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Al-Bi'ah and Natural Harmony: The Thoughts of Yusuf Al-Qardhawi and Abdullah Bin Umar As-Suhaibani in the Prespective of Maqasid Syariah

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ABSTRACT

The increasing global environmental crisis, ranging from deforestation, pollution, to climate change, makes the study of fiqh al-bi'ah (environmental jurisprudence) an increasingly relevant field in contemporary Islamic studies. This study aims to comparatively analyze two main strands of thought in contemporary environmental fiqh, namely the maqashid shari'ah and mashlahah approaches formulated by Yusuf al-Qardhawi in Ri'ayat al-Bi'ah fi Syari'ah al-Islam (2001), and the classical ahkam fiqhiyyah approach compiled by Abdullah bin Umar as-Suhaibani in Ahkam al-Bi'ah fi al-Fiqh al-Islami (2008). This study uses a qualitative method based on library research with descriptive-comparative analysis. The results of the study show that although the two figures differ in methodology and scope of discussion, Qardhawi is philosophically ethical based on maqashid shari'ah, while as-Suhaibani is normative-legal based on the investigation of fiqh furu', the two thoughts do not contradict each other, but rather complement each other in building the foundation of natural harmony according to Islam, namely the principle of preserving (hifdh), not destroying (la ifsad), and utilizing the environment responsibly (isti'mar bi al-ma'ruf).

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Introduction

Islam views the universe not merely as an object of exploitation, but as a trust entrusted by God to humans as caliphs on earth (QS. Al-Baqarah: 30)(Indonesia 2020). The Qur'an explicitly forbids humans from causing damage to the earth (la tufsidu fi al-ardh) as stated in QS. Al-A'raf: 56 and QS. Ar-Rum: 41, while also commanding humans to prosper and maintain the earth (i'mar al-ardh). The Islamic legal tradition (fiqh) since classical times has included provisions related to the maintenance of land, water, plants, and animals, although at that time it had not been formulated as a separate fiqh discipline(Dahlan 2017).

The current global environmental crisis, including air and water pollution, deforestation, biodiversity loss, and climate change, has given rise to the study of fiqh al-bi'ah (environmental

jurisprudence) as a branch of contemporary jurisprudence (fiqh mu'ashir). Ironically, Muslim-majority countries, including Indonesia, still face serious environmental degradation, a situation that is fundamentally at odds with Islamic teachings, which place great emphasis on environmental sustainability(Maulidya Mora Matondang 2018).

Among the many scholars and academics who have written on environmental jurisprudence, two names stand out with different yet complementary strands of thought. First, Yusuf al-Qardhawi, a contemporary Egyptian scholar, through his work Ri'ayat al-Bi'ah fi Syari'ah al-Islam (Al-Qardhawi 2001), written at the request of the organizing committee of a global environmental forum from an Islamic perspective, formulated environmental preservation as part of the maqashid shari'ah and mashlahah. Second, Abdullah bin Umar as-Suhaibani, a Saudi Arabian fiqh academic, through his doctoral dissertation, which was later published as the book Ahkam al-Bi'ah fi al-Fiqh al-Islami (As-Suhaibani 2008), systematically compiled environmental laws based on a search of classical fiqh books.

These two works represent two distinct modes of Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh) methodology in responding to environmental issues: one philosophical-maqashid, emphasizing values and awareness, and the other fiqh-normative, emphasizing legal certainty. Comparing these two schools of thought is crucial for gaining a more comprehensive understanding of how Islamic jurisprudence fosters harmony between humans and nature.

The formulation of this problem is: How is the concept of fiqh al-bi'ah according to Yusuf al-Qardhawi in Ri'ayat al-Bi'ah fi Syari'ah al-Islam?. How is the concept of ahkam al-bi'ah according to Abdullah bin Umar as-Suhaibani in Ahkam al-Bi'ah fi al-Fiqh al-Islami?, What are the similarities and distinctive characteristics (methodological differences and scope) between the two thoughts?. What are the implications of the synthesis of the two thoughts for efforts to realize natural harmony in the contemporary context?

The gap in this research is that studies on Yusuf al-Qardhawi's thoughts on environmental fiqh have been conducted quite a lot, especially those that highlight the concept of maqashid sharia and its implementation in environmental education in Islamic universities. However, studies that specifically compare Qardhawi's thoughts with the work of Abdullah bin Umar as-Suhaibani who represents the classical furu' fiqh approach from the Saudi academic tradition are still very limited. Most of the circulating environmental fiqh literature tends to stop at a single exploration of Qardhawi's thoughts, without juxtaposing it with more systematic normative fiqh works based on classical fiqh exploration such as the work of as-Suhaibani. As a result, the understanding of fiqh al-bi'ah tends to focus on the ethical-philosophical dimension and does not touch on the operational legal dimension which is actually necessary for the implementation of sharia-based environmental policies. This research attempts to fill this gap by presenting a comparative analysis that combines both dimensions: value (axiological) and law (legal-operational).

Method

This research is a qualitative study using library research(Kusumastuti and Khoiron 2019). The approach used is a descriptive-comparative normative approach, namely describing the thoughts of each figure objectively based on the original text, then comparing the methodological framework, sources of evidence, scope of discussion, and practical implications of the two schools of thought.

1. Data source

The primary data sources of this research consist of two main works: Yusuf al-Qardhawi, Ri'ayat al-Bi'ah fi Syari'ah al-Islam (Al-Qardhawi 2001), and its translation Islam Agama Ramah Lingkungan (Environmentally Friendly Religion), trans. Abdullah bin Umar bin Muhammad as-Suhaibani, Ahkam al-Bi'ah fi al-Fiqh al-Islami (As-Suhaibani 2008)which is a development of the author's doctoral dissertation at Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University, under the guidance of Sheikh Salih bin Abdullah al-Lahim. Secondary data sources are in the form of scientific journal articles, proceedings, and academic studies relevant to fiqh al-bi'ah, maqashid shari'ah, and environmental studies from an Islamic perspective, as listed in the bibliography.

2. Data collection technique

Data were collected through documentation techniques, namely tracing, reading, and noting relevant sections of primary and secondary sources. Data analysis was carried out using content analysis techniques to identify concepts, key terms, and arguments of each figure, then continued with comparative analysis to map the similarities and distinctive characteristics between the two schools of thought based on four indicators: (1) methodological approach, (2) sources and basis of arguments, (3) scope of discussion, and (4) orientation and practical implications.

Results and Discussion

In terms of language, al-bi'ah means environment or place of residence, while fiqh al-bi'ah can be understood as a branch of contemporary fiqh which formulates sharia laws relating to the maintenance, utilization and protection of the environment, whether in the form of land, water, air, plants or animals.

The normative basis of fiqh al-bi'ah is derived from several groups of evidence. First, verses about the position of humans as caliphs on earth (QS. Al-Baqarah: 30), which contain the meaning of trust and responsibility, not absolute ownership. Second, verses prohibiting acts of ifsad (damage) on earth (QS. Al-A'raf: 56; QS. Ar-Rum: 41). Third, verses about the balance (mizan) of the universe that must be maintained (QS. Ar-Rahman: 7–9)(Zar 1994). Fourth, a number of hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW that recommend planting trees, prohibiting polluting water sources, and affirming that cleanliness is part of faith.

Methodologically, two broad frameworks are commonly used by Muslim scholars in formulating environmental fiqh, namely the maqashid shari'ah framework (objectives of sharia) and the mashlahah framework (benefit). Maqashid shari'ah classically includes five main objectives: hifdh al-din (maintaining religion), hifdh al-nafs (maintaining the soul), hifdh al-nasl (maintaining offspring), hifdh al-'aql (maintaining reason), and hifdh al-mal (maintaining wealth). Contemporary scholars argue that environmental preservation (hifdh al-bi'ah) is an inseparable means (wasilah) for the realization of these five maqashid, as reflected in the ushul fiqh principle "ma la muridmu al-wajib illa bihi fahuwa wajib" (something that completes an obligation, then it also becomes obligatory).

YUSUF AL-QARDHAWI'S THOUGHTS ON FIQH AL-BI'AH

Short Profile

Yusuf al-Qardhawi (1926–2022) was a contemporary Egyptian Islamic scholar, an alumnus of the Faculty of Islamic Theology of al-Azhar University (graduated in 1952) and earned his doctorate in 1972 with a dissertation on zakat and its impact on poverty alleviation. Throughout his career, al-Qardhawi was known as one of the most productive scholars in responding to contemporary Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh mu'ashir), ranging from Islamic economics and politics to the environment.

Work and Writing Background

The book Ri'ayat al-Bi'ah fi Syari'ah al-Islam was written by al-Qardhawi at the request of the organizing committee of the first global environmental forum which discussed environmental issues from an Islamic perspective, compiled around the months of Rajab–Sya'ban 1421 H coinciding with October 2000 AD, then published by Dar al-Syuruq, Cairo, in 2001. This work was then translated into Indonesian with the title Islam, an Environmentally Friendly Religion by Abdullah Hakam Syah and published by Pustaka al-Kautsar in 2002(Al-Qardhawi 2002).

Methodological Framework

Al-Qardhawi builds his argument on two main pillars: maqasid shari'ah (the means of benefit) and mashlahah (benefit). He asserts that environmental preservation is an effort to create benefits and prevent harm, in line with the fundamental objectives of Islamic law. Environmental preservation, he argues, has the same status as maqasid shari'ah because it is a prerequisite (wasilah) for the realization of these five main maqasid.

Key Concepts

Perfection of faith and environment: al-Qardhawi emphasized that concern for the environment is part of the perfection of one's faith, in line with the hadith of the Prophet SAW that cleanliness is part of faith, so that one's religiosity is not only measured by worship rituals alone. The concept of ihsan as a pillar of conservation: al-Qardhawi formulated two meanings of ihsan in the environmental context, namely (1) maintaining and preserving it perfectly, and (2) paying attention to, loving, caring for, and respecting nature and the living creatures in it.

The term “kufr al-bi'ah” (ecological disbelief): al-Qardhawi uses this term rhetorically-metaphorically to emphasize the seriousness of the impact of environmental destruction, namely as a form of denial of the blessings and greatness of Allah, not as a verdict on one's faith status. Hifdh al-bi'ah as part of the maqashid sharia: environmental preservation is positioned as a derivative maqashid that supports the five main maqashid sharia(Islamuna 2023).

Approach Character

Al-Qardhawi's approach is philosophical-ethical, oriented towards strengthening the values and ecological awareness of the people (awareness-based), and written in the context of global discourse on the environmental crisis, so that his arguments tend to be persuasive and inspiring rather than technical-legal.

ABDULLAH BIN UMAR AS-SUHAIBANI'S THOUGHTS ON THE AHKAM OF AL-BI'AH

Short Profile

Abdullah ibn Umar ibn Muhammad as-Suhaibani was an academic and lecturer in Islamic jurisprudence at Qassim University, Saudi Arabia. His major work, Ahkam al-Bi'ah fi al-Fiqh al-Islami, was originally a doctoral dissertation completed at Imam Muhammad ibn Saud Islamic University under the guidance of Shaykh Salih ibn Abdullah al-Lahim, and was later published as a book by Dar Ibn al-Jauzi, Dammam, in 2008(As-Suhaibani 2008).

Methodological Framework

Unlike al-Qardhawi, as-Suhaibani constructed his work through the istiqra' (inductive search) method of Islamic texts and the opinions of classical jurists across various schools of thought, with a significant emphasis on Hanbali jurisprudence, in line with the Saudi scholarly tradition of formulating concrete environmental laws (ahkam). His work is structured systematically according to classical Islamic jurisprudence (such as mu'amalat and jinayat jurisprudence), rather than as an essay on contemporary thought.

Scope of Discussion

Prohibition of ifsad (destruction) of property and land, both public property (al-mal al-'am) and private property. Recommendation to build settlements, cities, and production facilities as a form of prosperity of the earth (i'mar al-ardh). Protection of plants: prohibition of cutting down trees without a need justified by sharia, and support for the establishment of protected areas (hima) for the preservation of flora. Laws related to animals: prohibition of fighting or pitting animals (tahris baina al-hayawanat), the dislike of keeping birds in cages without need, and emphasis on the principle of rifq bil-hayawan (compassion for animals). Management of water and shared resources, including provisions on pollution and collective use rights over natural resources(Bimo 2011).

Scope of Discussion

As-Suhaibani's approach is normative-legal and technical-practical, focusing on formulating the legal status (obligatory, forbidden, reprehensible, permissible) for every form of human interaction with the environment. His work is academically oriented and designed to provide legal certainty that can serve as a reference for fatwas and Sharia-based regulations.

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS: SIMILARITIES AND SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS

The comparison between the two schools of thought below is intended to map the similarities and unique characteristics of each figure, not to contrast one approach with another, considering that both speak at different levels and with different but complementary goals.

Equality

Similarities Both figures are based on the texts of the Qur'an and the Hadith as primary sources, and view environmental preservation as an integral part of the teachings of sharia, not an issue foreign or secular to Islam. Both figures emphasize the principle of balance between the right of humans to utilize nature as caliphs and the obligation to maintain its sustainability, namely the prohibition of excess (israf) and the prohibition of destruction (ifsad). Both figures pay special attention to the protection of plants, animals, and shared resources as part of the responsibility of the human caliphate(Jafat 2018).

The Characteristics of Each Thought

The following table maps the differences in characteristics of the two schools of thought based on four analysis indicators:

Aspect	Yusuf al-Qardhawi	Abdullah bin Umar as-Suhaibani
Reference works	Ri'ayat al-Bi'ah fi Sharia al-Islam (Cairo: Dar al-Syuruq, 2001)	Ahkam al-Bi'ah fi al-Fiqh al-Islami (Dammam: Dar Ibn al-Jauzi, 2008)
Background of writing	Compiled at the request of the committee of the first Global Environment Forum from an Islamic perspective (circa 1421 H/2000 AD)	Doctoral dissertation at Imam Muhammad bin Saud Islamic University, supervised by Shaikh Salih bin Abdullah al-Lahim
Methodological approach	Maqashid syari'ah and mashlahah; of a philosophical-ushuli nature	Istiqra' (inductive search) classical fiqh furu'; is fiqhiy-normative
Focus of discussion	Ethical-spiritual dimension: ecological awareness as a mirror of the perfection of faith	The concrete legal dimension (ahkam) of each form of human interaction with nature
Key terms	Ri'ayah al-bi'ah, ihsan bi'iy, hifdh al-bi'ah, kufr al-bi'ah (metaphorical)	Mandatory, haram, makruh, mubah, hima (protected area), rifq bil-hayawan
Context	Global-international; aimed at world environmental discourse	Academic; follows the classical fiqh systematics of the school (quotes a lot of Hanbali fiqh)
Main contribution	The foundation of spiritual values and motivation for caring for the environment	Operational legal framework and case details per topic (land, plants, animals, water)

1. The Complementary Nature of Both Thoughts

These two schools of thought essentially answer different but complementary questions. Al-Qardhawi's thought answers the question "why" the environment must be protected, by providing a foundation of values, spiritual motivation, and theological awareness for Muslims. Meanwhile, as-Suhaibani's thought answers the question "how" human interaction with the environment is legally regulated, by providing a detailed operational legal framework for each

case. The combination of these two approaches produces a comprehensive fiqh al-bi'ah: both value-based and applicable law(Tahir and Hamid 2024).

Complementary Nature of Both Thoughts

From an Islamic perspective, natural harmony is understood as maintaining the balance of Allah's creation, as affirmed in QS. Ar-Rahman: 7–9, which must be maintained by humans as caliphs on earth(Sopyan 2020). The synthesis of the thoughts of al-Qardhawi and as-Suhaibani gave rise to a number of operational principles of contemporary Islamic jurisprudence that are relevant for implementation, including:

1. The principle of hifdh al-bi'ah as a derivative maqashid, which makes environmental care a part of the piety and perfection of a Muslim's faith, as emphasized by al-Qardhawi.
2. The principle of tafshil al-ahkam (legal details), which demands a clear and detailed legal formulation for every form of human interaction with nature, land, plants, animals and water, as formulated by as-Suhaibani.
3. The principle of considering mashlahah-mafsadah as the basis for environmental policy, both at the individual and state levels.
4. The principle of rifq (compassion) towards non-human living creatures as part of Islamic morals in interacting with nature.

In the contemporary context, the synthesis of these two approaches can be applied, among other things, through the development of environmental fiqh (eco-fiqh) curriculum in Islamic educational institutions, the preparation of contemporary fatwas related to waste management, energy, and forestry, and the formulation of public policies based on sharia values in Muslim-majority countries, including Indonesia.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis presented, the following conclusions can be drawn. First, the concept of fiqh al-bi'ah according to Yusuf al-Qardhawi is built on the framework of maqashid shari'ah and mashlahah, with an emphasis on the ethical-spiritual dimension in the form of ecological awareness as a reflection of the perfection of faith, as well as the concept of ihsan as a pillar of environmental conservation. Second, the concept of ahkam al-bi'ah according to Abdullah bin Umar as-Suhaibani is built through an inductive search of classical fiqh furu', with an emphasis on the concrete legal dimension that regulates in detail the legal status of various forms of human interaction with land, plants, animals, and water.

Third, both schools of thought share fundamental similarities in terms of reference sources and the principle of balance between the use and preservation of nature, but differ methodologically: al-Qardhawi's is ushuliy-philosophical while as-Suhaibani's is fiqhiy-normative. The two schools of thought are not contradictory, but rather complementary: one provides a foundation of values and motivation, the other provides an operational legal framework. Fourth, the synthesis of these two schools of thought implies the formation of a complete fiqh al-bi'ah foundation for efforts to realize harmony in nature, which can be implemented through education, contemporary fatwas, and public policies based on sharia values.

This study has limitations due to its library nature and the failure to examine the concrete implementation of these two schools of thought in practice. Therefore, further research is recommended to examine the application of this synthesis of fiqh al-bi'ah to environmental policy in Muslim countries, including the effectiveness of contemporary environmental fatwas in encouraging changes in the ecological behavior of Muslim communities.

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