

Sustainable Development Environmental Values and in Islamic views

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Abstract

Sustainable development ethics in Islam involves embracing environmental values and ethics in the Holy Qura'n and Sunnah. These values may require changes in the individual's behavior and culture in order to care for the environment and its ecosystems. This paper aims at investigating the sustainable Environmental Values and Ethics (EVEs) in a number of Holy verses and Prophetic speeches. The paper focused on three fields of EVEs that reflect the ethics of sustainable development. The first is on bringing about environmental balance by cooperation between individuals and groups, and appreciating their components. The second provides some EVEs related to environmental management through the rational use of non-renewable resources, and investment in renewable ones. The final field offers, as examples, some EVEs for environmental protection through preventing pollution. Finally, the section of conclusion was set up.

Keywords: Sustainable Development Ethics, Islamic Environmental Values

Introduction

Sustainable Development (SD) ethics, Okour (2012) indicates that it is a remedial strategy for dangerous situations. SD can improve the quality of the life and the environment, both of which must be achieved to satisfy the needs of the present and future generations. It is a strategy that is implemented in its program named *Agenda 21*.

Agenda 21, Okour (2008) indicates, is a global project initiated by *Rio 92* to protect the environment. It calls for adopting ethics towards the environment within its 40 chapters. Okour maintains that these chapters were systemized for schooling people to be environmentalists. *Rio 92* is a movement for SD that has established a global base for change towards a sustainable future. Previously, SD was defined in 1987 by the World Commission Strategy's(WCS) as "*a development that meets the needs of present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their basic needs*" (WCS 1987:43). Consequently, the United Nations (UN) (1993) has since asked all the countries which attended to include measures for SD in their national strategies. Okour (2008) points that taking SD to heart, many developed, as well as developing, countries responded to the UN call for modifying their policies to include sustainable measures.

Okour (2012) states that SD is a development in all walks of life, She asks for contemporary environmental thoughts to implement SD in order to reconcile between the *development* and the *conversation* subjects. This underpins the viewpoint of Keating (1993) who says that the two issues of *development* and *conversation* can deeply affect public orientation and responsibility. The responsibility is achieved by following a proper way, within the Environmental Management (EM) process, in managing natural resources efficiently as Keating (1993) states, managing resources in an efficient and far sighted way is by far the most important goal in SD. To apply SD measures, Hague (2002) calls for reducing the use of natural resources by seeking out alternatives. Those alternatives, Okour (2008) and Keating(1993), are named *renewable* resources that should be managed to meet the basic goals of SD. Consequently, at a global level, SD should treat the various issues in the three connected dimensions of *economics*, *environment* and *society*, based on the concept of according priority to environmental issues in economic and social development for the present and future generations. The three dimensions have to be deeply interlinked in order to achieve sustainability. Palmer (1998) writes, the concept of SD is inextricably interwoven with environmental economics.

Environmental ethics is needed to cope with national and global environmental issues, WCS (1987) exposes the Norwegian prime minister, Brundtland, speeches that emphasized the need for a new ethics to dominate environmental problems, in which economic growth goes in hand with environmental protection. Brundtland continued, "solving environmental problems is not only a matter of having various technologies and new methods dealing with pollution, but also pro-environmental awareness and commitment to behave positively towards nature" (p. 43). Furthermore, a number of environmentalists, (Okour, 2012, 2008; Keating, 1993; McCoy and McCull, 1993) insisted Palmer and Nael(1994) speeches that SD is a result of many national environmental disasters have happened, e.g., dried wetlands, dumping of wastes in the oceans, multiplying roads and houses on agricultural land, over-exploiting wild animals and plants for economic reasons, and the ever increasing use of fossil fuels.

Al Qassas (1996) points out, the increasingly frequent natural disasters happening have forced man to change his attitude towards the environment. In his progress and development, man has, by both commission and omission,

greatly laid the environment to waste. In his wake, the problems mainly caused by the increasing use of technology in various aspects of life. The new technologies are continually being introduced, causing much anguish and hysteria over environmental issues.

The question begged is: What is the solution to these problems within Religion and Islamic views? The answer perhaps lies in our conscience influenced by the individual religious background. All the main religions emphasize the protection of nature and consider humans as the only creatures able to protect the earth, considering detrimental actions against the environment as sins (Samarrai 1993). Regarding Islam, it is a religion of obedience to Allah, the Creator of earth that is set for life, Al Qardawi (1995) argues that the earth was not created only for humans, but for all creatures, Allah said: *"and the earth He puts down for all creatures"* (Surah 55:12). Allah asked for a very specific relationship between the whole creatures-without any conflict- to form a new structure called the "environment". Thus, all creatures should partake in the pleasures of the earth because they all praise and admire Allah *"all praise to the Lord of Al-Alamin"* (Surah 1: 1).

Tahtawi (1996) points out that the reason for God creating the earth is to have life. Therefore, when we consider the environment, we should not think it a resource that is inexhaustible. It has an ecological capacity for self-renewable in nature, but damage wrought beyond that will change even the 'good' elements to harmful ones that may threaten life. Any too drastic change imposed on it may well affect it irreversibly. Islam underlines the importance of preserving ecosystems and calls for exploiting them wisely and rationally within their powers of self-recuperation so as not to put them into irreversible decline.

Therefore, protecting the environment by refraining to waste its resources but, instead, preserving them, is our individual as well as collective duty. Allah has threatened to punish- in this world or in the hereafter, or in both - those who change His blessings. Allah said: *"And whosoever changes Allah's favor after it had come to him, then surely, Allah will be severe in His punishment"* (Surah 2: 211). It is indisputable that destruction of the elements, which has caused so much suffering to the modern world, is a punishment of sorts for those who abuse the bounties of Allah: *"Evil has appeared on land and sea because of what the hand of men have earned, that He made them taste a part of that which they have done"* (Surah 30: 41).

To understand more about Islamic environmental ethics, the following three fields are taken into consideration:

1. Environmental Balance

Hamid (1997) stated that man lives in three environments-vital, man-made, and social. These environments interact with each other. The environment, as a functional system, has communal relations between its organic and non-organic components. In addition, it has inputs and outputs that afford it ability for self-recuperation from any small damage so that the ecosystem can remain stable. Stability needs a dynamic balance between environmental inputs and outputs. Man, as a living creature, must depend on various resources for his sustenance- light, food, water, shelter and air. These place a fair, but not excessive, demand on the environment. However, the improvement in his standard of living, brought about mainly by industrialization, has placed untenable demands on the environment, such that the ecological balance cannot be restored unless the demands are reined in.

1.1 Appreciating the Environmental Components

Al Qardawi (1995) indicates that Allah created the earth for humans, and the trees, plants and rivers were also created for their sake. Therefore, all the components should be respected, as they possess natural value. The respect accorded them could be in their proper use that reflects SD ethics, and protection from abuse.

Appreciating Human Beings

Al Qardawi (1995) said that Allah valued humans from the beginning by ordering the angels to prostrate before their Father (Adam): *"And when We said to the angels prostrate yourselves before Adam"* (Surah 2: 34). Allah entrusts humans, and gives them the responsibility to care for the earth when He made them *Khaleefha* on earth, or descendant of the planet: *"and makes you inheritors of the earth"* (Surah 27: 62) and *"And remember when your lord said to the angels, Verily, I am going to place (mankind) generations after generations on earth"* (Surah 2: 30). Allah gave humans the privilege to use the resources on earth *"He is Who created for you all that is in the earth"* (Surah 2: 29). As with power comes responsibility, humans had to assume the protection of the earth as only they can distinguish right from wrong. Thus, all living and non-living things should be respected.

Appreciating the Role of Science and Scientists

The Role of science and scientists in protecting the environment is respected in Islam. Scientists could save the planet from damage by encouraging the development of new technologies, Ibn Khatheer (1988) points out that Islam calls for developing a scientific mindset based on rejecting any claim without proof: *"Is there any ilahh (god) with Allah? Say: "Bring forth your proofs, if you are truthful"* (Surah 27: 64). Qutb (1987) indicates that Islam calls for rejecting guess in situations requiring certainty and science: *"But they have no knowledge thereof. They follow but a guess, and verily, guess is no substitute for the truth"*(Surah 53: 28).

The Prophet urged Muslims to acquire useful knowledge and to travel for the sake of learning. Abi al Darda, in

Al Sayed(1999), said: "*Who walks away seeking with it knowledge, Allah will make his way to paradise easy, for the angles to put down their wings as a sign that they are pleased with his deeds; all the creatures in the sky and earth, and even whales in the oceans, ask forgiveness for the scholar*"¹. Islam accords priority to science which essence is fearing Allah and believing in Him as the only Deity. Allah said: "*It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah*" (Surah 35: 38). Islam asks for appreciating scientists by distinguishing between people who are knowledgeable and those who are not.

Appreciating the Soil

Islam also accords respect to non-livings, such as the soil and water. Allah wants humans to appreciate them as they are also Allah's creatures, glorifying and praising Him: "*The seven heavens and the earth and all that is therein glorify Him, and there is not a thing that does not glorify His praise*" (Surah 17: 44). The origin of human beings, as well as their life elements, derives from the earth. Scientists have analyzed the human body and found it to be made up of 16 elements.

The first element is oxygen, and the last manganese. The elements of the crust of the earth, consisted enriched clay are the same as those in the human body, this that is called soil (Jamal 1999). Thus, from Islamic view, soil should be respected because Allah created human from clay molded into shape, and then breathed into him his soul (Ibn Khatheer 1988), Allah said: "*He is Who has created you from clay*"(Surah 6, 2), and "*Allah did create you from dust*"(Surah 35: 11). For more appreciation of the soil, Allah asked all Muslims to use purified soil in ablution- *Tayamum* - if there is a lack of water.

Appreciating Water

Water is considered the most valuable natural resource in life, and must be appreciated because of its importance, not only for humans, but for all creatures. Life would be impossible without water "*We made from water everything living*" (Surah 21: 30). Tahtawi (1996) points out, about 70 percent of the human body is water, and if the body loses only 20 percent of it, the person will die. Allah indicates that human beings originated from water "*And it is Who has created man from water*" (Surah 25: 54). Moreover, water is also considered the source of vegetation "*It is He Who sends down water from the sky, and with it We bring forth vegetation of all kinds, from which We bring forth green stalks*"(Surah 6: 99).

Water is the source of sustenance "*Who has made the earth a resting place for you, and the sky as a canopy, and sent down water from the sky and brought forth therewith fruits as a provision for you*" (Surah 2: 22). Besides, it is the only substance to drink "*Then tell Me about the water that you drink. It is you who cause it from the rain-clouds, or are We the Causer for it to come down?*" (Surah 56: 68-69). Consequently, this important resource should be sustained everlastingly; water ought to be used in an efficient and far-sighted way with our full appreciation. Appreciation of this grant could be verified by investing rain water and rationalizing the use of it.

1.2 Taking care of Living Creatures

The vital system includes the flora and fauna (biological diversity) on the earth and in water, and the interaction between water, soil and natural vegetation plays an important role in the distribution of natural life. Human beings depend on animals for their daily lives, and, in turn, animals on plants for their survival. Allah asks us to be thankful for these grants: "*And they have other benefits from them, and they get (milk) to drink. Will they not then be grateful?*" (Surah 36:73), and blessed this wealth in the following verse:

"and the cattle he created for you, in them there is warmth and numerous benefits, and from them you eat. And wherein is beauty for you when bringing them home in the evening, and as you lead them forth to pasture in the morning. And they carry your load to a land that you cannot reach except with great trouble to yourselves. Truly, your Lord is full of Kindness and Most Merciful" (Surah 16: 5-7).

Sustainable Development by Maintaining Biodiversity

In Islam, more attention should be paid to this EVE because Allah gives everything His care. Allah said: "*He is who sends down water from the sky, from which you drink and grow the vegetation on which you send your cattle to pasture*" (Surah, 16: 10). In this verse, an equal right is given to both humans and animals to enjoy the natural resources. This value meets with the principle of *interdependence* in SD.

In Islam, humans do not own the natural resources, but are merely their caretakers to preserve the universe as created by Allah (Al-Tamimi, 1991) because "*everything with Him is measured*" (Surah 13: 8). Thus, His gifts should be protected as Allah created the earth with the means for living, not only for humans but also for all the other creatures. As God said:

"And the earth, We spread out and have placed there in firm mountains, and caused to grow there all kinds of things in due proportions. And we have provided there the means for living, for you and for those whom you provided for not. And there is not a thing, but with Us are the stores thereof. And We send them not down except in known measures"(Surah 15: 19-21).

Protecting the Wilderness

Islam preceded the modern world in initiating reserves for endangered species, and wild animals and plants. The Prophet designated some areas in Mecca and Medina as protected areas to conserve the original fauna and flora. The sacred places are about 12 miles long, stretching from Mount "Irr" near Miqat to Mount "Tor" in Medina near "Uhod" in the north (Soukari, 1995). Thus, Islam set up environmental laws, forbidding hunting, and harvesting natural plants-the wilderness- in the months of Ihram. As Allah said:

"O, you who believe! Kill not the game while you are in a state of Ihram, and whosoever kills intentionally, the penalty is an offering, brought to the Ka'bah of an eatable animal, equivalent to the one he killed, as adjudged by two just men among you or, for expiation, he should feed Masakin, or its equivalent in Saum" (Surah 5: 95).

The Islamic concern over wilderness is the basis for environmental protection, not only for the present generation, but also for the future and far-future ones. The forbiddance of hunting and harvesting of plants in the months of Ihram affords them an opportunity for regeneration. This could be manifested from the Prophet say who prohibited us from killing four creatures - *Ant, Bee, Hoopoe (Al-Hodhod) and AL-Sard* (a bird)".

Allah will ask us in the Hereafter about the bad indulgent deeds we practiced in our daily lives: *"then on the day you shall be asked about the delights"* (Surah 102: 80). If a person hunts in contravention of the prohibition, he is punished by offering an eatable animal to the poor, or undertaking an equivalent self-punishment in fasting. This punishment represents an *environmental tax* on those who misbehave, or offend any animal/bird in the wilderness.

1.3 Environmental Cooperation

For maintaining the environmental balance, Islam advocates a social system based on *cohesion and symbiosis*. *The Prophet said: "Muslims are like one body in their mutual friendship and mercy"* (Al Sha'rawi, 1991). Islam also made the standard of righteousness as the basis for differences between people. Allah said: *"O mankind, We have created you from a male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another"* (Surah 49: 13).

Cooperation in Good Deeds

Islam asked for actual cooperation between each other for doing good deeds to construct a well-built world, not a destroyed one. Allah said: *"Help you one another in Al-Birr and Al-taqwa, but do not help one another in sin and transgression and fear Allah"* (Surah 5: 2).

This is an explicit invitation to help *Al-Birr (righteousness and goodness)* in our actions. Allah will punish anyone who commits terrible deeds and sins that contribute to destroying not only the relationships between ourselves, but also the world (Tahtawi 1996). The value of *cooperation* must be verified at all levels to achieve prosperity in the worldly life.

Reducing Poverty

Ibn Khatheer (1988) said that Islam asks for a balance between rich and poor by ordering the rich to pay *Al-Zakat* to the poor under the principles of "intergenerational" and "intragenerational" in SD. *Al-Zakat* is considered one of the five Islamic pillars, and the most important economic means for establishing social justice. It also leads society to the means of prosperity and security. Allah said: *"Perform Al-Salat and give Al-Zakat"* (Surah 2: 83), as the resources should be shared by us and our grandchildren due to the Islamic view that the earth is for all generations.

2. Environmental Management (EM) Values

Al Shara'wi (1991) argues that Allah chose humans from all his creatures to rule the earth, and to be steward for its resources. God, in His wisdom, has assigned stewardship, or *Khilafa*, on the earth to human beings, and named him *Khlaeeffa*. In this respect, man has to manage the earth, not only for his own benefit but also for all creatures. Man is entrusted with its preservation and care, and must only use it within the limits of the trust. Ibn Khatheer (1988) said that the Prophet declared *"the world is beautiful and green, and verily, God has made you His stewards in it, and He sees how you acquit"* (Saheeh Muslim). So, the *Khaleefha* must manage the natural resources for the environment to be balanced, and, therefore, stable. He must use the natural resources responsibly without abusing them. The following sub-sections clarify the value of EM:

2.1 Sustaining the Limited Elements

Allah created everything in the universe in due proportion and measure, saying: *"Verily, all things have We created by measure"* (Surah 54: 49), *"Everything to Him is measured"* (Surah 13: 8), and *"And We have produced everything in balance"* (Surah:15:9).

These holy verses disclose the limits to natural resources, thus, reducing their consumption is also embedded in the verses (Ibn Khatheer 1988). Recently, the principle of *limited natural resources* in SD has been argued, stimulating the advocates of SD to call for using natural resources sustainability. Islam gives special attention to the universe in evidence of the Creator's greatness as He said: *"Have you not seen that God is glorified by all in*

the heavens and on the earth, such as the birds with wings outspread? Each knows its worship and glorification, and God is aware of what they do" (Surah 24: 41). Therefore, these elements, in the teachings of Islam, must be sustained as these elements provide for human welfare, having too their roles in glorifying Allah.

Rational Utilizations of Natural Resources

The damage wrought on the environment depends on the degree of development and complexity of the economic system. To prevent environmental damage, the friendly eco-economy must take into account environmental depletion and alteration (Jamil 1999). Jamil continues that in Islam, the right to use natural resources comes with an obligation to conserve them quantitatively and qualitatively.

Madani (1989) stated that Islam is a religion of moderation in everything. Its teachings emphasize the duty to balance the just satisfaction of individual versus group needs. Allah said: *You will never be hungry nor naked. And you will suffer not from thirst nor from the sun's heat"* (Surah 20: 118 - 119).

Two examples are now given of resource use- the consumption of water and food:

According to decreasing the consumption of water, Islam advocates steering a middle course in everything. Allah says: *"Thus We have made of you an Ummat, justly balanced"* (Surah 2: 143). According to the tradition of the Prophet of Islam, a Muslim is to be economical with water if taking from a big river: "Allah's Messenger (peace be upon him) happened to pass by Sa'd as he was performing ablution. He said: *Sa'd what is this extravagance?* Sa'd said: Can there be any idea of extravagance in ablution? The Prophet said: *Yes, even if you are by the side of a flowing river"*.

Therefore, reducing water use is an important virtue for life, as water is the embodiment of life. This is the conclusion from what has been said of our Prophet warning Sa'd not to waste water for his ablution even when taken from a bountiful river. This is an explicit invitation for humans to reduce their consumption of water (Al Sha'rawi, 1991).

In a Hadith that reflects the future scene regarding the sa'd issue, the Prophet said according to Abu Dawud: *"There will be a people amongst this Ummah who will transgress in their supplication and ablution"*.

It is obvious that the transgressing in wasting even in ablution means the use of excessive amounts of water or it misuse even for an apparently impressive purpose and objective is disallowed by Islam. This is contrary to the Islamic culture of maintaining the healthy balance between need and waste.

According to decreasing the consumption of food, it is desired to have environmental value in Islam, God ordered humans to partake of food and drink without wastefulness *"And eat and drink but waste not by extravagance, certainly He likes not AL-Musrifun"* (Surah 7, 31). Moreover, the Prophet asked humans to eat and drink just for sustenance and not in excess, he warned us against over-consuming food, which would weaken the mind and body. Ibn Khatheer (1988) interprets that the Prophet divided the needs of the human body into three thirds: one for food, one for drink, and the last for respiration.

Ibn Khatheer (1988) indicates that Islam is based on the values of moderation and control without extravagance. It considered them as the characteristics of believers *"and those who when they spend are neither extravagant nor niggardly, but hold a medium (way) between those extremes"* (Surah 25: 76). On the other hand, Allah considered the wastrel as the brother of devils and does not accept and like them *"Verily, the spendthrifts are brothers of the 'shayatin' devils"* (Surah 17: 27).

Investing in Renewable Natural Resources

Islam has environmental values in the verses and signs of Allah that require deep thinking to understand. Islam asks for experimental science to develop evidence-based thinking *"Bring forth your argument, if ye be telling the truth"* (Surah 27:4), and *"Bring me a Book before this, or any remnant knowledge, if ye are telling the truth"* (Surah 46, 4). Islam also encourages traveling to seek the truth *"And were the ways of life that have passed away before you: travel through the earth and see what was the end of those who rejected truth"* (Surah 7:37).

Al Sha'rawi (1991) points out that Allah asks humans to think deeply on the many signs and verses: *"And how many signs in the heavens and the earth that pass by, while they are averse there from"* (Surah 12, 105). Islam urges us to create technical devices to more innovation and modernization with his limited ability as in the following verse: *"O, ye assembly of Jinns and men! If it be ye can pass beyond the zones of the heavens and the earth, pass ye! But not without authority shall ye be able to pass!"* (Surah 55:33). An example of a good environmental investment is given below:

Harnessing Rain Water

Tahtawi (1996) points out, there are many verses reflect the direct concern of the Divine Will whenever it rains: *"And God sends down rain from the skies, and gives therewith life to the earth"* (Surah: 16:65), *"and He sends down rain from the sky and with it gives life to earth"* (Surah: 30:24).

Allah reminds humans to be grateful for His bounty bestowed in natural elements like the wealth of rain. Tahtawi indicates that there is another instance of this philosophy contained in these verses:

"And We send down from the sky rain charged with blessing, and We produce therewith gardens

and grain for harvests" (Surah: 50:9). "Is it you who cause it from the rain clouds to come down, or are We the causer for it to come down. If we willed, we verily could make it salt: Why then do you not offer thanks to Allah?" (Surah 56, 68-70). "Verily, in this is indeed evident proof and a manifest sign for people who give thought" (Surah 16:10-11).

Those verses signify for thanking Allah that could be verified, as Tahtawi (1996) explains, by collecting rainwater in wells and dams for usage instead of being wasted. Islam focuses on planning for projects like dams without damaging ecosystems, Allah guided *Zul-Qarnian* how to construct dams, He said about him: *"Bring me blocks of iron. At length, when he had filled up the space between the two steep mountains-sides, he said: Bring me that I may pour over it molten lead"* (Surah 18: 96).

3. Environmental Planning

Planning is of the most concern in Islamic instructions, in which the modern administration system is reflected (Al Sha'rawi, 1991). This system is built on shared planning and decision making, as in Environmental Management Systems (EMSs). In such systems, the scientific and technical methods are based on practical plans and collective decisions. In Islam, environmental planning appears throughout Muslim thinking and work. *Zul-Qarnian* in the Holy verses asks people to help him in building the famous dam, preventing "yajooj" and "maooj" from destroying their country.

Islam is a practical religion, it urges humans to seek for work and to acquire wealth *"And seek the bounty of God"* (Surah 62:10). Allah restricts humans work, He asked to do good to be successful: *"work righteousness, and soon will God observe your work. And also His Messenger and the believers"* (Surah 9: 105). Thus, humans must set the suitable goals to do the best work as Islam has put limitations in conducting any work: *"And do not forget your portion of lawful enjoyment in this world; and do good as Allah has been good to you, and not seek mischief in the land. Verily, Allah likes not the Mufsideen"* (Surah 28:77).

Consequently, Tahtawi (1996) points out that in order to do well, it is important to set up the primary plan, avoiding mischief to achieve the balanced ecosystems. So, managing natural resources and searching for alternatives should be taken into consideration. As Islam is the best for all times and places, thus, Allah asks for wise management in any practical action, imitating the signs of Allah through the universe: *"Say, travel through the earth and see how God originate creation"* (Surah 29:20). Allah calls us to imagine how He created the universe without any fault, and to use Him as the ultimate model in planning: *"you can see no fault in the creation of the most Gracious"* (Surah 67: 3). Good planning in Islam is achieved by communal consultation, which is now adopted by flexible administration: *"and who conducts their affairs by mutual consultations"* (Surah 42:38). According to Tahtawi (1996), the Prophet also asked Muslims for consulting others' opinion so as not to gain regret.

3.1 Environmental Protection

When Allah created the environment, He made the heavens as a cover. He protected it from dangers such as shooting stars, and the Ultra-Violet (UV) ray that is a serious risk nowadays (Al Rafa'i, 1989). Allah said: *"And We have made the heavens as a canopy, well-guarded, yet do they turn away from the signs which these things point to"* (Surah 21: 32).

Recently, Jamil (1999) indicates, the atmosphere comprises several layers, each with its own distinctive features to protect life on earth. Allah created the stratosphere - the layer that contains ozone - to screen out excess harmful UV radiation from reaching the earth. Talaba (1992) indicates that the mesosphere layer works as a shield against shooting stars and meteors. Therefore, Allah has protected the environment for man who is His *Khaeefha* on earth. However, man has abused his bounty from Allah by using industry to improve his living standards, in the process wreaking havoc on natural systems. Various technologies create pollutants from harmless raw materials, and these have become the main causes of pollution (Al Qasas, 1996). Some of the damage already caused may be difficult, if not impossible, to be ameliorated. Ironically, man ends up suffering the most from his own hand.

Water Pollution

On protecting water from pollution, Al Sha'rawi (1991) said that Islam has a strong view on the subject because water is a major bounty from God. It must be appreciated and protected from all pollution forever, as stated by our Prophet in barring humans strewing waste in calm water. These prohibitions lead, without doubt, to preventing water pollution which can affect living things by causing disease. Allah said: *"So eat and drink of the sustenance provided by God, and do no evil nor mischief on the earth"* (Surah 2: 60). Why then do we pollute water by our irresponsible actions in spite of the water being sent down from the sky purely? Allah said: *"And we send down pure water from the sky"* (Surah 25: 47).

In addition to the protection of water from pollution, the Sunnah emphasized the proper use of water without wasting it. One more Hadith regarding the protection of water is related to the use of clean still water. Imam Muslim narrated that the Prophet said: *"No one should bathe in still water, when he is junub (impure)"*.

The above analysis would have already stressed the significance of water for various needs. It is God's will that all living beings on earth are dependent for their existence on water: *"We made from water every living thing"* (Surah 21:30)

Air Pollution

This element is no less important than water for the continuation and preservation of life. Nearly all global creatures are utterly dependent on the air they breathe. The air, Al Qasas (1996) indicates, has other functions which may be less apparent to man but which God has created for definite purposes, as we have been made aware of by the Glorious Qura'n -such as the vitally important role of the winds in pollination. God has said: *"And we send the fertilizing winds..."* (Surah 15:22). The winds are also clear evidence of Allah's power and grace, and the excellence of design in His creation. He has also said:

"Verily in the creation of the heavens and the earth; in the alternation of night and day..... in the change of the winds, and the clouds compelled between heaven and earth surely there are signs for a people who have sense" (Surah 2:164)

"And He it is Who sends the winds as tidings heralding His grace: until when they have raised a heavy-laden cloud, We drive it to a dead land and cause the rain to descend upon it, and thereby bring forth fruits of every kind" (Surah 7:57)

Since the atmosphere performs all these biological and social functions, its conservation, pure and unpolluted, is an essential aspect of the conservation of life itself which is one of the fundamental objectives of Islamic law (Al Rafa'i, 1989). Again, whatever is indispensable to fulfill this imperative obligation is itself obligatory. Therefore any activity which pollutes it and ruins or impairs its function is an attempt to damage and hamper Allah's wisdom toward His creation. This must similarly be considered an obstacle of some aspects of the human role in the development of this world.

Al Qasas (1996) indicates, Islam considers pollution as a mischief, damage and alteration for the blessings of Allah: *"and do good as Allah has been good to you, and not cause mischief on the land. Verily, Allah likes not the Mufsideen"* (Surah 28: 77). It very firmly calls on us not to pollute our natural elements. Preventing pollution is the individual religious duty for every Muslim. As Many verses in Holy Qura'n ask for doing good deeds to avoid harming the earth: *"Do not mischief on the earth after it has been set in order"* (Surah 7: 56) and *"And spend of your substance in the cause of Allah and make not your own hands contribute to your destruction but do good"* (Surah 2: 195). Allah ordered us not to change the features of his bounty as He will punish anyone who does so: *"And whoever changes Allah's favor after it had come to him, then surely, Allah is severe in punishment"* (Surah 2:211). As a result, the air is a vital element to be maintained in its pristine condition, and not be polluted.

Protecting the air from pollutants can be realized from many sayings of the Prophet. There are many Hadiths(talks) that tell us that the Prophet, discouraged or prohibited activities that result in unpleasant smells, from taking place in certain public places. The Prophet asked Muslims not eat Garlic and Onion while getting close to praying. This is understood from the Hadith narrated by Abu Dawaud: *"He who eats from this wicked plant, should not get close to our mosque, until its smell goes."*

Al-Qaradawi (1995) refers to a religious ruling (fatwa) upon the fact that smoking is harmful to the health of primary and secondary smokers. It is the harm that results from releasing anything into the air, which forms the fundamental basis of al-Qaradawi's mention. By comparison, anything that pollutes the air and is damaging the health should be prohibited in Islam. This includes indirect harm such as in the case of the dangerous gases, which depletes the ozone layer. Harmful gases, that cannot be prohibited all together, should be reduced and alternatives should be made popular. The emission of Carbon Monoxide would certainly be a target of this prohibition. A case is also made out to find out alternative sources of energy to protect against, if possible, the damage via global warming phenomenon due to a continued use of fossil fuels.

Soil Pollution

Like air and water, the land and soil are essential for the continuation of our lives and the lives of other creatures. Allah has declared in the Qura'n: *"And the earth He has established for living creatures"* (Surah 55:10). He has also made the land our home and the home of all global beings *"And God has made you grow, as a plant from the earth; then to it He returns you, and He will bring you forth a new"* (Surah71:17-18). And as our home, the land has value as open space: *"and God has made the earth a wide expanse, that you may traverse its open ways"* (Surah71:19-20).

Islam does not ignore this EVE, prohibiting all mischief in the land. Soil is the medium for cultivating living things because good soils will produce high quality plants. Polluted soil will produce bad fruits and vegetation as stated by God: *"The vegetation of a good land comes forth by the permission of its Lord, and that which is bad brings forth nothing but with difficulty. Thus we explain variously the Ayat for people who give thanks"* (Surah 7: 58).

If we would truly give thanks to the Creator, we are required to maintain the productivity of the soil, and not

expose it to erosion by building, farming, grazing, forestry, and mining. We are required to follow practices that do not bring about soil degradation, but preserve and enhance its fertility. Any act that leads to its destruction or degradation leads necessarily to the destruction of life on earth, such acts are categorically forbidden.

Food Pollution

The motto "Prevention is Better than Cure" is useful in preventing food pollution. Islamic law is based on the principle "stopping mischief takes priority over obtaining benefits" (Faqih 1993: 80). We can conclude that Islam deposits great store in *protecting food from pollution*. It asserts this value by calling to eat only good quality food - food 'naked' from any kind of pollution to keep the health of human beings. Allah said: "*O, mankind! Eat of that is lawful and good in the earth*" (Surah 2: 168) and "*O, Ye who believe! Eat the lawful things that We have provided you with, and be grateful to Allah, if it is indeed He whom you worship*" (Surah 2:72). Therefore, Islam warns us from eating "Al-Maitah" - dead animals - and the meat of pig as it eats polluted things and rubbish (Ibn Khatheer 1988), as He said: "*He has forbidden you only the Maitah, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that which is slaughtered as a sacrifice for others than Allah*" (Surah 2:173). The prophet called Muslims to put covers in the pots of food and water for preventing from disease.

Seas and Oceans

Seas and oceans are important in providing us with much of God's bounty. Ghanimi (1995) indicates that Allah has put the seas and oceans under human control to supply him with food (dried and live fish), and to provide him pearls, jewelries, coral, and oil from their bottom. Allah said: "*Out of them both come out pearl and coral*" (Surah 55:22). These grants of bounty are now damaged by ungrateful humans who destroy natural resources not only on land, but also in the seas without considering God's displeasure: "*Evil has appeared on land and sea because of what the hand of men have earned, that He makes them taste a part of that which they have done*" (Surah 30: 41). The word 'evil' means many kinds of immoral and depraved actions that result from denying nature's rights (Al Sha'rawi, 1991).

Noise Pollution

Allah asked Muslims to lower their voices in talking in order not to detract from the good they have done (Al Sha'rawi, 1991). For further appreciation of this value, Allah stated that paradise is without noise pollution: "*Where they neither hear harmful speech nor falsehood*" (Surah 88:11), "*No laghw (evil talk) will they hear therein, nor any sinful speech, but only the greeting 'salam, salam'*" (Surah 56, 25 - 26).

Moreover, rowdy voices distract from the value of good deeds already done, and whosoever speaks in hushed voice is forgiven and granted good reward. Allah said: "*O, you believers, raise not your voices above that of the Prophet, nor speak aloud to him in talk as you speak aloud to one another, lest your deeds should be rendered fruitless while you perceive not*" (Surah 49: 2). Allah ascribes no wisdom to those who raise their voices: "*Verily, those who call you from behind the dwellings, most of them have no sense*" (Surah 49: 4).

Islam asks for lower voices and forbids the higher ones that only bother and annoy the people who hear. God said: "*And be moderate in your walking and lower your voice. Verily, the harshest of all voices is the braying of the asses*" (Surah 31:19)*. Allah forbids us speaking loudly because loudness is unkind and unpleasant, like the braying of a donkey. It could be understood that loudspeakers in celebrations are prohibited in Islamic law and beliefs.

Conclusion

From what has been discussed, it is clear that to be ecologically sound, SD could be taken into account as an actual movement for effectively planning development along with conservation. Developed countries should follow these two issues, development and conservation, and help the poor countries in achieving their national strategies. If SD applied by developed and developing countries, it will be used as an ethical plan that could reconcile the three dimensions of economics, environment, and the society. It could rescue the environment from its present threat of degradation.

To hold these views, people should reconcile their religious beliefs with the technological approaches regarding their environment, the new generation needs to view the environment as a colleague not as a slave, and a structure of communal actions is needed to embrace some if not more EVEs.

Islam has considerable environmental ethics and values. It was a pioneer in introducing such advanced ethics and values; it obligates Muslims to be the caretakers, not damagers, of ecosystems. Islamic EVEs are true divine ethics imposed by Allah to guide us in our behavior to the environment. They act as positive moulds for individual and group beliefs and behavior. They can be practiced as the bases for environmental balance, management and protection. All societies will be increasingly aware of proper behavior to ecosystems because Islamic ethics and values will greatly influence human thought. It goes without saying that if human beings had kept to the teachings of Islam, they would have avoided committing all the root causes of environment problems. It is hoped that Islamic ethics and values in the Holy Qura'n will be considered in new studies for achieving equilibrium in this world, so that they need not be subsequently used instead to rescue the earth.

Finally, Islamic ethics towards the environment meets all of the previous in their rationales; it is considered a normative ethics in merging the three global ethics.

Notes

*All the translation of Holly Qura'n verses is taken from translation of the meanings of "The Noble Qura'n in the English Language" by Mohammad Taqi-Din Al-Hilali. Islamic University, Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah in 1996. The prophet says are taken from "Reyad Al Salheen" (AlNawawi)

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