

# Isti'mār Al-Arḍ: The Concept of Prosperity for the Earth from Qur'ānic Perspective

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**Abstract**--This article tries to uncover the concept of prosperity of the earth which begins with verse 61 of Sūrat Hūd, then continues by connecting it with other verses in the Qur'ān and the Hadīth. The concept contains a message or a strong signal, even a command that humans can prosper the earth as a form of environmental preservation by maintaining the balance of nature. The method used is the thematic tafsīr or al-tafsīr al-mawḍū'ī which sees the verses of the Qur'ān as a unified meaning and confirms that in the Qur'ān there are no verses that contradict the others. This article found that God created humans from the earth and God told them to manage and prosper it while banning it from spoiling it. The earth and all its contents are intended for the survival and comfort of human life. This article concludes that the damage that has ever happened on earth is a result of human activity itself that does not act as God commands.

**Key words**--isti'mār al-arḍ; prospering the earth; al-tafsīr al-mawḍū'ī; khalīfah; fasād

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Previous studies have suggested that religion plays little role in the national developments around the world, such as in the Western Europe, Africa, most of Asia and South America (Snyder, 2003, p. 184). However, the Middle East has a different model. The Middle East is the center of Islamic world. This region is regarded as the holy site of Islam. The people also uphold Islamic culture (Bayman, 2003, p. viii; Testerman, 2014, p. 186). Islam is the power which unites the Arab world for centuries (Lawrence, 1984, p. 86). For every Arab Muslim, Islam represents an irreplaceable core identity, a private ownership, and a communal legacy (Abu-Osba, 1982, p. 49). Although division exists in Islam, such as between Sunni Islam and Shia Islam (Stent, 2014, p. 127) and the clash between modernists and fundamentalists (Stump, 2008, p. 183), the belief of Islam is still deep-rooted in their lives (Snyder, 2003, p. 184).

Other findings indicate that Islam encourages national development not only in the Middle East, but also in several Muslim-majority countries, such as Turkey (Dönmez & Yaman, 2019), Indonesia (Azra, 2006; Bruinessen, 2013; Pringle, 2010), Malaysia (Hooker & Othman, 2003; Mueller, 2014; Nair, 2013), or at least, in countries with significant Muslim population, such as India (Ansari, 2016; Sabahuddin, 2006), and even in Muslim-minority regions (Haddad & Smith, 2002). Although it's not the main power, more or less, Islam has become a contributing factor in the national development of the previously mentioned countries. The phenomena, at least, can be understood from two viewpoints, namely: (a) democratization; and (b) the nature of Islamic teachings.

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Especially in Muslim-minority countries (Cesari, 2006), however small, through democracy, Islam still has a chance to contribute to the national development in a country where its followers are citizens (Hunter et al., 2005); even more in Muslim-majority countries (Künkler & Stepan, 2013; Menchik, 2016; Price, 1999). On the other side, the accommodative and contextual natures of Islamic teachings (although not all Islamic scholars acknowledge it, such as the mode of existence of the Salafis (Duderija, 2010; Wahib, 2017)) has encouraged Islam to keep influencing its followers wherever they are (Effendy, 2003). This nature is apparent and it keeps developing along with the scientific development within Islam in general (Huff, 2003; Iqbal, 2007; S. Ismail et al., 2015; Nasr, 2007), or the development of normative sources of Islam studies, such as the Quran and *'Ulum al-Qur'ān* (Abū-Zaid, 2004, p. 54; M. M. Ayoub, 2012; Bucaille, 2010; Tawfik, 2008), the tafsir (exegesis) (Çoruh, 2019; Daneshgar, 2018; Mustapha, 2012; Stowasser, 1994), and the others in the modern era, in particular. The product of past Islamic studies, or more well known as *turath* (Lahoud, 2004), gradually has transformed from a kind of guide for the Muslims into a staple to be developed into products of modern-contemporary Islamic studies (Affani, 2019, p. 189).

The sciences of the Quran and its exegesis, for example, are classic Islamic disciplines or *turāth* which keep developing, creating an experimentative interconnected form with other disciplines. A number of studies related to public necessities has emerged, such as a study on natural resources and natural environment (Abdulai & Shamshiry, 2014, pp. 11–40). Many verses of the Quran (hence, it's a part of the Quran and Tafsir studies) are used as the initial step of natural resource and environmental studies (Abou-El-Enin, 2009, p. 306). Those verses are easily found, among others: Quran 11:61; Quran 38:27; Quran 7:10; Quran 15:20; Quran 45:13; and Quran 2:29.

The worrisome global climate change has prompted many scientists and academics to expand their areas of study to that of they previously thought as insignificant.; including the normative sources of religions (Coward & Hurka, 1993, p. 44; Veldman et al., 2014). Islam, primarily via the Quran and Hadith, certainly, has those sources of study (Arnez, 2014, pp. 75–101; F. Khalid, 2019). Because of its universal nature, the product of Islamic studies is not limited to the country where it is being studied, but it also can be applied to every region on earth. While outside of Islam, by involving Islam in it, natural resource and environmental studies can be viewed, at least, from the joint works of world's major religions (Richard Clugston & Holt, 2012).

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Several studies of Islamic normative sources about natural resources and environment have been published by interrelating them with the verse 61 of chapter or Surah Hūd. Among others are: Ba Kader (1983) who discusses Islamic principles for the conservation of the natural environment; Kodir & Mushoffa (2017) who highlight the socio-ecological crisis incited by overexploitation of natural resources (Indonesian issues); Mustofa & Mubaraok (2018) who cover the hydrocarbon exploration on Spartly islands; Wahidi, Shabir, & Junaidi (2018) mention the punishment for those who do bad deeds on earth; Kurniawan & Rahman (2019) who called *imārat al-arḍ* (earth prosperity) as a form of *al-tanmiyyat al-iqtisādiyyah* (economic development); as so does Norah bin Hamad (bin Hamad, 2017, p. 106).

A result of a joint study on the synergy of the values of faith from various major religions and faiths around the world has been previously published. This work, in certain limits, has succeeded combining the values of faith

with the social and educational aspects of sustainable development. The work contains nineteen articles (Amswych, 2012; Asai, 2012; Boff, 2012; Browning, 2012; Rick Clugston, 2012; Dahl, 2012; Diallo, 2012; Joseph, 2012; Liu & Constable, 2012; Mansour, 2012; Matal, 2012; Nagle, 2012; Nouh, 2012; Sarabhai, 2012; Soetendorp, 2012; Swee-Hin, 2012; Terena, 2012; Tucker, 2012; Weiming, 2012), entitled *Exploring Synergies between Faith Values and Education for Sustainable Development*, edited by Richard Clugston and Steve Holt (Richard Clugston & Holt, 2012).

### III. METHOD

Thematic exegesis or *al-tafsīr al-mawḍū'ī* is a method of exegesis which regards Quranic verses as a unity of meaning. (El-Mesawi, 2005; Ḥaddād 'Ādil et al., 2012, p. 25). This method emphasizes that there are no contradicting verses in the Quran (M. Ayoub, 1984, p. 187; Crockett, 2004, p. xvi; Ghattas & Ghattas, 2009, p. 28; Mattson, 2013, p. 195; Sardar, 2011, p. 227). Hence, the main element of this method is by collecting all verses considered having the same theme (Griffel, 2013; Syarifuddin & Azizy, 2017), then systematically arranging them as if letting the Quran speaks by itself (Abdul-Raof, 2010, pp. 94–95). This method was introduced by Aḥmad al-Sayyid al-Kūmī, the head of Tafsīr Department at Al-Azhar University along with a number of his colleagues and students (Supiana, 2012, p. 143).

Al-Farmāwī in detail proposes this method with the following steps (al-Farmāwī, 1977, p. 61): (a) determine the problem; (b) collect verses related to the problem; (c) arrange the verses according to their revelation chronological orders, accompanied by knowledge of their circumstances of revelation; (d) understand the correlation of the verses with their own *surah* (chapter); (e) arrange a discussion in a perfect framework; (f) complete the discussion with relevant hadiths; (g) study the verses as a whole by categorizing verses with similar meaning, or between general verses and specific verses, between *muṭlaq* verses and *muqayyad* verses, or are contradicting by birth, so all of them are converged together without any difference or coercion (al-Farmāwī, 1977, p. 62).

### IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS

The verse about prospering the earth textually is only contained in the Quran 11:61:

﴿وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا مِنْكُمْ وَأَمَرُوا آلَهُمْ صَالِحًا فَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ مَا لَكُم مِّنْ إِلَهِ غَيْرُهُ هُوَ أَنشَأَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَرْضِ وَاسْتَعْمَرَكُمْ فِيهَا فَاسْتَغْفِرُوهُ ثُمَّ تَوَلَّوْا إِلَيْهِ وَإِنَّ رَبِّي لَقَرِيبٌ مُّجِيبٌ ﴿١١﴾﴾

“And to Thamud [We sent] their brother Ṣāliḥ. He said, "O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him. He has produced you from the earth and settled you in it, so ask forgiveness of Him and then repent to Him. Indeed, my Lord is near and responsive."

This verse tells about the Prophet Ṣāliḥ who said to his people that God has created them from earth (dirt) and made them its caretakers (God made men as the occupants of this world to rule and prosper it).

Based on the verse above, we can limit the sub-themes into three discussions, namely: (a) The creation of earth for mankind; (b) Mankind's roles as the ruler and caretaker of earth; and (c) The benefits of maintaining and prospering earth along with the danger of harming it.

### a. The Creation of Earth for Mankind

The measurement and study of earth's rocks shows that the age of earth has reached 4.6 billion years old (Ball, 2003). The earth is a burning hot big stone which is also covered with burning hot big stones. Then, millions of meteors hit earth on daily basis. Until the collision flattened the earth and shaped it into a ball (Imamudin, 2012).

There are many singular utterances of "earth" in the Quran (Thayyarah, 2013, p. 468). The utterances are often accompanied by "sky", both in singular and plural forms, and placed before or after it (Muhazir, 2017). When earth is intended to be in a plural form, the Quran expresses it in a beautiful and interesting form, like His saying in the Quran 65:12. The word "earth" in singular forms sometimes are intended to show directions and in plural forms to show its occupants. Many of both forms are intended for human survival (M. R. Khalid, 2012).

Allah created earth as a dwelling place (Husma, 2017, p. 53) and a living place for mankind (Abdillah, 2001, p. 92). Earth, and even nature with everything in it, was created to be used and managed as well as possible for human interests (Saehudin, 2015, p. 208). Verses that talk about the creation of earth, based on their revelation chronology, include Quran 38:27; Quran 7:10; Quran 15:20; Quran 45:13; and Quran 2:29.

The creation of earth for mankind was commenced by a statement that God did not created the sky and earth for no reason, as His saying goes in Quran 38:27:

وَمَا خَلَقْنَا السَّمَاءَ وَالْأَرْضَ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا بَطْلًا ۚ ذَلِكَ ظَنُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا فَوَيْلٌ لِلَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنَ النَّارِ



"And We did not create the heaven and the earth and that between them aimlessly. That is the assumption of those who disbelieve, so woe to those who disbelieve from the Fire."

Moreover, the above verse states to never believe that the creation of earth is for nothing, because only the *kafir* (nonbelievers) who think so, and indeed there is no creature created in vain, from plants, to animals and even human are connected to one another. If there is a disturbance in one of the creatures, then the ecosystem will be imbalanced entirely (Salim, 1984, p. 3). If the creation of these natures (the earth and the sky) is without purpose, then it means what God did, including the life and death of His creatures, along with their creations and exterminations, are done without any purpose as well (Pasya, 2006).

Then, God also emphasizes that the creation of earth and everything in it are intended for human survival, as mentioned in the Quran 7:10:

وَلَقَدْ مَكَّنَّاكُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَجَعَلْنَا لَكُمْ فِيهَا مَعْيِشًا ۚ قَلِيلًا مَّا تَشْكُرُونَ

"And We have certainly established you upon the earth and made for you therein ways of livelihood. Little are you grateful."

"We have certainly established you upon the earth" means God has made mankind able to manage and maintain it, through reason and knowledge that God has passed to them, or God has made earth as their home in this worldly life (Shihab, 2002a, p. 18).

Furthermore, in the Quran 15:20:

وَجَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ فِيهَا مَعْيِشًا وَمَنْ أَسْمَأُ لِلْمُرْرِزِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾

“And We have made for you therein means of living and [for] those for whom you are not providers.”  
The word “ma’āyish” is the plural form of “ma’īshah” which at first means “having life”. This meaning then changes into “the means of life” (Shihab, 2002b, p. 110). Both of the verses, especially the second one, underline that God has created everything for the convenience of mankind on earth.

After the three verses (11:61; 7:10; and 15:20) above were revealed, according to their *makkiyah-madaniyah* chronology, then God re-emphasizes that everything on earth is intended for mankind, as His saying goes in the Quran 45:13

وَسَخَّرَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا مِنْهُ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿١٣﴾

“And He has subjected to you whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth - all from Him. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who give thought.”

And also in the Quran 2:29:

هُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مَّا فِي الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا ثُمَّ أَسْتَوَىٰ إِلَى السَّمَاءِ فَسَوَّاهُنَّ سَبْعَ سَمَوَاتٍ وَهُوَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عَلِيمٌ ﴿٢٩﴾

“It is He who created for you all of that which is on the earth. Then He directed Himself to the heaven, [His being above all creation], and made them seven heavens, and He is Knowing of all things.”

The two verses above affirm that God created everything on earth for mankind so everything that mankind needs for their survival and convenience is provided. Therefore, it can be understood that in the beginning every creature in this world can be or is allowed to be used. No one can forbid something that God has permitted (al-Marāghī, 1946a, p. 73, 1946b, pp. 146–147).

Al-Maraghi, in this case, explains the utilization is conducted through one of the two means, namely: (a) using it as food for the physical importance, or as an ornament of daily lives for fun purpose; and (b) using it to fulfill the spiritual needs, namely by thinking about the greatness of God through what He created. The second one is conducted when the first mean is over the limit of human ability (al-Marāghī, 1946a, p. 73, 1946b, pp. 146–147).

#### **b. Mankind’s Roles as the Ruler and Caretaker of Earth**

Humans are the creatures of God who has a noble standing and dignity on earth (Dogan, 2013). Humans are perfect creatures and have the ability above that of other creatures (Stern, 2017). These are what made them be appointed as the ruler and caretaker of earth (Ali, 2009; Al-Khasawneh et al., 2015). With their ability to reason, humans are given a chance and ability to observe, think, research and also study natural phenomena (Soros, 2013), hence they can manage them well. To understand how far the importance of mankind’s roles as the ruler and the

caretaker are in maintaining and managing the earth, we have to first understand the position of mankind and their functions and duties on earth.

The functions and duties of mankind on earth are explained in the Quran 11:61, which says that God created men on earth and appointed them as its caretaker. However, to be clearer, the verses that talk about mankind's roles as the ruler and caretaker of earth, based on its revelation chronology, include Quran 38:26; Quran 7:129; Quran 27:62; Quran 6:165; and Quran 2:30.

It begins with the story of the appointment of the Prophet Dāwud as the *khalīfah* (leader) replacing Ṭālūt, as His saying goes in the Quran 38:26:

يٰۤاٰدُوۤد اِنَّا جَعَلْنَاكَ خَلِيۡفَةً فِى الْاَرْضِ فَاحْكُم بَيْنَ النَّاسِ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَا تَتَّبِعِ الْاَهْوٰى فَيُضِلَّكَ عَنْ سَبِيۡلِ اللّٰهِ اِنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ يَضِلُّوۡنَ عَنْ سَبِيۡلِ اللّٰهِ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ شَدِيۡدٌ يَمَّا نَسُوۡا يَوْمَ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٣٦﴾

“[We said], "O Dāwud, indeed We have made you a successor upon the earth, so judge between the people in truth and do not follow [your own] desire, as it will lead you astray from the way of Allah." Indeed, those who go astray from the way of Allah will have a severe punishment for having forgotten the Day of Account.”

The appointment of a *khalīfah* involves the meaning of appointing some men who were given revelation by God about His rules (Rahim, 2012). This meaning of *khalīfah* also covers all mankind who has ability to think. Mankind, with their ability to think, science and comprehension, are able to maintain and manage earth with freedom (Ati, 2018).

*Khalīfah* initially means “the successor” or someone who comes after the one before him (Pay, 2015). This story, along with the appointment of Ādam as the *khalīfah* on earth, at least, bears two meanings: (a) the word “*khalīfah*” is used in the Qur’ān for someone who is given the authority to manage a region, extensively or limitedly; and (b) A *khalīfah* has the potential to make mistakes by following his lusts. That was what happened to Dāwud and also Ādam, where both are gifted with knowledge, the both slipped up to follow their lusts, but then both begged for mercy, and God accepted it (Shihab, 2002c, p. 369).

After that, God will observe what mankind is doing as *khalīfah* on earth, whether they are being grateful by maintaining and managing earth according to His rules or harming it by ruining it and causing disasters. This is reflected in His revelation in the Quran 7:129:

قَالُوۡا اٰوۡدِيۡنَا مِّنۡ قَبۡلِ اَنْ تَاۡتِيَنَا وَمِنۡۢ بَعۡدِ مَا جِئْتَنَا قَالَ عَسَىٰ رَبُّكُمْ اَنْ يُّهۡلِكَ عَدُوۡكُمْ وَيَسۡخَلِفَ لَكُمۡ فِى الْاَرْضِ فَيَنظُرَ كَيْفَ تَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿١٢٩﴾

“They said, "We have been harmed before you came to us and after you have come to us." He said, "Perhaps your Lord will destroy your enemy and grant you succession in the land and see how you will do.””

Also in His revelation in the Quran 27:62:

اَمِّنۡ مُّجِيبَ الْمُنۡظَرِ اِذَا دَعَاۤهُ وَاٰتٰهُ وَيَكۡتِفِ السُّوۡءَ وَيَجۡعَلُ لَكُمۡ خُلَفَاۤءَ الْاَرْضِ اَوَّلَهٗ مَعَ اللّٰهِ قَلِيۡلًا مَّا تَذَكَّرُوۡنَ ﴿٦٢﴾

“Is He [not best] who responds to the desperate one when he calls upon Him and removes evil and makes you inheritors of the earth? Is there a deity with Allah? Little do you remember.”

Ibn ‘Ashūr considers the phrase “who makes you inheritors of the earth” is on the rank of utilization, ownership, including the inheriting of earth from generation to generation (*jaylan ba’da jaylin*) (Ibn ‘Ashūr, 1984, pp. 15–16). The above verses suggest the amount of favors God gives to mankind, namely the authority of everything on earth and its maintenance. Moreover, this is strengthened by the word “*tadhakkarūn*” which means to remember or present something which essentially has existed on the mind (M. Ismail, 2014).

Also, His revelation in the Quran 6:165;

وَهُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمْ خَلْقَ الْأَرْضِ وَرَفَعَ بَعْضَكُمْ فَوْقَ بَعْضٍ دَرَجَاتٍ لِيَسْئَلُوكُمْ فِي  
مَاءِ بَنَاتِكُمْ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ سَرِيعُ الْعِقَابِ وَإِنَّهُ لَغَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿١٦٥﴾

“And it is He who has made you successors upon the earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees [of rank] that He may try you through what He has given you. Indeed, your Lord is swift in penalty; but indeed, He is Forgiving and Merciful.”

And another one in the Quran 2:30:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً قَالُوا أَتَجْعَلُ فِيهَا مَنْ  
يُفْسِدُ فِيهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَاءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَ قَالَ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ مَا  
لَا تَعْلَمُونَ ﴿٣٠﴾

“And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, “Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority.” They said, “Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?” Allah said, “Indeed, I know that which you do not know.””

In the first verse, a dialogue happened or an effort by the angels to understand the secret of the appointment of *khalīfah* on earth by directly asking about it to God. This dialogue is explained in the next verse so the angels “realized” about the selection and appointment of *khalīfah* on earth, that mankind indeed has a distinction that makes them able to rule and manage the earth (Madjid, 2018).

### c. The Benefits of Maintaining and Prospering the Earth and the Danger of Harming It

The verses that speak about the benefits of maintaining and prospering earth along with the danger of harming it, according to their revelation chronology, include:

#### 1) The Benefits of Maintaining Earth.

The benefit of maintaining and managing earth certainly is for the convenience of its occupants so they can live comfortably (Naeem et al., 2016). The commands to maintain or do good to earth, are included among others in the Quran 28:77:

وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِن  
كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفُسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ ﴿٧٦﴾

“But seek, through that which Allah has given you, the home of the Hereafter; and [yet], do not forget your share of the world. And do good as Allah has done good to you. And desire not corruption in the land. Indeed, Allah does not like corrupters.”

Islam affirms mankind not to forget their roles on earth and to always do good deeds, including to the universe (Golshani, 2000; Rahman, 1967), because God dislikes people who corrupt. From the above verse, according to Quraish Shihab, the word “ahsin” is derived from the word “hasan” which means *good*. The patron of this word is in the form of exclamation and needs an object. If the object is not mentioned, then it includes everything that can be touched by goodness; it can be initiated by doing good deeds toward the environment; followed by wealth, plants, animals, humans, and others (Shihab, 2002d, p. 407). In fact, according to al-Suyuthi, in his exegesis of *al-Jalalain*, he interprets “Allah does not like corrupters” means that Allah will punish people who corrupt (al-Suyūfī, 2016, p. 518).

## 2) The Danger of Harming Earth.

Many Quran verses emphasize not to harm the earth, including the Quran 7:56, Quran 35:39, Quran 27: 69, Quran 6:11, and Quran 30:41.

Allah emphasizes and forbids mankind not to harm the earth, as His saying goes in the Quran 7:56:

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ  
مِنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ ﴿٥٦﴾

“And cause not corruption upon the earth after its reformation. And invoke Him in fear and aspiration. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good.”

The above verse summarizes several commands, including: (a) the command not to do harm on earth and corrupt it (“And cause not corruption upon the earth”) (Hope & Jones, 2014); (b) the command that earth was corrupted, but Allah fixed it and commanded us not to corrupt it again after He fixed it (“after its reformation”) (Saniotis, 2012). These verse visibly shows the law of balance in the order of natural environment (earth) which has to be put forth so its sustainability is maintained (Samuel, 2010). This also suggests that if there is a disturbance in the balance of nature, then immediate actions and steps are needed to recover the balance (Foltz, 2000); (c) The command of the important of praying in this age. In this era, the environmental damages threaten earth with various natural disasters, like tsunami and the others (“And invoke Him in fear and aspiration”) (Rokib, 2012); and (d) the command not to lose faith in God’s mercy, and so we pray to be given goodness (“Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good”) (Shihab, 2002d, p. 115).

“And cause not corruption” uses the word “fasād”, which means infertility, aridity, hunger, famine, and similar instances (Thalbah, 2009). A corruption appears as a result of no rainfall or natural disasters such as tsunami, earthquakes, and the others. Therefore, God forbids mankind to make corruption because it threatens the survival of

mankind on earth. Every verse above were revealed before a warning or a research about more frequent occasions of natural disaster (Shihab, 2002e, p. 115).

Allah emphasizes that anyone who disbelieves upon what He has gifted toward him, the he will regret it, as His saying goes in the Quran 35:39:

هُوَ الَّذِي جَعَلَكُمْ خَلَائِفَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ فَعَلَيْهِ كُفْرُهُ وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْكَافِرِينَ كُفْرَهُمْ إِلَّا مَقْتًا وَلَا يَزِيدُ الْكَافِرِينَ كُفْرَهُمْ إِلَّا خَسَارًا ﴿٣٩﴾

“It is He who has made you successors upon the earth. And whoever disbelieves - upon him will be [the consequence of] his disbelief. And the disbelief of the disbelievers does not increase them in the sight of their Lord except in hatred; and the disbelief of the disbelievers does not increase them except in loss.”

As the result of corruption, sometimes it happens all at one or consecutively, or through a particular method, as mentioned in the Quran 27: 69:

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ فَانظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُجْرِمِينَ ﴿٦٩﴾

“Say, [O Muhammad], "Travel through the land and observe how was the end of the criminals."”

Also, in the Quran 6:11:

قُلْ سِيرُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ انظُرُوا كَيْفَ كَانَ عَاقِبَةُ الْمُكذِبِينَ ﴿١١﴾

“Say, [O Muhammad], "Travel through the land; then observe how was the end of the deniers."”

The two verses above has similar meanings. The first one uses the word “*Fa*” and the second one uses the word “*Tsumma*”. In Arabic, the word “*Fa*” is usually used to describe two occasions that happen consecutively without relatively long interval (Shihab, 1996). This verse shows that God commands mankind to travel around earth, and without a relatively long interval, they will immediately observe the results made by the sinners toward earth (Shihab, 2008). “Immediately” does not mean it happens directly after the command is followed, but by keep complying to the rules of nature and God’s decree Meanwhile, the word “*Tsumma*” is usually used to describe two occasions happened consecutively with a relatively long interval. The observation of the consequences of what sinners did is not directly connected to the travelling around the earth at the same time, but it takes a relatively long time. In other words, if a man or a generation corrupts the earth, then the consequences can come immediately but also after several generations after it (Shihab, 2002a, p. 18).

Among the important and serious things in this study is the what God says in the Quran 78:6-7:

أَلَمْ نَجْعَلِ الْأَرْضَ مَهْدًا ﴿٦﴾ وَالْجِبَالَ أَوْتَادًا ﴿٧﴾

“Have We not made the earth a resting place? (6); And the mountains as stakes? (7)” Al-Maraghi interprets: “And We make the mountains like posts that are planted on earth so it’s not tilted or leaning to one side that it shakes its occupants. If there are no mountains, certainly the earth will always be shaken by earthquakes as a

result of a turbulence inside it. Therefore, the function of earth as our living place will no longer be perfect” (al-Marāghī, 1946c, p. 8).

It’s possible that someone will say: “There are many visible mountains, hence not all of earth spread out”. To correct the thought, Allah explains the function of mountains on earth and the convenience of its occupants. According to Quraish Shihab, the word “ja’ala” in the above verse is used to emphasize how great the benefits of what Allah created are and for mankind to realize it and use it well (Shihab, 2002e, pp. 7–8). Then the Prophet Muhammad in one of his hadiths says: “When Allah created earth, the surface started to move and shake, then Allah stabilized it with mountains”. The two explained sources state that mountains are one of the important elements to maintain the stability of the earth’s moves and rotation.

According to a research, under the earth’s crust layer, there is a lithosphere layer (Sumanjaya et al., 2016). When the plates collide and pile up, arise a high mountain top. However, when the plates are still on their spread, then the surface of the continent will be constant, and the plates keep moving along with the earth’s rotation in a slower tempo than time calculation (Armainingsih, 2016; Imran, 2016). According to geologists, the high mountains have “foot” in the asthenosphere which makes its continental positions (Hakim, 2019). Therefore, more mountains being flattened means more earthquakes (El-Naggar, 1992).

Reasonably, then God emphasizes that every damage on earth is the consequence of men’s actions, as He says in the Quran 30:41:

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ أَيْدِي النَّاسِ لِيُذِيقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِي عَمِلُوا لَعَلَّهُمْ  
يَرْجِعُونَ

“Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness].”

As we see according to the verse, every corruption on earth is the consequence of human’s actions, both of human from the generation when the corruption happens or from the previous ones. The next point from the verse, as explained by al-Thabary, is for mankind to know the truth then ask for forgiveness to Allah and leave behind corruption and immorality (al-Ṭabarī, 2001, pp. 512–514).

The creation of earth is one of the God’s mercy for mankind, so this earth which was once corrupted was reformed by God for mankind. God made earth into a proper place for life, so mankind can be grateful of His favors.

## V. CONCLUSION

The Quran 11:61 states that Allah (God) has created men out of earth (dirt) and has assigned them as the caretakers. The verse mentions three major discussions: the creation of earth for mankind, the role of mankind as the ruler and the caretaker of earth, and the benefits of maintaining and prospering earth as well as the danger of harming it. The verses about the creation of earth for mankind according to its revelation chronology include: Quran

38:27; Quran 7:10; Quran 15:20; Quran 45:13; and Quran 2:29, which state that the creation of earth and everything in it were intended for the convenience of human life on earth.

The verses about the role of mankind as the ruler and the caretaker of earth according to its revelation chronology include: Quran 38:26; Quran 7:129; Quran 27:62; Quran 6:165; and Quran 2:30, which states that mankind has an important role to maintain and run the earth.

If mankind conduct their duties properly, then earth will prosper, and if they forge their duties, then damages that incite natural disasters will arrive. Those verses containing explanation about the benefits of maintaining and prospering earth along with the danger of harming it state that every destruction that has ever happened on earth is the consequence of mankind's own action.

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