



An Analysis of Religious Perspective in Environment

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Abstract

Environment are natural consists of all living and non-living things living together on Earth. Due to human demand and greedy towards the environment, various alternatives applied in human, namely science in law, science and policy, science and technology, sustainability science, ethic in science, etc.; in controlling human activities and maintain the environment from being continuously destructed. However, the ideas for environmental solution are not resolved in overall and the religious perspective is taking part in environmental destruction prevention. So, the religious are very concern on human attitude that should be applied and implement 'love' for every action taken to prevent harm towards the natural environment. Therefore, religion in Islamic, Buddhist, Christian, and Hindus perspective are the most successful to become a major role in sustaining the environment for coming future.

Keywords: Law and policy; sustainability and ethic; religions; love; environment.

Introduction

Environment can be described as natural environment. Natural environment consists of all livings and non-living things that live together on Earth. It is an environment that encompasses the interaction of all living species (Johnson et al., 1997). For example, human and animals interact with water, air, plants, mountains, etc.; to continue the life on the Earth. The continuous interaction creates a cyclical system, which help to maintain and sustain the Earth from destruction or extra natural resources in certain level. Moreover, the environment can also be referred as a system (a physical system interact with other system by exchanging mass, energy, or other properties), biophysical (the interaction between physical and biological in chemical reaction can affect an organism), and a series of natural sounds (which refer as a natural sounds create by seashore with crashing waves or a thunderstorm with falling rain, and being record onto CDs) (Kemp, 1998).

Natural environment consists of various elements which benefit to human being and

other livings being on Earth. Human population increase, the demand towards the natural environment will also increase. From there, human start to take advantage of the natural environment to fulfill the attitude of greedy. The situation will cause the destruction towards the environment. For examples, extreme logging activities create landslide, factorizations create poisonous smoke and chemical will affect the air and water quality, cutting trees to build an airport which will create sound pollution, and human waste products will reduce the space on Earth, decreasing soil quality and create a situation of odor pollution. So, human should control their attitude and activities which will cause the destruction towards the environment.

In the coming century, natural environment issues start to be concerned and debate among the global community. Various methods had been discussing and applied into human itself. Science in law, science and policy, science and technology, sustainability science, ethic in science, etc.; had been introduced to control human activities and maintain the natural



environment from being continue destruct (Hua, 2016a). However, the solution to the natural environment still can't be solved in overall. So, the suggestion to maintain the natural environment is by religious perspective on the environment. Various religious have various believe towards the environment. This report will discuss more on main religious, which is Islamic perspective, Buddhist perspective, Christian perspective, and Hindus perspective (Hua, 2016b).

Discussion

In Islam, the main references of Islam religion are Qur'an and Hadith. There are lots of emphasis is put in the Qur'an and Hadith on nature and natural phenomena as divine signs indicating the knowledge, the wisdom and the power of God. In Islamic perspectives, men are God's vicegerents on earth, to steward all the created things both in the living and the non-living things. God had created the skies with the sun, the moon, the stars, and the surface of earth with trees, gardens, mountain, rivers, oceans and the several of the animals. God had given us a brain (intellect) to think rationally before doing something and taking care of our earth and environment. Nature and environment were created by God and its belonging to God not ours. Everything in the nature is a sign of God's existence. Nabi Muhammad (pbuh) said: "The earth is green and beautiful, and Allah has appointed you his stewards over it".

In the Asisi Declaration on Nature (1986) Muslim leader stated that the central concepts of Islam are:

- i) *Tawhid* (The Unity of God)
- ii) *Khalifah* (inheritor)
- iii) *Akhirah* (life after death)

Allah is Unity and His unity is also reflected in the unity of mankind, and the unity of man and nature. His trustee is responsible for maintaining the unity of His creation, the integrity of the earth, its flora and fauna. This entire central

concept of Islam is concern in maintaining through balance and harmony, especially towards environmental ethics of Islam. For these reasons Muslims see themselves as having full responsibility towards the world and the environment because all of the creation is made by Allah (Hua, 2016c; 2016d).

Christian perspective is also discussed more on the environment. Rev Dr. Mark Reid, a Minister of Swaffham Baptist Church stated that there are three areas on Christian perspective on the environment based on from the Bible:

- 1) God made human beings as a stewards of creation
- 2) Environmental problems largely stem from human sinfulness
- 3) The redemption of man involves the redemption of creation

In the context of Christian theology, environment is the world that God has created and human beings are part of that creation. In the Christian perspective on the environment, human beings are seen as the most intelligent life that had been created on the Earth, they are fully responsible for all the damages done on the earth. In the bible, Genesis (2:7) stated that "the Lord God forms a man from the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being". Another prove that shown in the bible is " God created Adam (first man) from the adamah (earth). This show us that human being made from the dust of the ground and suggest that we are intricately connected and linked to the earth.

Christians believe that the whole universe, the earth, the world, the cosmos, animals, plants and others are God's handiwork and God's work of art. This means that the environment does not belong to us. Human are God's representatives on the earth. God borrowed the environment for all living being on Earth to use it properly and take care of it from

destroying and abuse it. Genesis (1 & 2) stated that “And since God created it all, it all belongs to God”. Human role in this world is to be the stewards, managers of something very precious and valuable that belongs to God. Genesis (2:15) suggests that the stewardship role is to till and to keep our garden Earth. Meaning that we need to take care and sustain our earth from any damages.

However, human never stop their activities in destructing the natural environment, which lead to the natural crisis or disaster. “But ask the animals, and they will teach you; or birds of the air and they will tell you; or speak to the earth and it will teach you; or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of all these does not know that the land of the lord has done this. In His hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind. (Job. 12:7-10)” (Horvat, 2011). So, God is fair to all of humankind. When human destruct the environment, eventually they will face the natural disaster.

Buddhism and Hinduism perspective is different with the Islamic and Christian perspective on the environment. In early Buddhism was basically not interested or focused on the nature in this regard; rather, it accepted that the everlasting truth of nature was its impermanence and natural cycle of destruction and formation (Yamamoto and Kuwahara, 2006). However, Buddhism is more concern in the living being, for example animals. In Buddhist teaches, they put emphasis on ‘ahimsa’ which means avoiding injury to any sentient creature. This is the first of the five principles of Buddhist life. In these practices, Buddhist believes that, the act of killing and hurting an animal which is harmful. In the ancient time, Buddhist king Asoka the Great established hospital both for human and animals and he emphasis being kind to animals and forbade killing them even for food. He also built forests by planting trees for providing shelter for the animals. Buddhist also believes in the

concept of ‘Karma’. Simple meaning of Karma is every serve as the cause of a future situation. So, our actions have their own consequences. If we destroy the nature, nature will destroy us back. In their belief, all disasters that occur on our planet such as tsunami, Sandy hurricane, climate change and so on are consequences from our action.

Buddhist also teaches to respect animals. That’s why the majority of Buddhists historically and in the east is practiced in vegetarians. They believe that killing animals and eating meat is a source of bad karma for them. They also implied respect for plants because sometimes plants are described as ‘one-facultied’, having some of sensitivity of animals. They also thought to have a simple life. The monastic life in Buddhism gives the model of simple living without too much consumption of natural resources. If everyone lived simple as well as Buddhist monk, there would be no problems with depletion of resources and very little pollution produced because the sources of pollution such as from manufacturing and transportation would be much more limited.

In Hinduism perspective, the followers believe in the Karma, which they need to respect the living being and do no harm to them, as the same with the Buddhism practices. Karma in Hinduism explains causality through a system where beneficial effects are derived from past beneficial actions and harmful effects from past harmful actions. They also believe in the concept of *ahimsa*, which is non-violence and respect for life. This concept prevents a Hindu from causing harm to any creature. Therefore, as we all known, most of the Hindus are vegetarian. They also put high reverence in the Ganges river, the cow, the cobra, the monkey, etc. That’s why Hindu did not eat cows because the cow is a sacred animal for them and the called the cow as “mother”.

The respect is not only towards the living being, but also non-living being (Tripod Official

Portal, 2015). They also have the believed that they need to respect the environment by having a simple and harmonious life. Isha Upanishad stated that “Everything in the universe belongs to the Supreme God. Therefore take only what you need, that is set aside for you. Do not take anything else, for you know to whom it belongs.” Furthermore, Mahatma Gandhi, the preeminent leader of Indian nationalism, state as their role model for simple living. His entire life can be seen as an ecological treaties, every minute act, emotion or though functioned much like an ecosystem. He’s gone through the simple life such as small meals of nuts and fruits, ablutions and everyday bodily practices, periodic observance of silence, morning walks, his cultivation of the small as much as of the big, spinning wheel, abhorrence of waste, resorting basic Hindu an Jain value of truth, nonviolence, celibacy and fasting. He is also concerned that having vegetarians and fruits, better than having meat as their meal, can help to reduce the attitude of greed on the natural environment.

Conclusion

As a conclusion, human have love value inside their heart. The love value will affect the action that they do. If they take the better action by love, the environment will be safe to sustain for the next generation; but if the action is bad, this will cause destruction to the environment. So, human should awake their self-attitude in the concern with their religious to help in protecting the environment. There are various method involve with the science and technology in maintaining the environment, but the human attitude also needs to control through religious so that the plan to sustain the environment will be successful. Finally, human need religion to awake their attitude towards the environment, so that the environment can be protected, save, and usable for the coming generation.

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