

EARTH IN THE HOLY QUR'AN: HOW TO PROTECT AND MAINTAIN IT? (Bumi dalam Al-Quran: Perlindungan dan Penjagaan?)

NURDENG DEURASEH

ABSTRAK

Dalam usaha mengembalikan umat Islam kepada kegemilangan tamadun Islam bersumberkan al-Qur'an dan Sunnah, Islam Hadhari telah diperkenalkan oleh Mantan Perdana Menteri Malaysia, Tun Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi pada tahun 2004 berdasarkan kepada sepuluh prinsip Islam Hadhari. Tujuan artikel ini ialah untuk membincang dan mentafsir secara ilmiah salah satu dari prinsip Islam Hadhari iaitu pemuliharaan alam semula jadi. Ia adalah satu perbincangan ilmiah perspektif al-Qur'an serta peranannya dalam mewujudkan persekitaran yang sihat melalui perlindungan dan pemuliharaan alam semula jadi terutamanya bumi. Ayat-ayat al-Qur'an yang berkaitan disertakan dan ditafsirkan secara ilmiah. Tanah dianggap sebagai unsur penting bagi bumi kerana berperanan mewujudkan persekitaran yang sihat. Dalam hal ini, prinsip Islam Hadhari iaitu pemuliharaan alam semula jadi adalah penting dalam usaha menjaga kualiti alam sekitar. Manusia bukan hanya berperanan membantu dan memberi makan dan minum kepada orang miskin, tetapi juga menjauhi daripada perbuatan yang boleh membawa kepada pencemaran alam sekitar. Dengan kata lain, kewajipan seseorang bukan hanya berbuat baik kepada sesama manusia, tetapi juga kepada alam semula jadi termasuk tanah, udara, air, tanaman, pokok-pokok serta haiwan. Tanah memiliki ciri-ciri signifikan iaitu dapat memberi manfaat berterusan kepada manusia jika digunakan secara bijak.

Kata Kunci: Bumi, gunung, mizan dan takdir, alam semula jadi, al-Qur'an

ABSTRACT

In order to bring the ummah back to fundamental of Islam, as prescribed in the Qur'an and the Sunnah that form the foundation of Islamic civilization,

Islam Hadhari was introduced by the former Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Abdullah bin Haji Ahmad Badawi in 2004 based on ten principles of Islam Hadhari. The objective of this paper is to discuss and interpret one of the principle of Islam Hadhari namely The Safeguarding the environment in the light of the Holy Qur'an as well as its role in making a healthy environment by protecting and maintaining the land and soil (earth). In order to fulfill its objective, the relevant verses of the holy Quran will be highlighted with academic interpretations. It is found that the land and soil are considered as essential thing for making a healthy environment. In this regard, the principle of Islam Hadhari namely Safeguarding the environment plays an important role in preservation of the quality of a precious environment. Accordingly, human being was entrusted with a responsibility not to behave like an unlimited owner, but to live by Divine teachings, with respect to the preservation of ecological balance.

Keywords: Earth, mountain, balance and measure (al-Mizan and al-Taqdir), environment, al-Qur'an

INTRODUCTION

The natural environment and its component i.e., earth, air, water, plants, The natural environment and its component i.e., earth, air, water, plants, animals, etc., are considered as essential things for the preservation of health on this earth. For this reason, according to the Qur'an, the religious duties of man are not only to feed the poor but also to avoid polluting the environment. In other words, what is appreciable in the eyes of God is not only to be kind to human beings, but also to soil, air, water, plant, trees and animals, etc. These resources have a common characteristic, namely: they may be of continuous benefit to mankind if used wisely. In the following section, we will discuss the protection and maintaining of land and soil in the light of the Holy Qur'an.

THE TERM 'ARD (EARTH) IN THE HOLY QUR'AN AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

One of the most important basic elements necessary for the bestowal of water, food grains and all other basic requirements for the survival of human beings, as well as other creatures, is the earth ('ard). In Arabic dictionaries, the word 'ard (earth) is a noun which means the land and soil. This word is referred to many times both in the Qur'an and in the traditions of Muhammad s.a.w. In the Qur'an, the term 'ard is mentioned several times (al-Baqi 1994).

قَالَ مُوسَىٰ لِقَوْمِهِ اسْتَعِينُوا بِاللَّهِ وَاصْبِرُوا إِنَّ الْأَرْضَ لِلَّهِ
يُورِثُهَا مَنْ يَشَاءُ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ ۗ وَالْعَاقِبَةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ

Said Moses to his people: "Pray for help from Allah, and (wait) in patience and constancy: for the earth is Allah's, to give as a heritage to such of His servants as He pleaseth; and the end is (best) for the righteous.

(al-A'raf 7: 128)

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ
 اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ ۗ مَا مِنْ شَفِيعٍ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ
 إِذْنِهِ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَاعْبُدُوهُ ۚ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣﴾

Verily your Lord is Allah, who created the heavens and the earth in six days, and is firmly established on the throne (of authority), regulating and governing all things. No intercessor (can plead with Him) except after His leave (hath been obtained). This is Allah your Lord; Him therefore serve ye: will ye not receive admonition?

(Yunus 10: 3)

وَهُوَ الَّذِي مَدَّ الْأَرْضَ وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ وَأَنْهَارًا ۗ وَمِنْ كُلِّ
 الشَّجَرَاتِ جَعَلَ فِيهَا زَوْجَيْنِ اثْنَيْنِ يُغْشَىٰ اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ ۚ إِنَّ فِي
 ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٣﴾

And it is He who spread out the earth, and set thereon mountains standing firm and (flowing) rivers: and fruit of every kind He made in pairs, two and two: He draweth the night as a veil over the Day. Behold, verily in these things there are signs for those who consider!

(al-Ra'd 13:3)

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَسَلَكَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا وَأَنْزَلَ
 مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجْنَا بِهِ أَزْوَاجًا مِّن نَّبَاتٍ شَتَّىٰ ﴿٥٣﴾

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 diverse pairs of plants each separate from the others.

(Taha 20: 53)

وَالْأَرْضَ فَرَشْنَاهَا فَنِعْمَ الْمَاهِدُونَ ﴿٤٨﴾

And We have spread out the (spacious) earth: How excellently We do spread out.

(al-Dhariyat 51: 48)

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا وَجَعَلَ لَكُمْ فِيهَا سُبُلًا

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَهْتَدُونَ ﴿٤٩﴾

(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).

(al-Zukhruf 43:10)

اللَّهُ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ قَرَارًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً

وَصَوَّرَكُمُ فَأَحْسَنَ صُورَكُمْ وَرَزَقَكُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ ذَٰلِكُمْ

اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ فَتَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٥٠﴾

It is Allah Who has made for you the earth as a resting place, and the sky as a canopy, and has given you shape - and made your shapes beautiful, - and has provided for you Sustenance, of things pure and good;- such is Allah your Lord. So Glory to Allah, the Lord of the Worlds!

(Ghafir 40: 64)

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَأَنْزَلَ مِنَ

السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا

بِاللَّهِ أَنْدَادًا وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٥١﴾

Who has made the earth your couch, and the heavens your canopy; and sent down rain from the heavens; and brought forth therewith Fruits for your sustenance; then set not up rivals unto Allah when ye know (the truth).

(al-Baqarah 2: 22)

وَاللَّهُ جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ بِسَاطًا ﴿١٩﴾

And Allah has made the earth for you as a carpet (spread out).

(Nuh 71: 19)

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مِهْدًا ﴿٦﴾

Have We not made the earth as a wide expanse.

(al-Naba' 78: 6)

In these verses, we found that the earth, as far as its value is concerned, is described as mahd, (al-Zukhrif 43:10; al-Naba' 78: 6), mustaqarr or qarrar, (al-Ghafir 40:64), firash, (al-Baqarah 2: 22), bisat (Nuh 71: 19) and mihad (al-Naba' 78: 6). All these terms denote the surface of the earth which includes everything that is on the surface such as land and soil, mountains, plants, trees, forests, etc. The term 'ard also means a place that is smooth and easy for man to walk on, work on, cultivate on plants and crops, build on houses and factories and do everything on it within his limits. In this regard, Allah s.w.t says:

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ ذَلُولًا فَامْشُوا فِي مَنَاكِبِهَا وَكُلُوا
مِنْ رِزْقِهِ ۗ وَإِلَيْهِ النُّشُورُ ﴿١٥﴾

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.

(al-Mulk 67: 15)

Many Mufasssirun of the Qur'an comment the above verse by saying that Allah s.w.t made and prepared this earth in such a way that it has become a suitable place to build our home and the home of all terrestrial beings. It supports plant and animal life and is the origin of the main food resources for both man and animal. It has not come by itself, but by the Will and Power of the Creator. God created man to settle on the earth, generation after generation. He, with his Wisdom, placed it at a suitable distance and created such conditions on it which made it possible for different species to exist and stay alive on it (Fakhr al-Din al-Razi 1985; al-Qurtubi 1994). In fact, the land, according to the Qur'an, is considered dead or drought, whenever there is lack of rainfall and intensive dryness of the atmosphere that causes wilting and death of plants and hardship to cattle, other animals and man. However, it is Allah s.w.t Who

revives it by sending water from the sky and covers it with plants and trees. Allah s.w.t says:

وَاللَّهُ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيحَ فَتُثِيرُ سَحَابًا فَسَقْنَهُ إِلَىٰ بَلَدٍ مَّيِّتٍ
فَأَحْيَيْنَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا ۗ كَذَٰلِكَ النُّشُورُ ﴿٩﴾

It is Allah Who sends forth the winds so that they raise up the clouds, and We drive them to a land that is dead, and revive the earth therewith after its death: even so (will be) the Resurrection.

(Fatir 35: 9)

Again, Allah s.w.t says:

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ أَنْزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَتُصْبِحُ الْأَرْضُ
مُخْضِرَةً ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَطِيفٌ خَبِيرٌ ﴿٦٣﴾

See you not that Allah sends down rain from the sky, and forthwith the earth becomes clothed with green? For Allah is All-subtle, All-Aware.

(al-Hajj 22: 63)

وَأَيُّهُ هُمُ الْأَرْضُ الْمَيِّتَةُ أَحْيَيْنَاهَا وَأَخْرَجْنَا مِنْهَا حَبًّا فَمِنْهُ
يَأْكُلُونَ ﴿٦٤﴾ وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا جَنَّاتٍ مِّنْ نَّخِيلٍ وَأَعْنَابٍ وَفَجَّرْنَا
فِيهَا مِنَ الْعُيُونِ ﴿٦٥﴾ لِيَأْكُلُوا مِنْ ثَمَرِهِ وَمَا عَمِلَتْهُ أَيْدِيهِمْ
أَفَلَا يَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦٦﴾

A sign for them is the earth that is dead. We revive it and We bring forth from it grain, so that they may eat thereof; and We have placed therein gardens of date-palm and grapes, and We have caused springs of water to gush forth therein, that they may eat of the fruit thereof, and their hands made it not. Will they not then give thanks?

(Yasin 36: 33-35)

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ
وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ
مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ
كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيْحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ
وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ ﴿١٦٤﴾

In the rain which God sends down from the skies, and the life which He gives therewith to an earth that is dead.

(al-Baqarah 2: 164)

In relation to the above verses, Syed Muhamad Naquib al-Attas, in his interpretation of the Surah al-Tariq 86: verse 1, Wa al-Sama' Dhathi al-Raj' interprets the word *din* as referring to returning rain which brings benefit to the earth by bringing life to it and by causing good growth which is beneficial to life. Similarly, as rain gives life to the earth which would otherwise be dead, so does *din* gives life to man, without which man would be dead (al-Attas 1993).

For this reason, soil, which is one of the components of the earth, has been entrusted to man and he must take care of it by preserving and protecting it since it supports plant and animal's life. The soil begets plants, which are the origin of the main food resources consumed by both man and animals. Allah s.w.t says:

A sign for them is the Earth that is dead: We do give it life and produce grain therefrom, of which ye do eat. And We produce therein orchards, with date-palms and vines, and We cause springs to gush forth therein: that they may enjoy the fruit of this (artistry): it was not their hands that made this: will they not then give thanks?

(Yasin 36: 33-35)

MOUNTAIN AS PETS (AWTAD)

Mountain plays a significant role in the ecological system. It is an agent of ecological balance; a source of provision for human beings and animals; and a force, which determines the climate of regions. More than fourteen centuries ago, the Holy Qur'an confirmed the importance of mountains and their relationship with preservation of human health. With regard to the formers role, Allah s.w.t

says: “Have We not made the earth as a wide expanse and the mountain as pegs?” (al-Naba’ 78: 6-7). In this regard, the Mufasssirin are of the view that the word awtad or pegs is very significant ecologically. A peg is a piece of wood to be installed into the ground to hold the tent rope. It is usually hammered until its root goes deeply underground. Although the highest mountains on the surface of the earth do not exceed 5.6 miles, they have roots of about 40 miles underground. In this regard, (Muhammad Wazed Ali 1986) observes:

As the earth does not rest on any support, it was necessary to balance it on all sides, so that it should function smoothly and should not fall on a side during earthquake. The mountains and hills are so placed on the northern hemisphere to balance the oceans on the southern.

As far as the importance of mountains as sources for human life is concerned, the Qur’an mentions that mountains are also the habitation of bees which provide honey, a wholesome food. Above all, the Qur’an strongly shows that mountains are main sources of water. High mountains which are sources of rivers and streams are important to man for they not only serve as sources of drinking water but also as sources of irrigation and electric power, as scenic inspiration or as places in which to fish or swim. In relation to this, numerous verses of the Qur’an are mentioned:

ثُمَّ قَسَتْ قُلُوبُكُمْ مِنْ بَعْدِ ذَلِكَ فَهِيَ كَالْحِجَارَةِ أَوْ أَشَدُّ قَسْوَةً
وَإِنَّ مِنَ الْحِجَارَةِ لَمَا يَتَفَجَّرُ مِنْهُ الْأَنْهَارُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَشْقُقُ
فَيَخْرُجُ مِنْهُ الْمَاءُ وَإِنَّ مِنْهَا لَمَا يَهْبِطُ مِنْ خَشْيَةِ اللَّهِ وَمَا اللَّهُ
بِغَفِيلٍ عَمَّا تَعْمَلُونَ

Among the rocks there are some from which rivers gush forth; others there are which when split asunder send forth water.

(al-Baqarah 2:74)

وَجَعَلْنَا فِيهَا رَوَاسِيَ شَامِخَاتٍ وَأَسْقَيْنَكُم مَّاءٍ فُرَاتًا

And Allah made therein mountains standing firm, lofty (in stature); and provided for you water sweet (and wholesome).

(al-Mursalat 77:27)

وَالْجِبَالَ أَرْسَنَهَا ﴿٣٢﴾

And the mountains has He firmly fixed for use and convenience to you and your cattle.

(al-Nazi‘at 79: 32)

وَجَعَلَ فِيهَا رَوْسِيَٰ مِنْ فَوْقِهَا وَبَرَكَ فِيهَا وَقَدَّرَ فِيهَا أَقْوَامًا فِي

أَرْبَعَةِ أَيَّامٍ سَوَاءً لِّلسَّالِبِينَ ﴿١٠﴾

He set on the earth mountains standing firm, high above it, and bestowed blessings on the earth and measured therein its sustenance in four days, alike for (all) who ask.

(Fussilat 41: 10)

In addition to the above benefits, the mountain is a crucial factor in determining climates of regions. Winds coming from the north are cold and dry, those coming from the south are hot and moist. The former strengthen the body, are good for the brain and brighten the complexion, while the latter damage the senses and create carelessness (Tazimuddin Siddiqi 1981). In order to explain further the role of mountains in determining climates of regions, the Qur'an says: "It is Allah who made out of the things He created, some things to give you shade (zilalan), of hills He made some for your shelter (aknanan)" (al-Nahl 16: 81). According to the Mufasssirun, aknan (sing. kinn) means anything that protects rain, wind and other similar things. A building or a house, which prevents penetration of heat and is cool inside can also be called kin (Ibn Manzur n.d). Ibn Sina's view of the influence of the mountain on climate is as follows (Mazhar H. Shah 1966):

Mountains influence the atmosphere also by their site and location. High mountains influence the atmosphere in two ways: a) they reflect the rays or block the sun and b) they serve as windscreens or help the formation of winds. The former effect can be observed in places which have mountains in the north. Reflection of rays makes them hot, even though they are in the north. The same holds good when mountains are on the west but the east is open. If mountains are on the east there is less heat as the sun appears only in the afternoon when it is already on the decline and the intensity of rays is steadily waning. In the case of mountains being on the west, the exposure is to the rising sun. With regard to the screening influence of mountains, it may be stated that mountains on the north protect against the northerly cold winds but are exposed much more to the

southerly warm winds. The velocity of wind is much greater in the valleys than in the open deserts. This is because wind on blowing through narrow passages gathers more and more speed and keeps on blowing.

BALANCE AND MEASURE (AL-MIZAN WA AL-TAQDIR) IN THE HOLY QUR'AN

According to Islam, Creation, which is a sign of God ('ayat Allah), is the book of which Allah s.w.t is the author. Thus, it is impossible for man to know Allah s.w.t without knowing and observing what is in our surroundings. A closer look at al-Asma' al-Husna (God's Divine Names) which is found in the Holy Qur'an, reveals that al-Muhit (Who encompasses all things) is one of the ninety-nine names of Allah s.w.t. This indicates that Almighty Allah s.w.t encompasses all things and He is indeed close by, even though we do not comprehend the full significance of these terms (Ahmad b. al-Husayn b. 'Ali al-Bayhaqi 1998; Siddiqi 1987). Allah s.w.t says in the Qur'an:

وَلِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ بِكُلِّ
شَيْءٍ حَاطِقًا

But to God belong all things in the heavens and on earth: and it is He who encompassed (muhit) all things.

(al-Nisa' 4:126)

Thus, the term Muhit also means environment. In a deeper sense, it is always true to say that God Himself is the Ultimate Environment which surrounds and encompasses all things. Thus, knowledge about the environment becomes important and obligatory as the knowledge of Allah s.w.t or unity of God. Its understanding is instrumental in bringing us closer to God.

Interestingly, all environmental elements are complexly interlocked one to another so as to maintain the equilibrium of environment. It is sunnat Allah to remain in this condition since it was created by Allah s.w.t with justice. If there is injustice in creation, it is impossible to remain in proper and systematic balance. This is because everything that is unjust will deviate from balance and then lead to decay and corruption (al-Hijr 15: 85; al-Dukhan 44: 39). The way this equilibrium and justice was established is only known to Almighty Allah s.w.t. It is obvious that the proportion, the measure and the balance of nature are known in the Qur'anic context as al-Mizan. Allah s.w.t says:

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٧﴾ أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ
﴿٨﴾ وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٩﴾

And He has raised the Heaven; and He has set the Balance (therein) so that you exceed not the Balance. Observe the Balance with proportion, and don't lose the Balance.

(al-Rahman 55: 7-9)

إِنَّا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ خَلَقْنَاهُ بِقَدَرٍ ﴿٤٩﴾

Verily, all things have We created by measure.

(al-Qamr 54:49)

The above Qur'anic verses indicate that whatever Allah s.w.t has created in this universe was created in due proportion and measure both quantitatively and qualitatively. This concept is distinct enough. That is because it gives the values of unity, balance, order and harmony. According to the Mufasssirin of the Holy Qur'an, balance not only governs the structuring of the universe, it has specified each element with its proper place and defined function (al-Qurtubi 1994; Fakhr al-Din al-Razi 1985). There is no doubt that this concept, which is set by the Qur'an, must be accepted at all. Now, it is incumbent upon us to clarify the law of conservation of 'mass' which states that the total quantity of matter is always constant. In short, man can at best alter the shape and nature of any existence, but cannot make it nil, nor can he add or deduct from the existing amount without a corresponding loss or gain on the other side (Muhammad Wazed Ali 1986). Furthermore, this concept is true if man looks at himself in relation to other things which surround him on earth. He will observe that he lives in constant interaction with other forms of life and the physical elements of the environment, each of which components contributes to the functioning and balance of nature.

IHYA' AL-MAWĀT (THE REVIVAL OF THE DEAD EARTH)

We are commanded to revive the soil notably by planting and cultivating it. We are required to plant and cultivate the earth, not to corrupt it but to preserve and enhance its fertility. In this context too, we are reminded that to damage the soil is to deny Allah's tremendous favors. According to Islamic law, any act that leads to the earth's destruction or degradation of life on earth is categorically prohibited by the Almighty Allah s.w.t. In the light of this teaching, many Muslim jurists discussed at great length the topic relating to cultivation of the

soil, which is regarded as one of the important factors for the preservation of health, known in the book of Fiqh and Islamic jurisprudence as *ihya' al-mawāt* (the revival of the dead land). According to jurists and physicians, the purpose of *ihya' al-mawāt* is not only considered a fundamental source in the economy of the state, but also a source for healthy environment. It is true to say that Islam gives special attention to the importance of soil and land. This is because, *ihya' al-mawāt* is very important for human survival without which no plant and no cultivation can be developed and grown on earth. It is also true that degradation of land and soil brings about harm to the life of man, animals and other creatures.

As already noted, Allah s.w.t has made the soil fertile so as to grow vegetation, plants and trees upon which man and animals' life depends (Yasin 36: 33-35). In order to relate this matter to the health of human beings, it is necessary to say something pertaining to land and soil. Most of the Muslim jurists - particularly Shafi'i jurists - divide land into two categories. The first, is 'amir, i.e., land which is either used, owned, or annexed to 'amir's land. The second is *mawāt*, i.e., dead land which is not used or owned by anyone and is not annexed to 'amir land. The latter concerns us here, because, as we shall see, it is with the revival of this land and soil that contributes to the preservation of health (Maktari 1971; Poliak 1950).

Generally, the Muslim jurists held that *mawāt* land is land that has been neglected. It is dry land that had never been irrigated, that in its present state is not capable of yielding any crops or vegetation useful for human needs. It refers also to flooded land that has not been drained of its excess and stagnant water (al-Marghinani 1991). However, Abu Yusuf and al-Kasani specified that a piece of land which cannot be utilized is not considered 'mawāt land' unless it is far enough from the town so that a person standing on this land at a point nearest to the town and shouting at the top of his voice cannot be heard from the town (Abu Yusuf Ya'qub b. Ibrahim 1985). In other words, it must be located far away from any human settlement (Wahbah Zuhayli 1989).

Then, what is *ihya'*? According to the *fuqaha'*, it means "bringing to life", by putting a piece of land to use (Encyclopaedia of Islam *Ihya* 3:1054-4). Viewed in this light, al-Sarakhsi in his *Kitab Mabsut* says that *ihya'* consists of making the land fit for cultivation by ploughing, or building water channels, or digging a canal leading to it. On the other hand, the Shafi'i's jurist and judge al-Mawardi in his *al-Hawi al-Kabir* stated that the exact meaning of *ihya'* is fixed by reference to the purpose for which the land is developed in accordance with custom, since the Prophet s.a.w left it undetermined. Thus, it should be carried out in accordance with the nature and condition of the *mawāt* land itself. If the land is in the category of an agricultural land, the work expected to be carried out should include setting out boundaries, clearing of the land, irrigation works (whether to bring in water or to drain it out) (al-Mawardi 1985; al-Mawardi

1994).

It should be kept in mind that scholars of the Shafi'i school agree that any person who brings "dead land" back to life by undertaking its cultivation or reclamation or otherwise putting it to beneficial use acquires it as his private property and becomes its owner (al-Mawardi 1985; al-Mawardi 1994). This view is based on the tradition of the Prophet s.a.w who said: "Who quickens a dead land, it is his: there is no right of expropriation (against him)" (Abu Dawud n.d) Again, he says: "Whoever shall bring life to a dead soil shall have it for himself" (Malik Ibn Anas 1979).

However, the Hanafis on the other hand, who throughout the history of Islamic governments were considered champions by the rulers, opposed the Shafi'i's view. According to them, revival of mawāt land must be encouraged, but acquisition of land in this category should require the consent of the Imam (ruler) (Abu Yusuf 1985). The rationale of this view is the avoidance of disputes resulting from conflicting claims-either between ihya' cultivator and iqta' owner. Furthermore, this view is also based on the tradition of the Prophet s.a.w who said: "A person should not obtain (a thing) except that which his Imam has willingly surrendered to him". On the other hand, the Maliki school considers the state's consent only necessary where a mawāt land is situated close to any human settlement. Where a mawāt land is isolated and distant from any town or village, no consent from the State is necessary.

Even though the Muslim scholars differ on the above matter, they agree on the role of Islamic law in dealing in a fairly profound manner with the problem of soil, particularly its revival. It is in this connection that according to Muslim jurists, Ihya' is desirable and encouraged. The importance of ihya' al- mawāt is clear if we ponder on Islamic administration from the time of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w, the Khulafa' al-Rashidun, the Umayyads and others. Historians reported that when the Prophet s.a.w migrated to Medina, a large number of Medinan Muslims had their own agricultural lands. The Prophet s.a.w did not only confirm ownership of land, but he himself set a positive precedent by allowing lands to individuals. This policy was followed by his Caliphs too. 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab r.a, for example, transferred all the lands of Khaybar to hundreds of allottees after he exiled the Jews from there (al-Bukhari, Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab ma ja'fi al-harth wa al-muzara'ah, bab awqaf ashab al-nabiyy s.a.w wa 'ard al-kharaj wa mazari'atuhum wa mu'amalatihim; al-Zabidi 2002, Mukhtasar Sahih al-Bukhari, hadith no 1081; Ibn al-Athir 1982; S.M. Hasan uz Zaman 1990).

In Islamic law, mawāt land may be declared to be state property. It is reserved for public use. In this context, land reserved for public use is designated as hima (Encyclopaedia of Islam s.v. Hima). The governing authorities have the right and obligation to establish reserved land (hima) for purposes pertaining to the public good, such as the conservation and management of rangelands,

forest and woodlands, watersheds and wildlife (Ibn Qudamah 1981). While the Prophet s.a.w abolished private reserves for exclusive use of powerful individuals, he established public reserves in the way of Allah (fi sabil li Allah). This modification, according to Imam al-Shafi'i, was clearly explained in the Prophet saying: "there is no hima except for Allah and His Apostle" (al-Bukhari, Sahih al-Bukhari, Kitab al-Masaqat, Bab la hima illa li Allah wa Rasulihi; al-Zabidi 2002, Mukhtasar Sahih al-Bukhari, hadith no. 1097). Abu 'Ubaid al-Qasim b. Salam explains that the meaning of the hadith "la hima illa lillahi wa rasuli": there is no hima except for Allah and His Messenger is that the things which were declared by the Prophet s.a.w to be common property of the Muslims, like water, herbage, and fire etc., could not be made private and exclusive hima. In the light of this tradition, Imam Shafi'i is against some Muslim scholars' idea of establishing a hima for the private use of the Prophet s.a.w, but he interprets this hadith that the Prophet s.a.w declared his intention to reserve the right of creating hima for himself as the ruler in order to enable all Muslims to benefit from it (Abu 'Ubayd 1976; al-Shafi'i n.d; al-Mawardi 1985; Ibn Qudamah 1981).

CONCLUSION

The principle of Islam Hadhari namely Safeguarding the environment plays an important role in preservation of the quality of a precious environment. Accordingly, human being was entrusted with a responsibility not to behave like an unlimited owner, but to live by Divine teachings, with respect to the preservation of ecological balance. In other words, we are entrusted to follow divine regulations, rights and orders; and not to transgress the measure that has been established by Allah s.w.t when dealing with the natural environment. Whatever Allah s.w.t has created in this universe was created in due proportion and measure both quantitatively and qualitatively. This concept is distinct enough. That is because it gives the values of unity, balance, order and harmony.

Thus, destruction of the environment and the imbalance of nature are not only contrary to the Will of Allah s.w.t, but they are a form of ingratitude towards His blessings. It also contradicts the principle that one should keep the natural environment in order and balance and not cause environmental harm. Furthermore, the study shows that Islam gives special attention to revival of the dead land (Ihya' al-mawāt) which is very important for human survival without which no plant and no cultivation can be developed and grown on earth. It is also true that degradation of land and soil brings about harm to the life of man, animals and other creatures. The purpose of ihya' al-mawāt is not only considered a fundamental source in the economy of the state, but also a source for healthy environment. It should be mentioned here that according to Islamic law, any acts that lead to the earth's destruction or degradation of life on earth are categorically prohibited by the Almighty Allah s.w.t.

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