



INCORPORATING ISLAMIC ENVIRONMENTAL  
ETHICS IN THE MANAGEMENT OF NATURE  
RESERVE AREAS

BY

IMAN BINTI FADZIL

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Kulliyyah of Architecture and Environmental Design  
International Islamic University Malaysia

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study fundamentally discusses on incorporating Islamic environmental ethics in the management of nature reserve areas. At the moment, there is no study and written enactment yet in incorporating Islamic environmental ethics in the management system of nature reserve areas. Therefore, this study was conducted to examine the Islamic environmental ethics to be incorporated in the management of the nature reserve areas as an added value to the current management system. In order to achieve the stated aim, four objectives were underlined as followed i) to identify the management of nature reserve areas in Malaysia ii) to assess the Islamic environmental ethics and principles of nature conservation iii) to compare Islamic environmental ethics with current management system in order to improve current situation and iv) to suggest ways to harmonize and enhance current management system. This study employed a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, namely questionnaire surveys and semi structured interviews. The analyses were carried out using Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) and interview analysis. The site study area of Kuala Sepetang Mangrove Park was selected based on certain criterions which were further discussed in the study. The findings show a virtuous practice of certain elements of Islamic environmental ethics in the site study area by either the management or the local inhabitants whereby it is reflected through several awards they attained. Due to these reasons, incorporating Islamic environmental ethics is seen as the best alternative to harmonize and enhance the management system, human and environmental needs. Thus, the findings demonstrate three aspects on the perceptions which are i) management and policy ii) locals' usage and iii) ethics and civic awareness. This study has contributed to increase our knowledge on the level of understanding, responsibility and appreciating the Islamic environmental ethics in managing the nature reserve areas. The notion of incorporating the Islamic principles is perceived as an important initiative to harmonize and enhance current management system.

## ملخص البحث

تناول هذه الدراسة بشكل أساسي دمج المبادئ الأخلاقية للبيئة الإسلامية المتعلقة بإدارة مناطق المحميات الطبيعية، ومنذ هذه اللحظة لم تكن هناك أية دراسة تشريعية قائمة على دمج المبادئ الأخلاقية للبيئة الإسلامية بإدارة مناطق المحميات الطبيعية. وقد أجريت هذه الدراسة للتوعية بمدى أهمية دمج المبادئ الأخلاقية للبيئة الإسلامية بإدارة مناطق المحميات الطبيعية لغرض احتياجات الإنسان والبيئة. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف المرجو، كان لا بد من اتباع أربع خطوات، الآتية: 1. ضرورة التعرف على إدارة المناطق الطبيعية المحمية في ماليزيا 2. تقييم المبادئ الأخلاقية للبيئة الإسلامية ومبادئ المحافظة على الطبيعة 3. مقارنة المبادئ الأخلاقية للبيئة الإسلامية مع نظام الإدارة الحالية من أجل تحسين الوضع الحالي 4. توجيه طرق التنسيق وتعزيز نظام الإدارة الحالية. استخدمت هذه الدراسة مجموعة من الأساليب النوعية، والكمية، والدراسات الاستقصائية، وهي: الاستبيان، والمقابلات المفتوحة. وقد نفذت التحليلات الاحصائية بواسطة استخدام الحزم الاحصائية في العلوم الاجتماعية (SPSS)، وتحليل الحوار. تم اختيار منطقة منغروف بارك بكوالاسينغ (Mangrove Park, Kuala Sepetang) لإجراء الدراسة على أساس معيار معين والتي نوقشت بالتفصيل في الفصل الرابع. تُظهر النتائج أن هناك ممارسة حميدة لعناصر معينة من المبادئ الأخلاقية للبيئة الإسلامية من قبل الإدارة، والسكان المحليين. وينعكس ذلك من خلال الجوائز العديدة التي حققت. وللأسباب السابقة تُعد المبادئ الأخلاقية للبيئة الإسلامية أفضل البدائل لتنسيق نظام الإدارة الحالية وتعزيزه، وحاجيات الإنسان، والبيئة. وبالتالي فإن النتائج تثبت ثلاثة جوانب من التصورات، وهي: سياسة الإدارة، واستخدام سكان المحليين، والأخلاق المدني ووعيه. وقد أسهمت هذه الدراسة إلى زيادة معرفة مستوى التوعية، والمسؤولية، وتقدير مبادئ الأخلاقية للبيئة الإسلامية في إدارة المناطق الطبيعية المحمية. ولهذا تُعد فكرة دمج المبادئ الأخلاقية للبيئة الإسلامية مبادرة مهمة في تنسيق الأنظمة الإدارية الحالية وتعزيزها.

## **APPROVAL PAGE**

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.....  
Ismawi Bin Zen  
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that, in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Science (Built Environment)

.....  
Nor Zalina Binti Harun  
Internal Examiner

.....  
Kamarul Bahrain Bin Shuib  
External Examiner

This thesis was submitted to the Department of Landscape Architecture and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science (Built Environment)

.....  
Zainul Mukrim Bin Baharuddin  
Head, Department of Landscape  
Architecture

This thesis was submitted to the Kulliyah of Architecture and Environmental Design and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science (Built Environment)

.....  
Alias Bin Abdullah  
Dean, Kulliyah of Architecture  
and Environmental Design

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MANAGEMENT OF NATURE RESERVE AREAS**

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“بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحِيمِ الرَّحْمَنِ: In the Name of Allah, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful”

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

KSMP	<i>Kuala Sepetang</i> Mangrove Park
NR	Natural resources
AFO	Assistant Forest Officer
SF	Senior Forester
F	Forester
GO	General Officer
A1	Trust in KSMP Management
A2	Effectiveness of KSMP Policy
B1	KSMP Policy Protect KSMP Ecosystem
B2	KSMP Values the Locals
C1	KSMP Policy Preserve Flora & Fauna
C2	KSMP Policy Conserve Flora & Fauna
C3	KSMP Policy Effective in Conserving Flora & Fauna
C4	KSMP Policy Effective in Preserving Flora & Fauna
M1	KSMP Safeguard Natural Resources
M2	Locals Respect KSMP Resource Policy
R1	KSMP Protect Locals Rights
R2	KSMP Protect Environment Rights
LA1	Locals feel responsible to take care of KSMP
LA2	Goodness of KSMP is a collective responsibility
LB1	Locals recreational activities do not disturb ecosystem
LB2	Locals satisfied with the restrictions policy

LC1	Locals help preserving and conserving natural resources (NR)
LC2	Locals are given the opportunity to voice their opinion to Park Management
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E6	Many locals take part in activities organized by Park Management
E7	KSMP has become the pride of the locals
E8	KSMP increase locals' appreciation towards NR



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the aim, objectives and research questions on the idea of incorporating Islamic environmental ethics in the management of nature reserve areas in terms of management and policy, benefit and use of the locals as well as ethics and civic awareness. This research focuses on incorporating Islamic environmental ethics in the management of nature reserve areas. Incorporating Islamic environmental ethics in this study is defined as the idea of integrating the elements of Islamic environmental ethics and practices as an added value to the current management system. Incorporating Islamic principles in the management of nature reserve areas is perceived as an initiative to harmonize and enhance current policies as well as to prosper both human and nature. It is important to incorporate Islamic environmental ethics as it holds the key to people's ethics and the environmental well-being. A management system or policy cannot be considered as an ultimate success if they fail to comply in line with *Syari'ah*. Therefore this study is conducted to deliver understanding towards the importance of incorporating Islamic environmental ethics in the management of nature reserve areas in order to harmonize and enhance current policies as well as to prosper both human and nature.

## **1.2 RESEARCH BACKGROUND**

Nowadays, the environmental issues are more likely to appear as one of the most significant event for the world. Environmental problems for instance, pollutions, global warming and waste management are the main issues for discussion amongst the Muslim's scholars due to environmental destruction and consumption are threatening all humanity. According to Callicott (1982) and (1989), the mainstream of the world religions has started to construct an environmental ethics based on religious values as a reaction to the challenge of the environmental crisis. His statement has been supported by Capra (1984) when he further explained that the study of the aspect of nature and its relevance to environmental ethics has increased in recent eras as a result of this arising awareness. Nevertheless, nature reserve areas or protected areas are playing an important role to protect and preserve the elements of biodiversity of natural environment and the management of nature reserve areas still one of the big challenges yet to be enhanced and improved (Ghimire and Pimbert, 1994). These opinions strengthen the needs of having a set of environmental ethics that govern humans' acts towards natural environment.

This research deals with the Islamic environmental ethics, management of nature reserve areas as well as locals' ethics and awareness. This section will elaborate on the Islamic principles of nature conservation and environmental ethics. Then, it continues on describing and evaluating management plans and initiatives of nature reserve areas. Next it will highlight the relationship between the Islamic environmental ethics and the current nature reserve areas management.

In explaining the principles conserving nature through the perspective of Islam which had been underlined by the Almighty Allah, theories, application and chronological events related to environment and by what means to cope with it and

what's inside it will be elaborated in great details. This is to supply information needed in order to enhance and add value to the current management of nature reserve areas which infused into it the Islamic principle of environmental management.

The principles that Islamic environmental management perspective suggests to conserve nature are based on Islamic environmental ethics explain and demonstrate how humans should behave and treat the natural surrounding around them. This idea can be implemented in the management and conservation of the environment whereby both human and nature is equally benefited each other (Izzi Deen, 1990).

This research has identified the gaps in the previous findings, whereby, the current management plans and initiatives can be improve by integrating Islamic principle of environmental management as a basic guidelines to the existing approach. Furthermore, this research will discuss the Islamic view of environment and its significance for an environmental ethics. Later, the Islamic understanding of natural environment and the role of humankind as *khalifah* on earth will be discussed further.

### **1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

This research mainly aims at achieving the stated objectives since there is no study yet in incorporating Islamic environmental ethics in the management system of nature reserve areas. This does not imply that the current management is failing. Islamic environmental ethic adds values to the conventional management (Zaini Ujang, Seyyed Hossein Nasr & Ziauddin Sardar, 1993).

At the moment, there are no written enactment/regulations incorporating Islamic principles into nature reserve areas management system. This study can become an approach to harmonize scientific and value based practices. As Malaysia is

an Islamic country, so we feel more comfortable to integrate Islamic teachings into our daily affairs. This research intends to provide both human and environmental well-being by prospering and respecting both rights.

In Islam, man and the cosmos are in unity, harmony and complement each other. In this case, prevent water pollution, planting trees and loves animals suggest the same benefits as giving food to the needy. To suggest some steps to be taken to face this problem in Islam, Izzi Deen (1990) and Sayyed Hossien Nasr (1976) mentioned that the first step is the Islamic wisdom of nature must be formulated in the language appropriate to the current situation. Second, awareness of the teachings of the *Syari'ah* relating to the treatment of the natural environment must be extended and the law of nature care is determined based on the teachings of *Syari'ah*.

#### **1.4 RESEARCH AIM**

The goal of the research is to examine the Islamic environmental ethics to be incorporated in the management of the nature reserve areas as an added value to the current management system. It is hoped that the research will present an effective model of management system which prosper both human and natural environment as well as enhancing current management system to ensure environmental and social well-being.

#### **1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

The objectives are outlines as follows:

- i. To assess the Islamic environmental ethics and principles of nature conservation in term of their contribution in protection of the environment.

- ii. To understand the management of nature reserve areas in Malaysia.
- iii. To compare Islamic environmental ethics with current management system.
- iv. To recommend improvements on current management of nature reserve areas in Malaysia according to Islamic environmental ethics.

## **1.6 RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The main questions is to indicate the channels and methods appropriate and desirable in assessing current management initiatives and approaches of nature reserve areas, locals' ethics and awareness as well as the elements of Islamic environmental ethics.

- i. What are the elements of Islamic environmental ethics?
- ii. How do Islamic environmental ethics contribute to protection of environment?
- iii. How does the management of nature reserve areas in Malaysia operate?
- iv. How do Islamic environmental ethics relate to current management system?
- v. How Islamic environmental ethics improve current management of nature reserve areas in Malaysia?

## **1.7 SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF STUDY**

The research focuses on assessing current management of nature reserve areas, the idea of Islamic environmental ethics in environmental management as well as local inhabitants' ethics and awareness. The word local inhabitants refer only to the local people staying in and around the nature reserve areas. While management plans refer to supervision approaches and initiatives set by the park's authorities and management board.

To begin with the research will gather literatures and works which discuss theory, issues, and significance of Islamic environmental ethics and local inhabitants' ethics and awareness. Later the research will identify the relationship of the Islamic environmental ethics and local inhabitants' ethics and awareness in nature management and conservation. The research will gather data on the characters and attributes of the Islamic environmental ethics and local inhabitants in and around the nature reserve areas. This is to assist in discovering suitable approaches in improving current nature reserve areas management which incorporating Islamic environmental ethics into it.

The research will then indicate the existing condition of nature reserve areas management. To do so, the research gathers and assesses information on the effectiveness of current management plans by collecting views and opinion from local inhabitants as well as the management authorities. Additionally, information on the vibrancy and persistence of the nature reserve areas management are also vital for the study. This is to acknowledge the present state of management initiatives of the nature reserve areas and to assess its contribution towards tackling local interests to participate in park's activities and programs.

## **1.8 RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE**

The environment is an important area that will get the attention of the whole world by the arrival of the 21st century. In such circumstances, Muslims need philosophical framework and a clear concept about the environment. This framework is needed because recently these various schools of thought regarding the environment or environmentalism are sprouting in the West. In fact, in some aspects,

environmentalism is a new "religion" at the West. Recognizing this situation, Muslims must realize that environmental consciousness movement in the world today are not all parallel touch with Islam, particularly with regard to deep ecology and environmentalism itself (Zaini Ujang, 1992).

In addition, the awareness of the environment among the Muslims are very shallow, and the fact that lags that of Western society's awareness. With such a superficial awareness is most likely part of which shallow basic awareness will be influenced by the trace notion of "religion" of Western environmentalism. This is certainly contrary to the aspirations of *Tawhid* which is not anchored to the understanding of Islam accurately (Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 1978; Zaini Ujang, 1992).

Therefore, efforts to provide the framework and concepts about the environment from the perspective of Islam should be done immediately. In this study, Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1968 and 1978) expresses his view of the environmental crisis in his writing when he tried to unite the Islamic cosmology with modern environmental crisis. According to him, the Western's secular view is very contrary to the view of Islam about nature. Referring to the Islamic worldview, he stressed the importance of the *Quran* relating to the environment and the things about it. In this case, nature is also present in the revelation of the *Quran* and other forms of nature, as man is assigned as a witness. Similarly, the phenomenon of the natural world and the happenings in the soul is, *Ayatullah*. With regards to the environment, he cites the verse "*And whatever is in the heavens and whatever is in the earth is Allah's, and Allah encompasses all things*" (The Quran, 4:126). He is the Most Covers, and the modern environmental crisis is a result of the rejection of God as the Most Covers. By highlighting the role of the vicegerent in this crisis, Sayyed Hossien Nasr (1997) said that if the man as a vicegerent devoting role entrusted to him, as a servant of God,

then nothing is more harmful to the natural environment other than God's caliph himself.

Therefore, Islamic environmental ethics is viewed as being the best alternative for the environmental management and in particular for the management of nature reserve areas as one of the component of nature. This should be seen as an act of justice as Malaysia recognizes herself as an Islamic country which reported in Malaysia Demographic Profile 2013 is inhabited by more than 29.46 million inhabitants in whom 60.4 percent of the population are Muslims. Retrieved Feb 13, 2013, from [http://www.indexmundi.com/malaysia/demographic\\_profile.html](http://www.indexmundi.com/malaysia/demographic_profile.html). (refer to appendix A).

Above all, this would be the translation of Islamization of knowledge through the management system. Figure 1.1 shows the summary of the research significance.

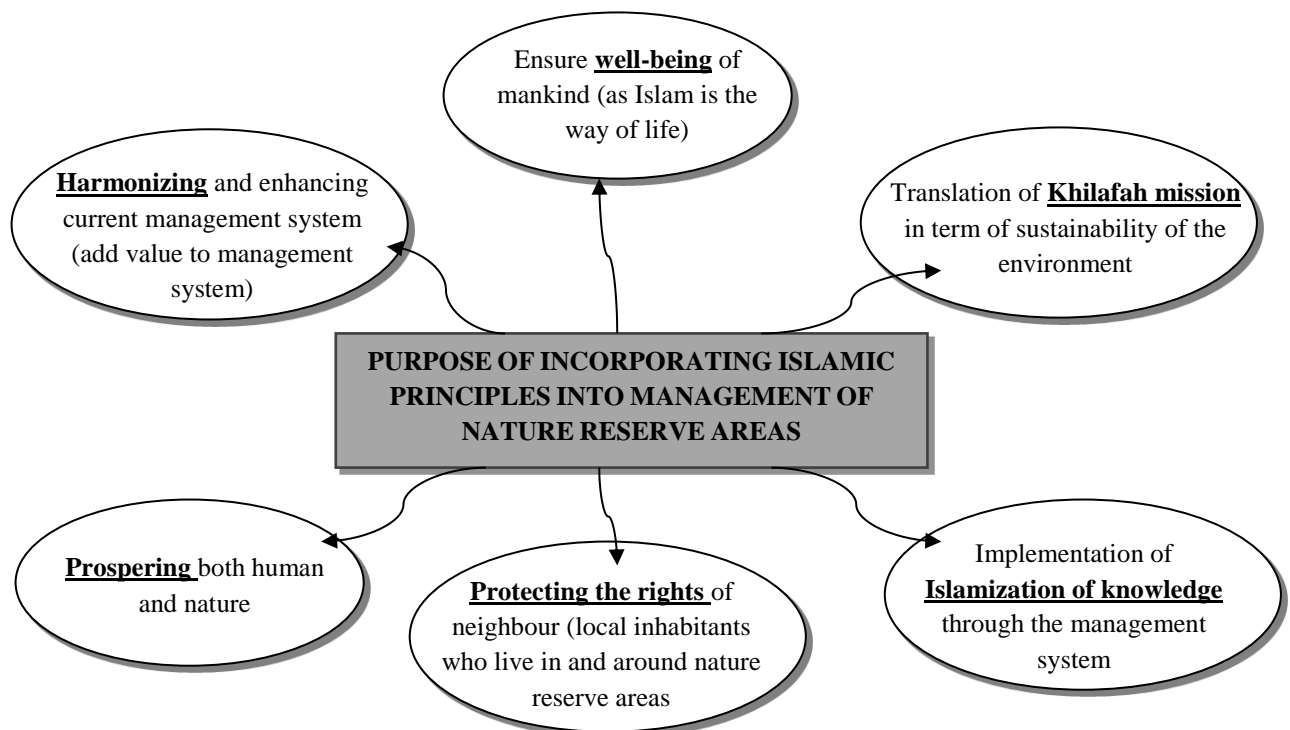


Figure 1.1: Summary of Research Significance