

ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS IN ALI YAFIE'S PERSPECTIVE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION IN INDONESIA

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Abstract: The real environmental problems are not just a problem of garbage, pollution, illegal logging, burning of forests and so on, but it is already in the field of human life point of view. Thus, the environmental problem actually comes from the mindset and egocentric attitude of humans in seeing themselves and their surroundings. The human self needs with all its aspects then fulfilling by sacrificing the environment is precisely the essence of the environmental problem itself. If that happens, then the problem might not be finished by curative actions (restoration, reforestation, etc.). Therefore, putting environmental ethics as a solution is the right thing. This is because environmental ethics includes not only technical issues, but also provides awareness that environmental damage is not only physically harmful but it is actually morally harmful. Hence, there are areas that are considered more crucial than the occurrence of environmental problems, namely aspects of morality. So that providing learning about environmental ethics is considered more principle and effective in reducing environmental problems.

Keywords: Environment, Morality and Environmental Ethics

INTRODUCTION

The environment is a very broad subject when it is discussed. It can be seen from various perspectives in knowledge, starting from biology, psychology, law, social, culture and even religion. It can be assumed that all aspects of human life cannot be separated from the role of the environment itself. Therefore, it is not excessive if the study of the environment is never out of date to be discussed. It always becomes a contemporary topic in every study. This problem can be seen from the many community organizations, government institutions, schools, boarding schools that have their respective characteristics when talking about the environment.

The fact that the environment is an endless topic for discussion is the emergence of many centers of environmental studies in Indonesia. There are reports that there are no less than 70 centers for environmental studies under the institution of higher education. Not to mention the centers of environmental studies under the ministry until government agencies whose numbers are of course not small.

Studying environmental problems is something that has its own challenges as



well as interesting. Once again, it is because the relevance of the environment to other disciplines is very diverse and intertwined. For example, the problem of environmental damage in the perspective of different subjects will also bring up different answers. This means that the phenomena behind environmental problems have their respective reasons. Thus, although starting from the same case, but it is not impossible to produce different conclusions.

However, discussion about the environment usually leads to deforestation, illegal logging, conservation of agricultural land to developed land, pollution of rivers and the sea which then ends up in all of these problems are damage, losses up to destruction. All of the above problems seem dominant in public discourse when discussing environmental problems. Why did that happen? First, the facts about environmental damage in Indonesia cannot be separated from the concrete conditions above. It means that at this time there is a battle between industrial modernity vs. ecological sustainability¹ that is not just an issue.

Second, the impact that is increasingly dangerous both to humans and the environment ecosystem also becomes the reason that environmental-related studies are worth encouraging. Therefore, according to the writer there is still hope that the more frequent environmental problems being studied means that there are indications that this problematic becomes important to always be presented in formal and informal forums. Therefore, it's easier for us to take concrete action in restoration or improvement related to the environment.

However, the writings that the authors want to present will only highlight the problem from one point of view, namely religion (fiqh), further narrowed from the perspective of environmental ethics (*akhlaq al-bi'ah*). At the same time, the writers will present a study through an environmental fiqh figure who is also a scholar in Indonesia, Ali Yafie who is famous scholars of the depth of knowledge about fiqh (Islamic law). In addition, his expertise is proven through his position as Rais Am PBNU (1992) and Chairman of the Central MUI (2000). Thus, the author actually wants to analyze the opinions and offers of the concept of environmental ethics carried by Ali Yafie.

For more details, in order to be easily understood in the direction in which this paper is directed, it is necessary to examine what the authors' academic anxiety is related to environmental ethics. Furthermore, the question that the author wants to ask in this paper is first, how is the concept of environmental ethics in the perspective of Ali Yafie fiqh? Second, how does the concept of environmental ethics work for the preservation of the environment in Indonesia?

Therefore, the purpose of writing this paper is to identify how the concept of environmental ethics in the perspective of Ali Yafie fiqh, so from it will be known transformative ideas of this scholar associated with environmental problems. The next purpose is to describe how the implementation of the ethical concepts that have been triggered and its principles for environmental preservation in Indonesia.

¹For the reasons of fulfilling the needs of human life that are all dynamic and complex in industrial modernity and the paradigm of developmentalism, acts of destruction of nature or the environment seem to find arguments for justification. See Muh Aris marfai, *Moralitas Lingkungan, Refleksi Kritis Atas Krisis Lingkungan Berkelanjutan*, (Yogyakarta: Weha, 2005) 3



DISCUSSION

In discussing environmental ethics, introduction is needed with the aim of getting a full and coherent understanding, including an operational definition. The operational definitions in this discussion are:

Ethics

I. The definition of Ethics

Theoretically ethics has a fairly diverse understanding. First, etymologically ethics comes from the Greek word *ethos* (plural: *ta etha*) which means customs or habits.² In this sense, ethics has the meaning of the presence of a positive habit in a particular society. Furthermore, this ethic is usually passed down from generation to generation until it becomes a culture. According to Black, ethics is the study of how humans treat each other and what the meaning of a good life is. It can be interpreted that ethics is questioning people's views in searching for its truth.

Bertens divides the notion of ethics into three parts namely:

- a. Moral values and norms that become a guideline for a person or a group in regulating his behavior;
- b. A collection of principles/moral values or a kind of code of ethics
- c. The knowledge of good and bad or systematic and methodical assessment of all values that are considered good and bad that are simply accepted by the public.³

Meanwhile, according to M. Fathurahman, ethics or moral can also be called morality refers to English which contains several meanings namely (a) customs, (b) politeness, and (c) behavior. Whereas in Arabic, morality is in line with the meaning of *Akhlaq*, which according to *lughat* is defined as character, temperament, behavior or character.⁴ Thus, the terms ethics, morals, norms, values, and character in general cannot be clearly distinguished, but it has the same standard which is comprehensively applicable in the community.

While in the perspective of Islam, ethics or morals according to Ahmad Amin is *adat al-iradah* (habituation of something). So the value that is deliberately cultivated in a particular society is included in the category of ethics. This can usually be realized in local but binding rules. As for practices such as *unggah-ungguh* in the context of Javanese culture, *pamali* in Sundanese culture and so on which this comes from ideas or activities which are then traditionalized.

Environmental awareness also needs to be accustomed. This is with the intention to protect and preserve the environment itself. Even if humans take advantage of the environment, then humans should replant so that later generations also enjoy the benefits of the environment.

² A. Sonny Keraf, *etika lingkungan*, (Jakarta: Kompas, 2006) 2

³ Hyronimus Rhati, *Kompleksitas Permasalahan Lingkungan Hidup*, (Yogyakarta: Atma jaya, 2005) 23-24

⁴ Lihat M. Fathurahman, *Agama dan Ego Orang Tua* dalam jurnal *Cendekia*, Vol. 14 No.2 Juli-Desember 2016, 323



Therefore, in the context of non-renewable environmental use, planning and management must be taken care of as well as possible.⁵ Therefore, the ethics formed must also pay attention to that.

Theory of Ethics

a. Deontology Ethics

Deontology comes from the Greek word *deon* which means obligation, and *logos* means science or theory. According to Deontology ethics, an action is considered good or bad based on whether the action is in accordance or not with obligations.⁶ In other words, an action is considered good because it is indeed good in itself. From this perception, making natural damage is considered morally bad not because it is harmful, but considered bad because it is not in accordance with the moral obligation to respect to the nature.

b. Teleology Ethics

Teleology comes from the Greek *telos* which has a meaning of purpose, and *logos* means a science or theory. This ethic has a standard that assesses the good and bad of an action based on the objectives or consequences of the action. This means that an action is considered good if it has good aims and brings goodness. As for the illustration that not throwing garbage in the river is considered to be a good deed because it is based on a good purpose too, namely to avoid pollution and flood.

c. Virtue Ethics

Ethical virtue does not matter as a result of an action nor does it base morality on universal moral law, but virtue ethics is more directed towards developing moral character in a person. It can be interpreted that this virtue ethics is a noble ethic, it is done no longer at the stage because of obligations and the existence of certain objectives, but this ethics is based on full awareness of doing it because of a **conscience**. Thus, the emphasis of this ethics is on the level of awareness.

Therefore, this ethic is considered as the most complete ethics. An example of this illustration is the awareness of not polluting the environment not because of fear of being caught by the government or fines and so on but because of the fear of environmental pollution is unethical in human consciousness. The moral message that can be taken from this ethic is the need to build moral character and personality for anyone, especially public figures in order to give role models about environmental awareness.

Environment

Environmental experts define that the environment⁷ or living environment is a

⁵ Imam supardi, *Lingkungan Hidup dan Kelestariannya*, (Bandung: PT. Alumni, 2003) 4

⁶ A. Sonny Keraf... 20

⁷ The term environment is a diversion from several foreign terms including: environment (English), L'environnement (French), umwelt (German), Milliu (Dutch), natural surroundings (Malaysia), sivat-lom (Thailand) and al-bi'ah (Arab). See Mujiono Abdillah, *Agama Ramah Lingkungan Perspektif Al-qur'an*, (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2001) 22



complex system that is outside the individual that affects the growth and development of organisms.⁸ . Imam Supardi added that the living environment was divided into two: first, the physical environment that is all inanimate objects and the physical conditions that exist around individuals, for example rocks, minerals, air water, weather, wind and others. The existence of the physical environment is very closely related to living things in general. In fact, it can be said that its existence is very influential on the survival of living things around it. For the examples: air for breathing, minerals for soil fertility and water as a source of human, animal and plant life. Second, the biotic environment is all living things that exist around individuals such as plants, animals and humans. Each of these biotic elements interacts between antibiotics and also with the abiotic-physical environment.⁹

Every environment both biotic and abiotic always changes; it can be suddenly or slowly. This change is closely related to the ecosystem that has become its stability. An easy example is comparing forests and rice fields. Forests with all the complexity of plants that are in it will still be able to survive because there are interrelations between the components in it such as water, natural fertilizer, humidity, temperature and so on.

While the rice fields are not so, the fertility of the rice fields is very dependent on the people who care for them. In other words, the stability of rice fields or fields becomes disturbed if it is not maintained and well preserved. This means that the environment in an inhabited area is very dependent on how humans treat their environment. In conclusion, if humans want to benefit sustainably from the environment, humans must pay serious attention to environmental sustainability. Whereas on the contrary, if humans only exploit without thinking too much, then environmental damage is the answer to all of that.

The environment in the perspective of Islam, as introduced in the al-Qur'an, has many terms namely all species (*al-'alamin*), space and time (*al-sama* '), earth (*al-ardl*) and environment (*al-bi'ah*). The Qur'an mentions the word *al-alam* 71 (seventy one) times in the form of phrases. *Al-sama* 'is mentioned 387 times with details 210 in the plural and 177 in the singular. *Al-Ardl* was mentioned 463 times. And finally *al-bi'ah* is mentioned in al-quran 15 times.¹⁰ The number of terms that have as many environmental connotations as mentioned above indicates the Qur'an provides a signal that the matter of the environment is also very important to be discussed until it is written many times in the Qur'an. The consequence is that people in the world not only worship *mahdhoh*, but also take responsibility for environmental sustainability, which is also an asset given by God to humans.

Environmental Ethics

After discussing ethics, ethical theory and the environment in general and Islamic discussions, the discussion will discuss the meaning of the concept of environmental ethics. From here it becomes a benchmark for further discussion on environmental ethics and its significance. If all this time discussing the Environment is only struggling in

⁸ Zoer'aini Djamal Irwan, *Prinsip-Prinsip Ekologi, Ekosistem, Lingkungan dan Pelestariannya*, (Jakarta: Bumi Aksara, 2007) 108

⁹ Imam supardi...2-3

¹⁰ Nadjamuddin Ramly, *Islam Ramah Lingkungan*, (Jakarta: Grafindo Khazanah Ilmu, 2007) 24-25



anthropocentric discussions,¹¹ then developments in Environmental ethics apply in reverse, thus seeing the environment is no longer an object that must be exploited but it must also be protected and preserved.

Albert Schweitzer said that "the mistake of all ethics so far is only to talk about the relationship between human and human".¹² Not the slightest discuss the relationship between humans and other creatures or humans with nature (environment). Therefore, it is necessary to broaden understanding in order to bring back human awareness to the viewpoints that must be had in relation to the environment. Therefore, environmental ethics is indeed directed to identify the relationships that must exist in the reality of life between humans and their environment.

According to M. Fathurahman, there are four ways that must be taken in order to obtain a meaning of environmental ethics comprehensively: First, combining two ethics at once namely, ethics of virtue and ethics of obligation. With the aim of a positive attitude to the environment not only stop at the obligation but already at the level of virtue. So that ethics to the environment begin purely because of awareness not because of the threat of punishment etc.

Second, the need to exemplify the code of ethics to the public. If so far only normative and applied ethics, then it still needs to be complemented by the existence of an agreement between communities regarding norms to the environment that will be enforced in the midst of them.

Third, environmental ethics is not aimed at creating *eco-facism* (environmental fascist, the writers borrow Ton Dietz term, 1996), which is due to ethical reasons, but instead everything is forbidden, so it is also not right. So, ideally it is possible to take advantage of the environment, but there is an obligation to preserve it.

Fourth, environmental ethics is the basic attitude of utilizing but participating, using while maintaining, learning to respect life and the environment. Therefore, environmental ethics needs to consider ecological externalities which are concerned with humans as well as the whole ecosystem or cosmos.¹³

From here, the direction is very clear that environmental ethics means talking about the ability to use environmental products, but there is also a responsibility behind it, namely protection and preservation.

Environmental Ethics in Ali Yafie's Perspective

Ali Yafie is the only environmental expert in Indonesia who comes from an indigenous Indonesian institution, the pesantren. Although the education path is limited to pesantren, it does not reduce its active role in the academic world. The particular

¹¹ The anthropocentrism argument can be found in the Aristotelian tradition developed by Thomas Aquinas, The Great Chain of being, which states that humans occupy a position close to perfection after their Lord. Furthermore, Rene Descartes (the father of rationalism) considers that humans have a special place among all living things. This understanding creates the assumption that humans can do what is in line with their "nature", that is to control others. See A. Sonny Keraf, *Etika Lingkungan*, (Jakarta: PT. Kompas Media Nusantara) 36-38.

¹² Richard Silvan dan David Bennet, *The Greening Of ethic* (Cambridge: The White Horse Press, 1994) 9

¹³ M. Fathurahman, *Upaya Penanaman Kesadaran Ekologi melalui Etika Lingkungan*, Tesis (Yogyakarta: UIN SUKA 2011) 30



position he once held has given its own meaning, that the capacity as an expert in this field is no doubt. The proof is that he is able to become an important part of the country's major universities such as UGM, UI, ITB, ITS and other universities¹⁴

His outstanding scientific expertise is the field of fiqh (Islamic law) which he is able to synergize with current scientific disciplines (ecology). So that the existence of fiqh which tends to be exclusive -only in Islam- does not appear anymore, instead fiqh can be an important part in ecology where so far there have not been many scholars who construct this understanding and of course can make an extremely important contribution.

In his perspective, he interpreted environmental ethics based on the moral responsibility of a khalifah (human). Humans are the bearers of the mandate of Allah SWT to protect or preserve and develop nature for the benefit of humanity. This means that humans have a responsibility for environmental sustainability and the balance of the ecosystem that was created by Allah SWT. A piece of verse of the Qur-an that is repeated in many places namely *la tufsidu fil ardh ba'da ishlahiha* (do not make damage on earth after it is arranged) is interpreted by Ali Yafie as the basis of environmental ethics that must be possessed by humans. Thus, he indirectly disagrees with the ethics of anthropocentrism initiated by the West.

Then how is the relevance of fiqh that the concept he built then he synchronizes with the environment? It needs to be observed first about his opinion about the characteristics of fiqh. He noted that fiqh is one of the Islamic sciences (*al-ulum asy-shyar'iyah*) which is very dominant in the lives of Muslims. Where from it actually offers a framework approach to the environment that is very beneficial for human life.

It is well known that in the study of fiqh, it is almost certain that the pattern of discussion in these books begins with cleanliness (*at-thaharah*) ending with an orderly attitude (*at-tartib*), and based on the value of benefit (*al-mashlahah*), justice (*al-adalah*), mercy (*al-rahmah*), and wisdom (*al-hikmah*).¹⁵

On the other hand, Ali Yafie's ability to incorporate the environment into one of the fiqh spaces is a distinctive feat. At this point we can read through his thoughts:

- 1) The first quarter of fiqh is about worship which explains the technical chapters such as salat, zakat, fasting and haji. The nature of this technical explanation can be very detailed. This explanation is not only about the form of worship, but also comes to an explanation of the conditions, the pillars, things that should be avoided (makruh) to things that must be avoided because it is considered to cancel the worship itself. Easily, fiqh of worship is a discussion that gives an overview of the details of the form of worship that is applicable.
- 2) The second quarter of fiqh is *mu'amalah* (social), muamalah fiqh regulates humans in relation to other humans. There are two meanings in this muamalah understanding. First understanding, muamalah is the interaction between humans which is regulated by God so that nothing bad will happen in the political, economic and social fields. Second, the rule of God (specifically) between people in terms of the development of property and objects (economic only), or there are other

¹⁴ Ali Yafie, *Merintis Fiqh Lingkungan Hidup*, (Jakarta: Ufuk Press, 2006) 293

¹⁵ *Ibid.*....41



terms such as *adabiyah*, namely muamalah which addresses tolerance, honesty, and politeness. Next is *madaniyah* namely muamalah which discusses material aspects, the following legal effects such as *syubhat*, benefits, *madharat* and others.

- 3) The third quarter of fiqh is about marriage (*Munakahat*). The scholars define marriage in Islam is a teaching that is based on the *naqli* arguments. Al-Qur'an and as-Sunnah require marriage considering that human tendency is to love the opposite sex and indeed Allah created his creatures in pairs. Even more broadly fiqh *munakahat* also discusses the many benefits of marriage, both in terms of psychology, sociology to medical aspects.

According to Ali Ahmad Al-Jurjawi, there are many benefits of marriage, including:

- a. Marriage causes offspring to be born. When there are many offspring, the potential for doing good deeds is wide open.
 - b. A person's calmness is also determined by marriage. Marriages whose roles between husband and wife are very proportionally regulated have a positive effect on humans.
 - c. Men and women are two individuals who complement each other, their existence needs each other or it can be said that they can be good partners in doing good deeds on this earth¹⁶
- 4) The last quarter of the discussion is about *jinayah* (criminality) or in the more popular terms *jinayah* is also called Islamic criminal law. The scopes of the study in Islamic crime are *qisas*, *hudud* and *ta'zir*. It can be explained that the *qisas* is the same sanctions that the perpetrators have done on their victims, for example the perpetrators of murder, so they must be killed. *Hudud* is the imposition of severe sanctions on someone as determined by the Qur'an and the Hadith, such as adultery, getting drunk and leaving Islam or apostasy.

Next is *Ta'zir*, which is a law other than *hudud* law, or it can be interpreted as a fine that serves as a preventive function for the perpetrators of criminal acts so that they are not excessively excessive in committing criminal acts.

The question is, in what part does an environmental ethic have relevance? So the answer is that in this part of *jinayah* fiqh the relation is included, because the perpetrators of environmental destruction are included in the category of *ta'zir*. Ali Yafie stated that the urgency of environmental preservation was included in the *dharuri* (primary) category. In Fiqh there are five basic principles of life (*Al-Dharuriyat al-Khamsah*). Through his clever ideas, Ali Yafie completes the five basic principles of life into six basic principles of life (*Al-dharuriyat al-Sittah*). The details are as below:

First, *hifdzu al-ddin* (protection of religion) means the obligation of Muslims to maintain the existence of their religion through worship and even preach it. Second, *hifdzu al-aql* (protection of the mind) through activities that involves the role of reason to think. The Qur'an clearly commands to maximize the role of this mind in order to be able to take God's message in every side of life. Third, *hifdzu al-nafs* (protection of the soul) means keeping away from activities that can potentially damage health, such as

¹⁶ Abd Rahman Ghazaly, *Fiqh Munakahat*, (Jakarta: Kencana, 2003), 65-66



drug consumption, intoxication and other unhealthy lifestyles.

Fourth, *hifdzu al-mal* (protection of wealth) means that religion also gives responsibility to a Muslim to protect wealth or maintain wealth that he obtained from other factors from the outside. This makes perfect sense so that there is no violation of the rights of others (stealing, robbing, etc.). Fifth, *hifdzu al-nasl* (protection of offspring) means that Islam provides rules on this through the obligation of marriage, so that marriage will obtain offspring. Besides that, there is a responsibility to provide children / offspring with maximum education, both in religious and other fields.

Sixth, *hifdzu albi'ah* (protection of the environment) means maintaining the existence of the environment / nature in the hope that it can make use as well as preserve. At this point we can find Ali Yafie's great idea, he included a study of environmental ethics (*akhlak al-bi'ah*) from what did not yet exist into the argument that caring for the environment is no less important than the five responsibilities above. Thus, this opens our minds that the environment also has a very important role in human life. Environment is not only considered as a giant machine that is always exploited,¹⁷ but it should be maintained and preserved as a form of responsibility of the duty of the servant for the gift given by God.

Therefore, from this direction, Ali Yafie gave a progressive finding by saying that protecting the environment is a *farḍlu kifayah* namely a collective obligation in the perspective of fiqh. The consequence is that neglect of environmental damage is a social sin that can be experienced by all humans. This idea is certainly not a trivial idea because so far the *farḍlu kifayah* is very identical to mere formal worship, such as Salat, taking care of corpses and so on. But there are no findings from previous scholars who tried to implement the obligation of *ta'lif farḍlu kifayah* in the environmental field.

Thus, if it is realized this finding is very orientative because it is able to construct a new understanding of fiqh that even environmental affairs need to be approached by describing the science of fiqh itself. Thus, fiqh is always able to answer the challenges of the dynamics of the problems of human life.

CONCLUSION

Building a new mindset and awareness in environmental problems is a must. It is undeniable that the way of thinking from the past until now in viewing the environment is with western-style anthropocentric ethics. There is a sense to subdue the environment with all forms of interests behind it is a common thing that even everyone feels it. It's just that if this is realized again, honestly it is a mistake that continues to be repeated. Therefore, the *al-bi'ah fiqh* approach (Environmental Fiqh) is the right solution that must be practiced.

From the *fiqh bi'ah* which is then detailed into the *akhlak al-bi'ah* (environmental ethics) provides a very clear space about human responsibility for the natural surroundings. First, humans are *khalifah* who have a primordial responsibility towards their Lord regarding themselves and their environment. Therefore, if humans deny their

¹⁷ A. Sonny Keraf, *Filsafat Lingkungan Hidup (Alam Sebagai Sistem Kehidupan)*, (Yogyakarta: PT. Kanisius, 2014) 58



role, they are called *fasiq* because they have committed acts of *jinayah* (criminality), which means they are environmental criminals.

Second, the need to realize that protecting the environment from human exploitation is *fardlu kifayah*. Therefore, the reluctance of people to protect the environment is an immoral act that results in sin. This collective obligation is carried out by at least one person, but if it is not at all that an area conspires to exploit the environment (natural resources), then that region is punished for sin.

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