split the earth in fragments, and produce therein corn, and grapes and nutritious plants, and olives and dates, and enclosed gardens, dense with lofty trees, and Fruits and Fodder,—For use and convenience to you and your cattle." (QS Abasa, 80:24-32). Another verse reveals, "And the earth after that He spread. It emits its spring thereof and (grow) vegetation. And the mountains He firmly anchored (all of it) for your pleasure and for your cattle "(QS al - Naziat, 79:30-33.⁸

⁷M. QuraishShihab, *op.cit.*, p. 136.

⁸See also Q.S. Al-Furqan, 25 : 47-50; and al-Sajadah, 32 : 27

These verses, in addition to many other, indicate that the universe and its content, in the forms of fauna and flora, as well as in the form of water, mountains, gardens and so forth, are all created for the necessities and enjoyment of humans and other living beings.

On the the third place is the principle of natural subjugation, viewing that the entire universe is subjugated to men. This principle is based on the verse which means: "Allah is He Who has created the heavens and the earth and sends down water from the sky, and then he put out with rain water, various fruits become sustenance for you, and He has subjected to you that the ark sailing in the sea with His will, and He has subjected (also) for you rivers. And He has subjected (it) to you the sun and the moon are continuously circulated (in its orbit), and has subjected to you the night and day." (QS Ibrahim, 14:32-33).

These are the verses that underlie the necessity for human beings to live in harmony with their environment. The term conquest of nature does not apply in Islam, as it can mislead humans to arbitrary attitudes and environmental exploitation without consideration of the principle of the necessary requirements. The term employed by the Qur'an is "God subjecting human the nature to be managed." This management is accompanied by a notice not to damage.

In many verses God uses the term *sakbkhara* (to overcome or to make easy) in signifying that the universe and everything in it to be used by human beings. God subjected the sun and the moon, controls the fauna and the flora, subdues the earth, water, wind, and other natural elements of the environment. God repeatedly conveys that the elements of the environment or natural resources can be utilized by humans after being subdued (by God). Thus God intends to affirm that human beings would not be able to utilize the natural resources

except after being subdued by God. In this respect God's intervention in the subjection of the universe is made clear.

Thus, humans' relationship with the natural environment is not a subordination, as in the Islamic perspective it is not the human beings who conquer the nature, but God Himself. The term God employs to describe the relationship between man and the nature is *ista'mara*,⁹ basically means 'to prosper'. In connection with the earth or the environment, this word can be interpreted as to inhabit and to manage the natural environment under their control. Referring to the history of some of the Prophets, the management of the earth or the environment is manifested in the form of farming, animal husbandry, mountain sculpting for shelters, and other forms of environmental management. Briefly put, the environment should be appropriately managed to meet the needs of humans' everyday life.

⁹Some Muslim writers, such as Iris Safwat, mentions that men's relationship with their environment is described in the al-Qur'an using the terms *sakhkhara*, which literal meaning is to take control of or to utilize thoughtfully (Iris Shafwat, "Al-Islam wa al-Muhafazhatu 'ala al-Bi'ah" in *Al-Islam al-Yawm*, Majalah ISESCO, No. 11 year 1994, pp. 87-96). Such sort of statement should be criticized in order not get trapped in the line of thought of the Old Testament, wherein it is mentioned "subdue the earth and have dominion ... (Gen. 1:28). (see Martin Harun, "Pengantar Perbandingan" in Mujiyono Abdillah, *Agama Ramah Lingkungan, Perspektif al-Qur'an*, Paramadina, Jakarta, 2001, pp. xi-xliv). For in Islam, humans' relationship with nature is not in a scheme of conquest. In the Qur'an, especially in terms of managing the earth or the environment, the term God employs is *ista'mara*, not *sakhkhara*. *Ista'mara* bears the meaning of prosperity, in the sense of managing the earth for humans' prosperity, whereas While *sakhkhara* means take control of all elements of earth and the earth itself as well as the entire universe to help facilitate humans to have benefit. Thus the prominent aspect in this sense is the intervention of God in the subjection of nature. Subsequently, the term *sakhkhara* is more fitting to describing the relationship between humans and God in the subjection of the natural environment.

In this regard, M. QuraishShihab states that from the very beginning the Qur'an has introduced the term *sakhabhara* with the center meaning of "capability of grabbing - easily and as much as necessary- everything that can be utilized from the universe through a technical expertise."¹⁰When the Qur'an chooses the word *sakhabhara*, which literally means subjecting or degrading, the intention is that the universe with all the benefits derived from it should submit to human beings and its position should be placed under that of humans'. Are not human beings created by God as the caliph of the universe?It is not normal for a caliph to be submissive and humble himself to something God has subdued for him. If a caliph submits to or is subdued by the nature, the submission is not in line with the intention of Allah the Most High.¹¹ It should be noticed, however, that in addition to humans' position as the caliph, they are as wellservants of God (*'abd Allah*) and should therefore be obedience to Him. This is because, as Hossein Nasr asserts, "there is no creature on earth more dangerous than a caliph of Allah who no longer consider himself as *abd-Allah*, as in such circumstance he would not see himself owingallegiance to something beyond his being."¹² In short, in their position as caliph human beings are obliged to manage the nature to meet their needs. To some extent this circumstance would seem to be exploitative. However, since at the same time men are also servant of God and should be obedient as well as submissive to His rules, such as paying respect to the existing *sunnatullah* on His creation, the approach would be more appreciative of the nature.

¹⁰M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan al-Qur'an*, Mizan, Bandung, 1996, p.445.

¹¹*Ibid.*; Humans should not submit and then be subject to the worship of nature and then, for it is reckoned as *shirk*.

¹²Seyyed Hussein Nasr, "Islam and the Environmental Crisis" dalam *The Islamic Quarterly*, Vol. XXXIV (1990), No. 4, pp. 217-234.

The fourth is the principle of *istikhlaf*, viewing that men are entrusted a mandate to take care of the earth (environment). This principle is based on the words of God: "Believe in Allah and His apostle, and spend (in charity) out of the (substance) whereof He has made you heirs." (QS al - Hadd, 57:7).¹³

Istikhlaf implies the meaning that the absolute possessor of all things is Allah, and man are just entrusted the mandate to take care of and to manage it. That is why the principle of *istikhlaf* should be read in conjunction with the provision of the mandate by God to men (QS al-Ahzab, 33:72), and therefore it also should be accomplished with the sense of responsibility (QS al-Takatsur, 102:8).

In connection with this mandate and responsibilities, Aisha BintuSyati, when interpreting Q.S. al-Ahzab, 33:72, maintains that a mandate is a 'test' accompanying *taklif* (obligation assigned by God), a grant for freedom of action, and a responsibility to make choices.¹⁴ She furthermore argues that the nature and its contents, except humans, are moving in accordance with the laws of nature. It is subject to and complies with the requirements of the laws of nature (*sunnatullah*) without having to take responsibility for any actions. Should the sky hit the earth with its thunder and stopped pouring down water from its cloud; and should earth shook, then each life ended and villages destroyed; and should the mountains crumbled and scattered, and the fragments fell on a peaceful land; in these circumstances heavens, earth, and the mountains will not be prosecuted for their actions. Only humans are held responsible for their actions, and to be put on trial to receive in return reward and punishment.¹⁵ While Sheikh

¹³Cf. Q.S. al-Nur, 24 : 55.

¹⁴AisyahBintuSyati, *ManusiadalamPerspektif al-Qur'an*, PustakaFirdaus, Jakarta, 1999, p. 52.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 52-53.

Muhammad Abduh, in interpreting Q.S. al-Takatsur, 102:8 "Then you certainly will be questioned concerning the enjoyment," states that the worldly pleasures you are showing off to pride yourself on, will surely be held accountable from you someday: What have you accomplished with them? Have you fulfilled the rights of God in them? Did you preserve the boundaries Allah has set for you in enjoying them? If it turns out that such rights are not fulfilled and the restriction guidelines are not followed, then the enjoyment will undoubtedly bring about painful agony in the life hereafter.¹⁶

From the above description it can be formulated that God's granting authority (*istikhlaf*) to human to control and manage the nature should be perceived as a mandate of trust which must be carried out in accordance with the will of the mandate Giver, as human will be held responsible of it before God.

Humans' willingness to bear the mandate in such perspective is a logical consequence of their position in the function of God's vicegerent on earth as defined by religion. In a religious perspective humans are creatures with competence and rational capability to perform duties and to be held responsible of them.

Fifth, as caliph, human's task is to deliver the natural environment to achieve the purpose of its creation. Caliphate is the task God assigned for men to guide, nurture, and deliver all of God's creatures to achieve the objective of their creation.¹⁷ In supporting this principle, M. Quraish Shihab illustrates that human is surrounded by many creations of God. Take a flower, then ask what was it created for? The answer is, among others,

¹⁶Syekh Muhammad Abduh, *Tafsir Juz 'Amma*, Mizan, Bandung, 1998, p. 306.

¹⁷Edy A. Effendi (Ed.), *Sahur Bersama M. Quraish Shihab*, Mizan-Paramadina-RCTI, Bandung, 1997, p. 139.

for enjoyment of its color and structure. In this light, human as the Caliph is in charge of preserving the flower as long as possibly in order to bloom so that people can carry on enjoying it. In addition, flowers were also created for bees to obtain honey thus it should be maintained in order that the bees' right of obtaining food from it is fulfilled. Consequently, in the ethics of caliphate it is none of decent attitudes to collect flowers before they bloom.¹⁸

Hence God's creatures, comprising natural resources and environmental elements, are all created with certain rights. They are not meaningless or without purpose. This is inferred from God's revelation which means: "Men who celebrate the praises of Allah, 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."(QS Ali Imran, 3:191).¹⁹

And they reflect on the creation, that is, the occurrence and system of heaven and earth, and upon it pronounce in conclusion: Our Lord, You have not created the universe and everything in it in vain, without right destination.²⁰ Thus the universe and its entire content is created by God not without purpose, but with a clear theological intention. As caliph, humans are responsible for delivering the universe, as well as its entire content, to achieve the purpose of its creation. To this regard, there are also some Prophetic traditions which can be referred to:²¹

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 139-140.

¹⁹ See also : Q.S.-----

²⁰ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Mishbah : Pesan, Kesan dan Keserasian al-Qur'an*, Vol 2, Lentera Hati, Jakarta, 2000, p. 292.

²¹ Muhammad bin Isma'il al-Bukhari (194 H-256 H), *Shahih al-Bukhari*, Dar Ibn Katsir al-Yamamah, Bairut, 1987/1407, II, p. 541 (to be

"Ibn 'Umar narrated that the Prophet Muhammad forbade selling fruits before they grow into their real state. The Prophet forbade both the selling and the buying." (related by Bukhari and Muslim). And in another narration: "... and was he when asked about (the meaning of) 'the real state' he replied: Until its danger disappear."

In different Hadith the Prophet said:²² "Anas bin Malik narrated that the Prophet forbade selling fruits until they were perfect. (Some people asked: 'What are the signs of their perfectness?') Hereplied: 'they turn red'" (agreed upon, wording by Bukhari) .

In another Hadith the Prophet SAW said:²³ "It was narrated from Anas that the Prophet (peace be upon him) prohibits selling grapes after they turn black and prohibits selling grains after they turn hard" (Related by Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud).

The above Hadith describe the Prophet's prohibition to sell grains or fruits which are not ripe, or, employing the terms in the framework of this paper, 'which have not reached the objective of their creation'. Of course the purpose of creation intended in this context is not restricted to those mentioned in the above verses and Hadith, but more than that, perhaps there are still a lot more functions the natural resources bear which have not been discovered yet. In brief, one should believe that all natural resources or creatures are created by God, certainly

referred to as *Shahih al-Bukhari*); Muslim bin al-Hajjaj Abu al-Husain al-Qusyaeri al-Naesaburi (206 H – 261 H), *Shahih Muslim*, Dar Ihya' al-Turats al-'Arabi, Beirut, n.d., vol. III, p. 1165 (to be referred to as *Shahih Muslim*).

²²*Shahih al-Bukhari*, vol. II, p. 542.

²³Muhammad bin 'asa al-Tirmidzi al-Salami (209 H – 279 H), *Sunan al-Tirmidzi*, Dar Ihya' al-Turats al-'Arabi, Beirut, n. d., vol III, 530 (will be referred to as *Sunan al-Tirmidzi*); Sulaeman bin al-Asy'ats Ab-Dawud al-Sijistani (202 H – 275 H), *Sunan Abi Dawud*, Dar al-Fikr, n.p., n.d., vol III, p. 253 (referred to later as *Sunan Abi Dawud*).

not in vain, certainly with functions, and certainly with benefits. These functions and benefits might not be actual at this point of time, but their potential benefits and functions are undeniable.

The sixth is the principle of prohibition of being wasteful, viewing that wasteful attitudes should be prevented even if it is of good matters. This principle is based on the Qur'anic verse which means: "And render to the kindred their due rights, as (also) to those in want, and to the wayfarer: But squander not (your wealth) in the manner of a spendthrift. Verily spendthrifts are brothers of the Evil Ones; and the Evil One is to his Lord (himself) ungrateful"(QS al-Isra' 17:26-27) In addition to the traditions of the Prophet (peace be upon him) describing that: "Making ablution takes maximum three times washing for each stage, even though you take it in the flowing stream."²⁴ The Hadith reads:²⁵ "From Abu Na'amah and Qayis bin Abayah, that Abdullah bin Mughaffal narrated that ... I heard the Messenger of Allah said: Verily among the people there will be extravagant individuals in purification and prayer "(Related by Abu Daud).

Included in this context is wasteful use of water in making ablution, even if it is taken on seashore or in a major river, as in the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad to Sa'ad which is related by Ahmad and Ibn Majah through Abdullah bin Amr.²⁶

In this regard some Hadith also explain about the minimum quantity of water used for purification and toiletries. Among them is the Prophet's tradition: "From Aisyah, she narrated that the Prophet uses one *sha'* (bushel) for bathe and one mud for ablution"²⁷ (Related by Abu Daud).

²⁴M. Quraish Shihab, *Lentera ...*, *op.cit.*, p. 90.

²⁵*Sunan Abi Dawud*, vol. I, p. 24.

²⁶*Aunul Ma'bud*, vol I, p. 170.

²⁷One mud = 1,032 litres or 815,39 gram (according to Hanafiah); and 0,687 litres or 543 gram according to other schools (*Ibid.*, p. 417).

These traditions show that in the teachings of Islam efficient use of water is highly recommended, including in worship related purposes.

In addition to the ablution and regular baths as noted above, the *junub* (a state of major ritual impurity) bath, for example, is described in a Hadith which narrates as follows:²⁸ "Aisyah narrates that the Prophet usually takes the *junub* bath with one *faraq*²⁹ of water." (related by Muslim and Abu Dawud).

These Hadith do not only suggest using water efficiently, but also more specifically indicate certain minimum quantities needed for an appropriate use. This further attests that in upholding restriction on wastefulness on the use of natural resources - in this case is of water - the Islamic law do not just raise a verbal saying, but directly put the principle into practice in real life, as performed and exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him).

When a person is obtaining excessively, taking or using too much exceeding his or her portion, other partakers are consequently losing their share. The person then persecute him or herself for consuming too much, and at the same time the person also persecute the natural resource (water) for preventing it from working in accordance with the purpose of its creation, and persecute others for taking their rights. This principle is closely associated with extravagance and greed of modern man who develop uncontrolled consumptive patterns, which in turn led to environmental crisis.

The seventh is the principle of responsibility upon environmental harm, viewing that environmental damage is

²⁸*Shahih Muslim*, vol I, p. 255; *Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol I, p. 62.

²⁹one *faraq* = 10,086 litres according to Hanafiah, and 8,244 litres according to other schools (See *Mu'jam al-Lughah al-Fuqaha'*, p. 344).

caused by human actions, and therefore humans must be held responsible for their deeds in this world and in the hereafter.

This principle is based on Q.S. al- Rum, 30:41: "Mischief has appeared on land and sea because of (the meed) that the hands of men have earned, that (God) may give them a taste of some of their deeds: in order that they may turn back (from Evil)"

According to al-Syaukani, the term *al-fasad* means damage. The damage intended here is in general nature, either because of human activity such as immoral deeds to God, family separation, abuse and murder among human beings, or in the form of natural disasters such as drought, reduced crops, earthquakes, floods, and so forth.³⁰ On the other hand, *kasab* means all humans' endeavor with intention and sincerity to achieve results.³¹

The aforementioned verses indicate that the damage occurring on earth, either in the form of losses due to human actions or natural disasters that befell humans, is owing to human's own behavior. Calamities that befall human beings are intrinsically the *natijah* (outcome) of their own actions. This is consistently corresponding with the law of causality. As humans destroy their own environment, various hardships and calamities take place in their lives.

Indeed the hardships and calamities befalling them is in fact a reminder for people to be conscious of and re-introspect their way of life. Accordingly they should comply with the religious rules as well as the regulations issued by the state government.³²

³⁰Al-Syaukani, *op.cit.*, vol. IV, p. 228.

³¹Al-Raghib al-Isfahani, *op.cit.*, p. 430.

³²Cf. Abdul Muin Salim, "Metode Dakwah untuk Menanggulangi Lahan Kritis : Sebuah Telaah Qur'ani" (Research Report) in *Perumusan Model Dakwah dalam Pelaksanaan Penanggulangan Lahan Kritis di Sulawesi Selatan*, Collaboration of BAPPEDA Level I

So, as the consequences of causing damage to their environment, human beings have totake responsibility. In this worldly life, this responsibility take the forms of: a) be mindful and do not repeat their actions of harming the environment, as suggested in the Qur’anicverses; b) to restore the environment that has been ruined to revitalize its original function in accordance with the purpose of its creation; and c) to pay compensation when the damage bring about loses on the part of the state and the society.As for the responsibility in the afterlife, a sanction of sinful deeds and hellfirepunishment will apply. Thus a person conducting environmentaldestruction shouldconfront bothnational and religious sanctions.

Eighth, itis the principle of *al-adluwa al-ibsan*,whichperceives that justice and charity also apply to the natural environment. In QS al-Nahl, 16:90 The Lord reveals:"God commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all shameful deeds, and injustice and rebellion: He instructs you, that ye may receive admonition."

Performing justice and charity as commanded in the above verse has been commonly understood to be intended for humans. From various traditions and practices implemented by the Prophet, however, it is reflected that performing justice and charity is not just limited upon human beings. They should as well apply upon other creatures comprising animals, plants, and even non-living objects.³³

The term *adil*(fairness)can be interpreted as giving to as much as one is taking from the environment, whereas the term *ibsan* can be interpreted as giving more than one is taking from

South Sulawesi withCenter for Research and Community Outreachof IAIN Alauddin Ujung Pandang, 1989/1990, p. 83.

³³See A. Qadir Gassing, *op.cit.*,especially chapter III C and IV B.

the environment. When a forest concession holder cut down 100 trees, then plant 100 trees in return, he has performed justice to the natural environment. But he is demanded not only to conduct *adil* but also to perform *ihsan*. In this case planting 100 trees, which equals the amount he has taken, is not sufficient. He had to plant 150 trees, much more than that he had cut down. Of course the matter does not end with the activities on farming, as he also needs to prepare all facilities of maintenance and protection so that the trees planted can actually grow as big as those he had cut down.

The final principle, it is the law of natural harmony. This principle perceives that the basic doctrine of monotheism gives birth to other teachings or values. The ideology viewing that humans are originated from a single source leads to Humanitarianism, promoting that people should be compassionate not only to fellow human but also to animals, plants, and non-living objects, as a manifestation of his love upon the whole nature of God's creation.³⁴ The primary content in this viewpoint is the perception of the unity of being, acknowledging the principle of oneness of beings in this universe.

This principle of natural harmony implies appreciation of all creatures (biotic and non-biotic), put them in a respectable position (*muhtaram*), and treat them in accordance with God's will. This principle is based on the words of God: "And the animals that are on the earth and the birds that fly with wings are no other than communities (*umma*) like you" (QS al-An'am, 6:38).

In this verse animals and birds are classified by God as *umma* like in the case of human beings. This situation is supported by a Hadith in which the Prophet Muhammad

³⁴Harun Nasution, *Islam Rasional Gagasan dan Pemikiran*, Mizan, Bandung, 1995, pp. 211-212.

mentions animals, such as ants and dogs, as among the *ummah*. The Prophet's hadith:³⁵ Abu Huraerah narrates that the Prophet said; Verily there was once an ant bit one of the Prophets. The Prophet then had the whole anthill burned. Upon this Allah sent down a revelation to him: "Is it only because an ant bites that you destroyed an *ummah* (a community) who always glorify God?" (Related by Muslim).

This Hadith indicates that ants are also counted as a community that always glorifies (God), and hence their destruction is forbidden. As for the dog, one of the Prophet Muhammad's Hadith mentions:³⁶ Abdullah ibn Mughaffal narrates that the Prophet Muhammad once said: "If dogs were not among the *ummahs* (of God), I would surely order to kill them" (Related by Tirmidhi).

From the elaboration above it is clear that the Qur'an and Hadith do not restrict the employment of the term *ummah* upon human kind alone. Commenting on the above verses and Hadith, Quraish Shihab asserts that any equation binding that unites of human beings or animals, such as type, ethnicity, nation, ideology, religion, and so forth, construct an *ummah*.³⁷

In its applicative form, the principle of natural harmony is reflected in the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad. With regards to compassion on animals, the Prophet explains in a Hadith that a woman who caged a cat and did not feed it would go to Hell in the Hereafter. On the contrary, a sinner who gave drink to a dog dying of thirst, was forgiven by God. The Prophet SAW said:³⁸ Abdullah (Ibn ' Umar) narrated that the Prophet had told that a woman was tortured for a cat that she kept in captive to its death. She went to hell because she did not

³⁵ *Shahih Muslim*, vol. IV, p., 1759.

³⁶ *Sunan al-Tirmidzi*, vol IV, p.. 78.

³⁷ M. Quraish Shihab, *Wawasan al-Qur'an*, Mizan, Bandung, 1996, pp. 326-327.

³⁸ *Shahih Muslim*, vol. IV, p. 1760.

give it food and drink, and did not let it hunt insects on earth" (Related by Muslim).

On the subject of the dog, the Prophet SAW said:³⁹"Abu Huraerah narrated that indeed the Prophet had said that a man was walking on the street and felt thirsty. He found a well and went down to have some water and then climbed out. Once outside, suddenly there was a dog lowering its tongue and licking soils out of thirst. Then the man said, verily this dog has been so thirsty as I was. So he went down into the well again filled up his shoe with water, held it with his mouth, climbed up until he reached the top, and gave the dog a drink. God was so grateful to him and forgave his sins. They asked, O Messenger of Allah, will we obtain rewards for helping animals? The Prophet replied, in helping each of animate life there are always rewards" (Related by Bukhari and Muslim). So, helping animals will be repaid with God's rewards. To give drink to a thirsty dog is considered as an act of mercy, and therefore God forgives the person conducting it.

As for the plants, the Prophet forbade cutting down trees which are about to bear fruit. To the troops preparing to go to the battle field the Prophet ordered not to damage palm trees, not to unplug trees, and not to destroy houses.⁴⁰ It was narrated that Abu Bakr, upon his assignment to be the caliph, sent troops to Sham with an order that the troops in conducting battle (where possible) never cut or chop down trees in the battle area.⁴¹

³⁹*Shahih al-Bukhari*³, vol. II, p. 833; *Shahih Muslim*, vol IV, p. 1761.

⁴⁰Harun Nasution, *loc.cit.*

⁴¹Ahmad bin al-Husain bin 'Al³ bin Musa Abu Bakr al-Baehaqi (384 H – 458 H), *Sunan al-Baehaqi al-Kubra*, Maktabah Dar al-Baz, Makkah al-Mukarramah, 1994/1414, vol IX, p. 89. (will be referred to as *Sunan al-Baehaqi*).

The above depiction clearly pictures the message of Islam that even in a state of war cutting down or clearing trees, especially those which are bearing fruits, should be avoided where possible as they are highly beneficial to humans and other creatures.⁴² Within this framework, the fruits that have not reached maturity are recommended not to be picked,⁴³ as it would mean taking out the chance of creatures to reach the purpose of their creation.⁴⁴

Thus it is clear that maintaining and building environment on the surface of this earth is of essentially substantive teachings of Islam. This teaching springs from the concept of monotheism, which implies that humans, animals, plants, and other inanimate objects are all fellow creatures before God. In this regard, every single being has a respectable position and hence should be cherished, loved, and treated in accordance with the rules of God. This is the core meaning of the natural harmony principle.

Conclusion

To go over the main points of the above exploration, there are nine environmental moral principles that can serve as reference value in the management of the environment, currently and for the future time. The nine principles are : (1) the principle of natural ownership; (2) the principle of designation; (3) the principle of natural subjugation; (4) the

⁴²M.Syuhudi Ismail, "Berbagai Petunjuk Hadis Nabi Muhammad tentang Upaya Menghindari atau Mengatasi Terjadinya Lahan Kritis" (Research Report) in *Perumusan Model Dakwah dalam Pelaksanaan Penanggulangan Lahan Kritis di Sulawesi Selatan*, Collaboration of BAPPEDA Level I South Sulawesi with Center for Research and Community Outreach of IAIN Alauddin Ujung Pandang, 1989/1990, p. 51-52.

⁴³Alwi Shihab, *Islam Inklusif*, Mizan, Bandung, 1997, p. 158.

⁴⁴M.Quraish Shihab, *Membumikan al-Qur'an, Fungsi dan Peran Wahyu dalam Kehidupan Masyarakat*, Mizan, Bandung, 1992, p. 296.

principle of *istikhlaf*, responsibility for the management; (5) the principle of caliphate task; (6) the principle of prohibiting wastefulness; (7) the principle of human responsibility upon environmental damage; (8) the principle of *al-'adlu wa al-bisan*; and (9) the principle of natural harmony. *Wa Allahu a'lam bi al-shawab*.

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