

THE ETIQUETTES OF AGRICULTURE IN ISLAM

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper is to highlight Islamic etiquettes that need to be followed by everyone who is involved in the agricultural activities. The approach used in this writing is related to the etiquettes of agriculture according to the Al-Quran which need to be implemented in the agricultural activities. The agricultural ethics in Islam must be integrated and non-secular. It needs to be shariah compliance, abide by the rules of Allah SWT, not to be based on greed and any worldly rewards. The agricultural activities in Islam are oriented by the integration that cover the needs of each individual and the community. In Islam, the word adab (etiquettes) is known as akhlak as it is explained in the Al-Quran and Sunnah. The ethics of agriculture according to the perspectives of Islam can be categorized into three categories: the etiquettes towards Allah SWT, the etiquettes towards other humans and the etiquettes towards the universe. The outcome of this paper can deliver proper understandings of the etiquettes of agricultural activities which are parallel with the rules of Islam.

Keywords: *Etiquettes, Agriculture, al-Quran, Sunnah*

1.0 Introduction

Agriculture has become the main source of income in the Islamic countries since the time of Rasulullah SAW; this is followed by the time of Khulafas Ar-Rasyidin, Umaiyya, Abasiyya and it is pertinent up till now. There are various verses in Al-Quran that talk about agriculture such the agricultural products, fruits and so on. Rasulullah SAW also promoted the agricultural activities in which Rasulullah SAW guaranteed those who farm will receive good deeds when the crops are consumed by humans or animals. It is undeniable that the importance of agriculture has contributed to the food source of the country. The signs of the greatness of Allah SWT can be seen clearly through the creation and existence of flora and fauna. The concept of *tawakkal* can be shown when the agricultural activities are parallel with the *syara'*.

2.0 Definition of Agriculture

Agriculture is a matter of farming or any forms of agricultural trading (Kamus Dewan, 2005). The word "agriculture" has a wide meaning. Agriculture in literal or etymological meaning is built from two words which are "agri" or "ager" that connotes land and the second part is "culture" or "colure" which means management. Based on this explanation, agriculture is a land management process to make sure that the land could be a place of management for human life sustainability (<http://tanipermainews.blogspot.com>). In Arabic language, agriculture is translated as *Al-Muzara'ah* which derived from the basic *az-zar'u*. The word *az-zar'u* itself has two meanings; the first meaning is "*tharh az-zura'ah*" which means to cast the seed, i.e. throwing the seed to the ground while the second meaning of *az-zar'u* is *al-inbaat* which means "to grow plants" (<https://hanialfarouqy.wordpress.com>).

The scholar of different schools of opinion in defining Al-Muzara'ah in terminology. Prof. Dr. Wahbah Zuhaili in his book *al-fiqh al-Islamy wa Adillatuhu* writes that the Malikiyya cleric defines it as cooperation in cultivating cultivation. Hanabilah scholars define it as transferring land management to people who will plant it or do it, as for the result will be shared by both parties. (<https://hanialfarouqy.wordpress.com>). On the other hand, Spedding (1979) defined agriculture from modern perspective as a human activity for human being and had performed to gain profitable results. It covers economic activities and management apart from biology (<http://tanipermainews.blogspot.com>).

Agriculture basically means as an effort to produce food using the way of farming, rearing livestock's and catching fish. (Kementerian Pertanian Malaysia, 1993). In Al-Quran, the meaning of agriculture is the plants and trees that become the source of needs of humans. In Allah's words:

"And it is He who sends down rain from the sky, and We produce thereby the growth of all things. We produce from it greenery from which We produce grains arranged in layers. And from the palm trees- of its emerging fruit are clusters hanging low. And [We produce] gardens of grapevines and olives and pomegranates, similar yet varied. Look at [each of] its fruit when it yields and [at] its ripening.." (al-Ana'am 6: 99)

"He causes to grow for you thereby the crops, olives, palm trees, grapevines and from all the fruits. Indeed in that is a sign for a people who give a thought." (al-Nahl 16:11)

3.0 The Ethics of Muslim Farmers

The agricultural activities are highly regarded in Islam. Al-Quran encourages and provides the guidelines to the Muslims, particularly the farmers in upgrading the field of agriculture. Some of the ethics of Muslim farmers are:

3.1 To Make Agricultural Activities as a Mean to Enslave Oneself to Allah SWT/Farming as platform to devote oneself to Allah

Man is the creation of Allah SWT which is deemed to the best of His creation. Therefore, each human being should enslave himself or herself to Allah SWT by abiding all the rules of Allah SWT and avoiding all the things that are prohibited by Him. This is parallel with His words:

"O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous." (al-Baqarah 2:21)

By looking at the objective of man's creation, that is to enslave oneself to Allah SWT; therefore, the concept of *ubudiyah* (enslavement) needs to be instilled in one's daily activities which include the agricultural activities. Moreover, there is a very broad meaning of the scope of worship in Islam. Allah SWT said:

"And I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me." (al-Zariyaat 51:56)

Pleasing Allah SWT must be the priority of every Muslim. Whoever obtains the blessings of Allah SWT will be rewarded with multiple good deeds. Allah SWT said:

"And the example of those who spend their wealth seeking means to the approval of Allah and assuring [reward for] themselves is like a garden on high ground which is a hit by a downpour- so it yields its fruits in double. And [even] if it is not hit by a downpour, then a drizzle [is sufficient]. And Allah, of what you do, is Seeing."
(al-Baqarah 2: 265)

Hence, farmers need to shape their profession in accordance to the guidelines set by Allah SWT as best as they could for the sake of their happiness in this world and the hereafter.

Human beings are creatures created by Allah as the best of His creations. As God's greatest creation, humans must worship and submit themselves to Allah, obeying all His commands and eschew all the ones forbidden. Allah says in the Quran:

"Oh people, profess your devotion to Allah who has created you and those before you, so you fear His punishments and surrender yourself". (al-Baqarah 2:21)

The objective of human creation is the submission to Allah; thus, the concept of *ubudiyah* or enslavement needs to be inculcated into ones' daily routines including farming. In addition, the concept of *ibadah* in Islam has broad array of definition. Allah SWT says in the Al-Quran:

"And remember, I did not create the human and jinn but for them to surrender and worship me".

(al-Zariyaat 51:56)

The primary goal in all Muslim practices is to grant Allah's blessing. And those who are conferred with it are bestowed with multifold of rewards from Allah. This can be observed in the Al-Quran:

"The resemblance of those who spend their wealth solely to seek Allah's blessing and to strengthen their faith and sincerity of their devoting soul is that of a tree growing on a high ground. If a heavy rain pours onto it, it bears fruit two fold" (al-Baqarah 2:265).

Those peasants who continuously seek blessings from Allah and pledge to perform good deeds at all times with the wealth from the farming by providing to the needy, not forgetting to be grateful and praise Allah when the farming is abundance. Nonetheless, Allah dislikes peasants who are determined to pursuit wealth whilst neglect to worship Him. (Al-Qutubi, 2006. 10:398-408)

His Messenger, Muhammad also assures those peasants who cultivate their land would earn reward of when their harvest benefits mankind and animal (Al-Asqelani, 2005. 5:5)

This emphasizes cultivating land is not for obtaining opulent life or for fulfilling materialistic needs, instead it should be taken as the best channel to fulfill our obligation and as means to perform good deeds fellow mankind through *sadaqah* and alms. Emphasis on the obligation and the concept of kindness to others brings human closer to Allah, allowing the worshipper to fulfill their duty as the Allah's devotees. Thus, those peasants must in the pursuit of profession as peasants and with utmost will adhere to the guidelines and rules set by Islam. Those who did are promised contentment in their life and the hereafter.

3.2 To Believe That The Rizq Comes From Allah SWT (*Tawakkal*)

The *rizq* matters is in the Hands of Allah SWT. We as His slaves could only perform the best as we could. The phases of agriculture start with the process of the preparation of land till the collection of the crops which happen with the permission of Allah SWT. This goes as the saying of Allah SWT:

"[More precisely], is He [not best] who created the heavens and the earth and sent down for you rain from the sky, causing to grow thereby gardens of joyful beauty which you could not [otherwise] have grown the trees thereof? Is there a deity with Allah? [No], but they are people who ascribe equals [to Him]. " (al-Naml 27:60)

The humans are given the capabilities to perform their livings in this world and the hereafter. The believers need to put their trust in Allah SWT provided with the *dua* and being *tawakkal* to Allah SWT in accordance to every happening event.

The *rizq* for all Allah's creations have been predestined. As human, the *rizq* from Allah comes in all forms and undoubtedly enormous including the *rizq* of fertile and fruitful farming. This indicates that Allah grants considerably immeasurable *rizq* to His creation, us. Nevertheless, in farming, peasants must believe and have faith in Allah, to believe all their planting, despite their effort, the harvest comes from Allah regardless. Needless to say, it is crucial to insert this value as one of the etiquette in farming. Humankind, as the caliph of the Earth bears the responsibility to sustain or uphold the balance of the universe. Humankind has the duty and obligation towards their nature that is to maintain its sustainability.

Apart from maintaining its sustainability, humankind too has the duty to act with propriety or high decorum with their nature as Allah has created the nature for them. As the caliph, the duty is not only to sustain the nature but also to ensure its prosperity and benefitting from it like to farm ethically. The human needs to preserve the balance of the nature and life cycle. Therefore, damaging the nature especially the forest with hazardous pesticides or insecticides like DDT, deforestation, open burning have to be stopped and the nature too must not be exploited for own benefit or others.

However, modern farming activities have caused damage and other negative effects to lives. These damages and effects are dependent on the environment, knowledge and understanding, existing habits, or pressure from a particular body or issue. A person's life experience and awareness could also determine one's attitude towards preserving nature. Despite the damage and other negative impacts, there are a small number that brings usefulness to the nature, health and others.

3.3 Being sincere (*ikhlas*) and having good intentions

Good intentions means the intention of providing oneself, the family and to give back to the *ummah* and to develop the earth (country) through the ways that are permitted by the *syara*'. Therefore, the agricultural activities need to be clear from the feelings of wanting to show off, the feelings of wanting to be worshipped, the snobbish feelings and any other *riya* feelings. Islam stresses that its followers need to be completing duties given to the perfection, honest, and being *ikhlas* in completing their tasks. Rasullullah SAW said:

"Indeed one's tasks depend on the intention of his.." (narrated by Bukhari and Muslim)

"So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it, And whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it". (al-Zalzalah 99: 7-8)

3.4 Being *amanah* and Responsible

The concept of *amanah* is highlighted in Islam because humans are created to carry the responsibilities which was given by Allah SWT as the responsibilities of the vicegerent in this world. If the activities of agricultures are being performed without *amanah*, it will lead to destruction or deception; thus, these attitudes show that the doers have betrayed the *amanah* entrusted to them which were given since they were in their mothers' womb (*alam roh*). The concept of *amanah* is not only limited to the scope of the human observation, it is more than that whereby it shows the responsibility to Allah SAW. Rasulullah SAW had said: (*fasad*) the concept of *amanah* is really stressed by Islam because humans are being created by Allah SWT to fulfill the obligations to Allah SWT, which closely related to the tasks of the *khalifah* in this world. If one proceeds with the activities of agricultural with the absence of *amanah*, it means that he has done damages or committed misconduct or *fasad*, and he has betrayed the trust (*amanah*) which he had received since he was still unborn. The concept of *amanah* is not only limited to the scope of humans' observations, it is more of the *amanah* that one needs to fulfill to Allah SWT. As narrated by Rasulullah SAW:

"The best of one's efforts is when he is being honest and adviceful." (Narration of Ahmad)

3.5 *Itqan* (The Perseverance And Finesse) in Performing Tasks

The agricultural activities need to be done the best as the doers could. One's diligence and perseverance in doing certain tasks is firmly stressed by Islam. Rasulullah SAW mentioned that:

"indeed Allah SWT will love those among you, a person who is diligent and puts in a lot of efforts in performing his tasks." (Narrated by al-Baihaqi)

The Muslims need to put in a lot of efforts and multiply their efforts in enhancing their productivities and their *imans* to Allah SWT. Allah SWT will multiply His rewards to those who perform their tasks to the best as they could. In Allah's words:

"Whoever does righteousness, whether male or female, while he is a believer- We will surely cause him to live a good life, and We will surely give them their reward [in the Hereafter] according to the best of what the used to do." (al-Nahl 16:97)

"When a task is given to the person who is refuses to perform it correctly, ruins will befall upon him." (Narrated by Bukhari)

This hadith clearly highlights the importance of using all the skills confidently in order to produce the outcomes that pleases Allah SWT. Hence, every agricultural activity must be done according to one's expertise in any related field.

3.6 An Act of *Ihsan* (The Act of Compassion and Always Be Under the Watch of Allah SWT)

Through this concept, Islam teaches humans to always perform good deeds and to have mercy on other creations. Rasulullah SAW had mentioned that in the concept of agriculture:

"There is none amongst the Muslims who plants a tree or sow seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, but is regarded as a charitable gift for him." (narration of Muslim)

The *ummah* of Islam needs to be conscious (*insaf*) and aware that every action taken by them need to be done according the *syara'*. They also need to believe in the hereafter and that the calculation done on that day will determine good rewards to the doers or otherwise. The agricultural activities need to be done not only due to the purpose or performing the tasks and the worldly responsibilities, it is done because Allah SWT is observing and monitoring the actions done by His slaves. Therefore, the purpose of the Islamic agricultural management is to produce people who are productive not only on his acts of *fasad*, but also on the performance of his worship.

3.7 Maintaining the balance, simplicity and stability

As the slaves of Allah SWT, humans need not to overstep the boundaries set by Allah SWT and to respect the basic fundamentals of morals (*akhlak*) by not getting involved in the acts of tyranny, treachery, betrayal of trust, overstepping the rights of others which includes violating the facilities, opportunities, power and wealth. The rules of Islam are set to protect the religion, lives, intellects, ancestry and wealth. If all of these five factors are well taken care of, there will be no disturbance or chaotic situations happening in the lives of humans.

The boundaries of Allah SWT and the fundamental elements of *akhlak* are set in order for humans to complete their tasks in accordance to the fundamentals of humanities and civilization. The same goes for the agricultural activities that are performed can contribute to the welfare and provide maximum services that can increase the economy and productivity of the country. If the agricultural activities are done based on fraudulence, violence, threats, misappropriation and so on, it is definite that the doers will not gain the goals of increase Allah's rewards for them during the judgement day. In Allah's words:

"And He it is who causes gardens to grow, [both] trellised and untrellised, and palm trees and crops of different [kinds of] food and olives and pomegranates, similar and dissimilar. Eat of [each of] its fruit when it yields and its due [zakah] on the day of its harvest. And be not excessive. Indeed, He does not like those who commit excess." (al-An'am 6:141)

3.8 Avoiding the Acts of Damaging Properties That Belonged to Humans and The Environment.

Successful agricultural activities need to be performed on the basis of avoiding any act that could lead to any damages and respecting the boundaries of humanities. Humans not only need to care of their relationships with each other, they also need to care and instill the compassion to other creatures aside from humans. The words of Allah SW:

"...And do not aim towards the defective thereof, spending [from that] while you would not take it [yourself] except with closed eyes. And know that Allah is Free of need and Praiseworthy." (al-Baqarah 2:267)

It is proper for each farmer to be given specific guidance from time to time in order for them to upgrade themselves to become the followers of Islam that perform their tasks in accordance to the teachings of Islam. They need to be aware and always try to fulfill their duties according to the teachings of Islam, the teachings that stress on the happiness of the *ummah*, not the ones who perform the activities just for their own sakes which could lead them avoiding the boundaries and the rights of humanities. It is important for Muslims to understand the words of Allah SWT:

"And, [moreover], this is My path, which is straight, so follow it; and do not follow [other] ways, for you will be separated from His way. This has He instructed you that you may become righteous." (al-An'am 6:153)

4.0 The Etiquettes of Crops Productions

Islam has set up the agricultural guidelines that need to be followed by the farmers in producing the crops. The guidelines are set up in order to ensure that the produced crops can be enjoyed by the community besides from gaining the profits of sales and also obtaining the Allah's blessings.

4.1 The Planning and Real Objectives of Agriculture

Farmers need to have a thorough well plan for the short term and also the long term plans to realize the potential of the agricultural as dynamic entity that can be competitive as well. The activities of agriculture can be done effectively and more systematically through the clear objectives and goals. This will also ensure that wastage can be avoided, hoardings due to excessive supplies and to reduce the risks of the profit loss. The planning will also assist the farmers in producing the best quality products which are nutritious and safe to be consumed. Apart from that, the farmers also need to abide the rules and regulations that have been set up. This is to ensure that the farmers are up to date with the production and the product marketing for the farmers who commercialize their crops.

4.2 The Inspection on the Types of Crops

In order to reduce the risks of profit loss, the farmers need to identify the expertise of theirs in order to produce the expected crops. The farmers also need to foresee the compatibility of the types of plants with the land and the climate of the area before launching the agricultural activities. Apart from that, the farmers need to ensure that the respective crops or plants will greatly benefit the community and the nation. This is parallel with the efforts of the government to entitle the nation as the global production centre of halal food by developing the halal hub.

4.3 The Halal Agricultural Sources and Tools

The Muslims are prohibited to use the sources which are deemed as *syubhah* and *haram* in the Islamic agricultural activities. The farmers need to recognize and identify the obtained sources used in the farming activities. The same procedure applies to the selection of the seeds. The types of seeds need to be carefully selected to avoid the farmers using the bad seeds or the seeds that might not be suitable to be planted in the farmer's land. This is an important procedure as it can affect the status and income of the farmers.

The farmers need to have a clear focus on their agricultural planning. The unplanned agricultural development can harm the environment be it the ways of implementation and the tools used in order to smoothen the process of agricultural activities. For example, the usage of different types of the chemical fertilizer and so on need to be identified the effects of them on the crops and the surrounding area.

4.4 Identifying the Landlord, the Rental Rate and the Duration of the Land Rental

Farmers need to identify the owner or the landlord of the farm land that the farmers will use for the purpose of agricultural activities. The farmer then need to inform and ask the permission of the land owner beforehand by the *akad al-Muzara'ah*. The contract signed needs be legal and clear and the width of the land need to be explained in the contract in order to avoid misunderstandings between both parties before the beginning of the agricultural activities. Normally most farmers usually own their own plot; however, there are also farmers who rent some lands from others in order to gain more agricultural produce.

4.5 The Affordable Rates of Payment

There are varieties of expertise needed to be prepared for the purpose of agricultural activities. We need to prepare varieties of needs in the agricultural activities. This includes the preparation of the skilled workers in order to smoothen the process of agricultural activities. Lands and workers are two important components in the agricultural activities. The work of agricultural involves a few phases starting with the clearing of the land, followed by the planting of seeds, supervision of the plants, crops collections, the processing of crops and so on. Therefore, the payment rates for the workers

need to be of the same value and in accordance to their level of skills and energy that had been used by using the method of *aqad of ijarah* or *aqad of musaqat*.

4.6 The Shariah Compliance Management, Trading and Contribution

The main purposes of agricultural activities are as a mean of making a living or for the crops to be sold. Previously, the sole focus of the agricultural activities was to fulfill the basic needs of the community as well as to gain crops as their staple food. Some communities are involved in the agricultural activities for the trading purpose. A few aspects that need to be highlighted will be the aspects of the crop, demand, bargains, the current price in the market analysis and the focus of distribution of the crops in order to fulfill the needs of the internal and external communities.

Apart from that, the farmers and traders need to identify that there is no price manipulation; the existence of two different pricing for the same product. This is parallel with the saying of Rasulullah SAW who forbade two sale transactions in the same *aqad* of trading (Narrated by Five Imams) Apart from that, Rasulullah SAW also had forbidden *najay* (the act of overpraising the qualities and conditions of the goods of trade so that it will lead to the tricking of customers to solely believing the effects of the good and purchase the so called extremely good goods) (Narration of Bukhari dan Muslim).

Not hoarding the crops. According to a hadith narrated by Ahmad, “Those who hoard goods of food products for 40 days, they will not be cared by Allah SWT and Allah SWT too will pay no heed to them” (Hadith narration of Ahmad). Rasulullah SAW had said: Those who hoard things are the ones who are guilty. The processes from the planning till the distribution of goods need to be free from any forbidden elements of Islam, the examples of the forbidden elements will be *syubhah*, *riba*, *maysir*, *gharar* and deception. The written contracts of the activities need to be legal and clear between the parties involved.

4.7 The Responsibility in Paying Zakat

In implementing this activity, the farmers are required to fulfill their responsibility in paying zakat, be it the zakat of agriculture or the business zakat. In the Islamic economic system, zakat functions as the mechanism of sharing the collected wealth and it becomes obligatory to be paid when the farmers own the properties that has reached to some amounts. The payment of zakat need be done according to the rules and regulations set in Islam using certain calculation methods and also differ according to the different types of zakat.

5.0 Conclusion

An agricultural activity is one of the highly regarded activities and it is also encouraged in Islam. It is one of the needs of human beings which was set by Allah SWT that functions to fulfill the needs of mankind physically and mentally. The agricultural field is also a very broad field and requires a lot of physical and mental efforts in order to ensure the success of the field. The importance of agriculture cannot be denied when the profits of this industry contributes to the nation’s food sources apart from being the source of income to the farmers. The activities in this field are among the easy ways to gain the hereafter rewards from Allah SWT apart from gaining the benefits and halal source of income from the sales of the crops.

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