

The Dilemma of Deforestation in Indonesia: The Perspective of Buya Hamka and Quraish Shihab (Comparative Study of Al Misbah Interpretation & Al Azhar Interpretation)

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ABSTRACT

This research is motivated by the increasingly complex environmental problems in Indonesia, such as deforestation, water and air pollution, ecosystem damage, and the significant impacts of climate change. The environmental crisis is not only caused by inappropriate policies, but also by the low public awareness of the importance of preserving nature. In this context, Islamic thought derived from the Qur'an is relevant to provide moral and practical solutions. This study examines the wisdom of two great Indonesian scholars, Buya Hamka and Quraish Shihab, through their tafsir works, Tafsir Al-Azhar and Tafsir Al-Misbah, which contain views on the relationship between humans and nature. This comparative study aims to identify the relevance of the interpretations of the two figures in answering contemporary environmental problems in Indonesia. Although there are differences in methodology in interpretation, both Buya Hamka and Quraish Shihab emphasize the importance of environmental ethics and human responsibility as caliphs on earth. In conclusion, their interpretations not only have theological value, but also provide relevant practical guidelines for addressing environmental challenges in Indonesia.

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1. Introduction

Deforestation in Indonesia is a complex problem and has a significant impact on the environment, ecosystems, and human life. Deforestation is defined as the process of destroying or removing natural forests, either directly or indirectly, which can cause changes in land cover and ecosystems (Watch, 2023). The impacts of deforestation are extensive, including loss of biodiversity, increased greenhouse gas emissions, climate change, and damage to water resources. In addition, local communities who depend on forests for their livelihoods also feel the negative impacts of this process.

According to data from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (KLHK) (Anugrah, 2022), net deforestation in Indonesia in 2021-2022 reached 104 thousand hectares, with gross deforestation of 119.4 thousand hectares and reforestation of 15.4 thousand hectares. Although this figure shows a decrease of 8.4% compared to the previous year, where the deforestation rate reached 113.5 thousand hectares, challenges remain. The area of forested land in Indonesia in 2022 was recorded at 96 million hectares or 51.2% of the total land area. Among the provinces that experienced the highest deforestation in 2023 (BPS, 2022), West Kalimantan

recorded the highest figure with deforestation of 35,162 hectares, followed by Central Kalimantan and East Kalimantan.

Debates over deforestation data have also emerged; while the Ministry of Environment and Forestry claims that the deforestation rate is decreasing and has reached its lowest level in history, Forest Watch Indonesia (FWI) reports that around 680 thousand hectares of forest have been lost at an average rate of 227 thousand hectares per year (Indonesia, 2024). Thus, despite indications of a decline in deforestation rates, the challenge of protecting Indonesia's forests remains enormous. To address this issue, integrated efforts are needed from the government, communities, and environmental organizations to protect and sustainably manage forests for the sake of the sustainability of the ecosystem and the lives of the people who depend on it.

In this case, religion is considered to be able to help reduce environmental damage because religion builds human morals, including Islam. In the Qur'an and Hadith, Islam has mentioned environmental issues several times. However, with the largest Muslim population in the world, Indonesia is a very religious country. Ironically, the rate of deforestation in Indonesia is higher than anywhere else in the world. Therefore, based on this fact, the purpose of this article is to learn more about the problem of deforestation from the perspective of Buya Hamka and Quraish Shihab which in this case will also be discussed in Surah Al-A'raf verse 56 and from this article will discuss further the verses and hadiths that are continuous with deforestation to ask humans to maintain forest sustainability.

The author focuses on analyzing the thoughts of these two figures on the issue of deforestation. This study also refers to the theory that explains that deforestation is influenced by various factors, including land conversion for agriculture, plantations, and mining, as well as illegal logging activities. Buya Hamka, a cleric and intellectual, is known for his profound views on morality and ethics in human life, including in terms of protecting the environment. In his works, Hamka often emphasizes the importance of maintaining the balance of nature as part of human responsibility to God. Meanwhile, Quraish Shihab, an expert in interpreting the Qur'an, provides a more textual and contextual perspective on environmental issues. Shihab highlights the verses of the Qur'an that talk about the importance of protecting nature and avoiding damage to the earth. By combining the views of these two figures, this study seeks to offer solutions based on Islamic values in dealing with the problem of deforestation in Indonesia.

2. Method

In this study, the author uses a Qualitative Method with a Literature Study approach or more commonly known as Library Research. The process involves collecting various references related to the topic being studied such as the Tafsir Al Azhar book and the Tafsir Al Misbah book, books, journals, and articles. After that, the most relevant sources are selected and the data is grouped based on the research topic. In this study, the author uses the Muqorran method. which refers to a method of interpreting the Qur'an by comparing its verses with each other, or it can also be compared with the hadith and opinions of the Mufasirs that are in accordance with the research topic (Fitriatunnisa and Rafdi, 2024). The object of this study is the verses of the Qur'an related to deforestation by referring to the views of Buya Hamka and Qurais Shihab (Weber, 2017).

3. Result and Discussion

Deforestation in Indonesia is very dangerous if continued. Because of its vast tropical forests, Indonesia is called the "lungs of the world". Forests are called the largest producers of oxygen (O₂), which is very important for humans to breathe. In addition, forests play an important role in absorbing and storing carbon gas emissions, which are the main factors causing global warming. In addition, forests protect biodiversity, including flora and fauna. Therefore, the people and government of Indonesia must maintain the sustainability of the forest.

Deforestation in Islam

Islam, as a religion of rahmatan lil alamin, clearly teaches its followers to have eternal ecological awareness (*hablun min al-'alam*). Islam pays attention to nature. The Qur'an and Hadith show how Muslims think and act, including dealing with environmental crises. In one Hadith, the Prophet Muhammad SAW said, "I have made the city of Medina a sacred land between its two stones, its trees may not be cut and its game animals may not be hunted." In another hadith, he also said, "Whoever cuts a jujube tree, Allah SWT will immerse his head in hellfire." In wording, both stories prohibit humans from destroying the environment, including cutting down trees. When connected to the environmental crisis, especially the problem of deforestation, Islam can be considered "cursing". This may refer to the wording of the Hadith about the reward for those who cut down jujube trees by "dipping their heads into hellfire". As previously mentioned, Indonesia's deforestation rate is one of the highest in the world, and this is very concerning for Indonesia in dealing with deforestation.

Quraish Shihab is a contemporary Muslim scholar who also pays great attention to environmental issues. Through his works such as *Tafsir Al-Misbah and Islam and the Environment: The Perspective of the Qur'an Concerning Environmental Maintenance*. Quraish Shihab emphasizes that Islam has an important role in mitigating environmental damage, including deforestation, by referring to the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith which instruct humans to preserve forests and not to destroy them. He argues that forest destruction is a moral problem that must be addressed on the basis of Islamic faith and morality. Buya Hamka is an Indonesian cleric, writer, and philosopher who is known for his works of interpretation, especially the *Al-Azhar Interpretation*.

Buya Hamka, through his eco-theological approach, argues that knowing nature is part of knowing God, as stated in the verse "Is not He (Allah) who created the heavens and the earth and sent down water from the sky for you..." (QS. An-Naml: 60), this shows that nature is not only a resource, but also a sign of His greatness. He emphasized the importance of preserving nature as a moral command that must be obeyed by mankind, as stated in the verse "and do not do mischief on the earth after it has been created in good order..." (QS. Al-A'raf: 56). According to him, everything created by Allah on this earth is a natural resource that must be maintained well and cared for and utilized wisely and not excessively, and always be grateful for the blessings given by Allah.

Both figures agreed that deforestation as a form of excessive exploitation of nature, is contrary to Islamic principles and the use of natural resources must be carried out with spiritual awareness and respect for the rights of nature. They also reminded that humans have a responsibility to maintain the sustainability of nature and common welfare and as a form of

obedience to Allah. On the other hand, the author also explains the verses of the Qur'an related to the destruction of the earth, especially the problem of deforestation. Allah says in the letter Al-A'raf verse 56:

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

Meaning: "Do not cause corruption on the earth after it has been set in order. Pray to Him with fear and hope. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is very close to the doers of good."

Reported from the NU Online page, verse 56 of the Al-A'raf letter is so that you (humans) do not do damage on earth after it was created in good condition. Pray to Him with fear so that you are more devout and motivated to obey Him, and full of hope for His grace and the fulfillment of your prayers. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is very close to those who do good. Meanwhile, in Tafsir Al-Misbah, Quraish Shihab said that the previous verse prohibits exceeding the limits, this verse prohibits destruction on earth. Destruction is one form of exceeding the limits, therefore this verse continues the guidance of the previous verse by stating: and do not cause corruption on earth, after its improvement by Allah and/or anyone else and pray and worship Him in a state of fear so that you are more devout, and more motivated to obey Him and in a state of full hope for His grace, including the fulfillment of your prayers. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is very close to Al-Muhsinin, namely those who do good.

The universe has been created by Allah SWT in a very harmonious state, in harmony and fulfilling the needs of creatures. Allah has made it good, even commanding His servants to fix it. One form of improvement that Allah has done is by sending prophets to straighten out and fix the chaotic life in society. Whoever does not welcome the arrival of the messengers, or hinders their mission, then he has committed one form of destruction on earth. Damaging something after it has been repaired is far worse than damaging it before it has been repaired, or when it is bad. Therefore, this verse clearly underlines the prohibition, although of course worsening the damage or destroying something good is also very reprehensible.

His words: "wad'uhu khaufan wa tham a'an!" pray to Him in a state of fear and hope. There are those who understand it in the sense of "fear lest your prayer will not be answered." This opinion is not in line with the Prophet's recommendations. so that prayer is accompanied by full confidence and hope, may Allah grant prayer. This advice is different from the advice in the previous verse, namely to be humble and to keep it a secret. Because these are two other conditions that need to be considered by people who pray and worship. It is as if this verse is saying; Gather within yourself fear of Allah and hope in His grace, and never assume that the prayers you have offered, even if earnestly, are sufficient.

On the other hand, this verse refers to people who do good or are usually called Muhsinin. The word Muhsinin comes from Arabic (محسِنين), which is the plural form of the word muhsin (محسن). Etymologically, muhsin comes from the root word hasana (حسن) which means goodness or beauty. In the Islamic context, muhsinin refers to people who do good deeds sincerely, do good deeds beautifully, and give their best in every action they take.

Muhsinin are often described as those who do good deeds not only to gain rewards, but because of the drive of sincerity and love for Allah. This concept is closely related to ihsan, which means achieving perfection in worship as if seeing Allah, or at least realizing that Allah is always sees His servants.

This is the opinion of tafsir scholars such as Al-Tabari which the author has outlined in interpreting QS Al A'raf [7]: 56, namely explaining that muhsinin are people who do good deeds sincerely, carry out Allah's commands, and stay away from His prohibitions. They are pious servants of Allah, who do good deeds not only to get rewards, but also because of their sincerity and love for Allah.

His words: "inna rahmatallahi qaribun min al-mutsinin" indeed Allah's mercy is close to Al-Muhsinin, has also been a long discussion among scholars because the verse uses the word Qarib/close which according to Arabic language rules, should be in the form of Mu'Annas, namely Qaribatun, not Qarib, (Mudzakkar/Masculine), because it indicates the closeness of grace in the form of Mu'annas.

In addition to the view that is based on the use of language above, there is another view that is based on special considerations that the verse wants to emphasize. To explain it, it must first be remembered that the abundance of God's gifts is diverse, not only in the form of grace, but includes many things besides Him. If you say, He is the Most Gracious, then it is not included in the meaning of the word Most Gracious that He is the Giver of sustenance, or the Defender and so on. The only word that includes all the attributes of the Most Perfect God is the name of His Essence, namely Allah. Well, from here this verse when using the word qarib seems to want to state that the closeness obtained by the muhsin people is not only the 'closeness of His grace but the closeness of Allah with all His great attributes. From here the word qarib can essentially be associated with grace, but with Allah SWT. And because the word Allah is mudzakkar, then of course the word qarib must also be mudzakkar.

Meanwhile, in Tafsir Al-Azhar, Hamka said that it was narrated by Abu Shaykh from Abu Bakr bin Yyasy, that he was asked by people about what the meaning of Allah's verse which investigated the earth after it was finished, he answered: "The Prophet Muhammad SAW. has been sent by Allah to the face of this earth, even though at that time the earth was already tangled; with the coming of Muhammad, the confusion disappeared and a complete earth emerged. So if there are people who invite people to teachings that violate Muhammad's teachings, that person is called the one who brings tangles to the face of the earth. "Tangling up after you're done is much worse than tangling something that's already tangled up. So if you can't make something better, don't destroy what is already good. According to Abidin, people who like to create confusion and damage are people who are enemies of society. The peak of all chaos, confusion and damage is takabbur, unjust and arbitrary. And this is based on nations that have advanced in science in this modern era, we admit that they have brought a lot of progress to life.

Improvements to factories, improvements to world traffic relations, improvements to a more luxurious life, but very little effort is made to improve the human soul, so that increasingly on this earth, feelings of hostility and resentment are growing everywhere among nations. That. So a Muslim who is aware of his religion has an obligation not to add to the tangles that are already tangled, but rather to maintain the completion of what is already there, not to tangle it again, and try to make something better and more complete. "And call to Him in a state of fear and hope. "So in facing the social life, start by calling on Allah to strengthen your personality by humbling yourself and remaining silent, then accompanied by living in the midst of society, don't investigate what is done and destroy what is good. So apart from the

verse above, to pray humbly and silently, the attitude of prayer should be full of fear and full of passion. Afraid of His wrath and eager for His approval. So a person who lives in the midst of human society, armed with the power of Allah's guidance because of his unceasing prayer, will undoubtedly receive guidance and taufik from Allah, so that he does not become a destroyer and a troublemaker, but instead tries to make a better earth. beautiful, and a better world, especially deepening the influence of Islam or improvements that the Prophet Muhammad saw brought to this earth.

Hamka also appealed to pray solemnly and silently, followed by serving the social life that requires maintaining relationships between humans, safety and environmental sustainability accompanied by prayers that are full of fear and great hope, live life as a good person, Good personality towards Allah and good personality towards society. In good times or in bad times always in contact with Allah. That is the person who is called Muhsin, namely a person who always improves the quality of himself, the quality of faith and the quality of life. So Allah said, giving his promise to such people, as the end of the verse: "Indeed, the mercy of Allah is close to those who do good". (end of verse 56). Ihsan means always being good and improving, always doing good deeds, making things better and better for yourself and for others. This is what makes human life progress and increase. So we are commanded to do this ihsan, first and foremost in terms of worship, as the words of the Prophet Muhammad SAW: "Al-Ihsan is that you worship Allah as if you see Him. Even though you do not see Him, He always sees you".

Then do Ihsan in all fields, so that when slaughtering livestock to be eaten, do Ihsan using a very sharp knife, so that the animal does not suffer for a long time. In war, if the enemy is dead, do ihsanlah, that is, do not chop or stab the dead body again. Therefore, refine your heart's feelings with piety, so that it will increase your liking for what is better, what is truer, love for the truth, fight for justice, have mercy on the weak. Therefore, even in war, Muslims are obliged to do Ihsan. To the extent that it is said to be ordered to use a sharp sword, and if you cut an enemy's neck, you should use a very sharp sword, and if you have surrendered, you should be taken prisoner well, and the country that has asked for peace, should immediately stop fighting it.

This ihsan influenced Manshur Ibn Abu Amir in the golden age of Islam in Andalusia, so that the price of a piece of land that would be used as a bridge had been paid by a royal official 10 gold dinars to an old man, he called the old man back and added another 90 gold dinars, because he appreciated the honesty of the old man. This ihsan also caused Saladin Al-Ayubi to immediately go to war with the English King Richard, The Lion Heart, he heard that his enemy was sick, then he sent his personal doctor to treat his enemy until he recovered, so that when he recovered he could continue the war again with a healthy body. And this is in line with the opinion of Nurul Tsalis in his journal regarding the three basic principles of a Muslim's outlook on life, firstly, faith, namely belief in six matters, secondly, Islam, namely pillars, which are five matters, and thirdly, Ihsan as the key or pillar of faith and Islam.

One day, Sayyidina Umar bin Khattab suddenly became a caliph, walking in the market in the city of Medina. Suddenly he saw an old man who was tired and walking with a stick. He was begging for alms from the mercy of people. Then he called the old man. It turned out to be a Jew, so he asked: "O old man! Why has your fate reached this point?"

The orangtau answered that he was left alone in the world, there were no children left to help him, and he had to pay the Jizyah every year. So to pay for the Jizyah, he begged. He was touched when he heard the parents' words. Then he ordered the officials who accompanied him: "remove the parents' names from the list of people who are obliged to pay the Jizyah, and instead remove them from the Baitul Mal for their living expenses until they die. The parents were in tears when they heard this decision, and Sayyidina Umar was also in tears, saying: "He spent his energy on us when he was young, why won't he feel our defense when he is old?" Here's an example of Isan. And this is what God promises, that Allah's grace is always close to those who have a soul of ihsan.

4. Conclusion

The occurrence of environmental damage and deviations from nature that give birth to disasters are caused by human actions, as stated in a very clear wording (*bima kasabat aidin-nas*). However, this wording is understood by some commentators not only to indicate human behavior directly in the context of environmental damage, such as illegal logging, littering, dumping industrial waste without regard to the ecosystem, and so on, but also refers to non-physical behavior, such as polytheism, hypocrisy and all forms of sin. This means that deviations from faith and sinful behavior are the causes of environmental damage. Polytheism and infidelity here are not only in terms of faith but also behavior, so that *fasiq* is also considered as *shirk* in the context of actions, not beliefs.

From the explanation above, it can be understood that the occurrence of disasters and environmental damage is essentially due to damage to human mentality or morality. This mental damage drives humans to carry out destructive behavior, both those directly related to environmental damage, such as illegal logging, building buildings in water catchment areas, damming river channels so that they narrow and others: or indirectly, such as corruption, bribery, abuse of office, economic crimes and others. Here it can be understood that physical damage is essentially the result of non-physical or mental damage. If this deviant behavior continues massively and becomes a culture, it will have an impact on environmental destruction which will ultimately cause disasters. Allah brings disasters so that humans can feel the consequences of their actions so that they can return to obedience.

In this case, the author also created a table which discusses deforestation from the perspective of Quraish Shihab and Buya Hamka.

Quraish Shihab	The teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith that order humans to preserve forests and not to destroy them. He argues that forest destruction is a moral problem that must be addressed on the basis of Islamic faith and morality.
Buya Hamka	Nature is not only a resource, but also a sign of His greatness. He emphasized the importance of preserving nature as a moral command that must be obeyed by humanity as proof of being a pious servant.

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