



AGRICULTURE AND AGRIBUSINESS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF *AL-QUR'AN* AND *AL-SUNNAH*

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the concept of agriculture and agribusiness from the spirit of al-Qur'an and al-Sunnah. Thus, this article will be divided into two sections. The first section begins with the exploration of agriculture, whilst the second section in this article will discuss the advantage of participating in agribusiness. The methodology of study in this article is mostly through the analysis of classical as well as modern sources regarding agriculture and agribusiness. Interpretation of verses of al-Qur'an and al-Sunnah are also included in the discussion of these topics. The finding shows that al-Qur'an and al-Sunnah give a clear message to the Muslim community that embarking in this sector is very important for producing food as a source of energy to the development of human body.

Keywords: *Al-Qur'an and Al-Sunnah, Agriculture, Agribusiness*

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INTRODUCTION

Production function in the Islamic economics has been regulated by the concept of livelihood (*al-Rizq*) as well as lawful (*halal*) and unlawful (*haram*) sources of earnings. The term *al-Rizq* is applied to connote livelihoods and means of further production, which has been intimated by the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. and predetermined by Allah S.W.T. One way to gain lawful livelihood is through agro initiatives.

Indeed, there are many verses from the al-Qur'an as well as the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. that emphasizes on the importance of agriculture. Islam views agriculture sector as an obligation of the society (*Fard al-Kifayah*). Agriculture has been an important source of food production for mankind since ancient times and therefore, should not be neglected. Earnings through agriculture and becomes agro entrepreneurship is regarded honorable endeavors from the Islamic spirit.

Nevertheless, there are some questions that need to be solved with regards of agriculture and agribusiness. How do Islam views agriculture and agribusiness and are there any encouragement provided in the al-Qur'an or *al-hadith* for Muslim to engage in agriculture sector and to get earnings from it? To solve these issues, this article will discuss various aspects that are vitally related to these matters namely agriculture and concept of reviving idle land as well as agribusiness from the light of al-Qur'an and *al-Sunnah*.

AGRICULTURE FROM THE SPIRIT OF AL-QUR'AN AND AL-SUNNAH

As an organized religion, Islam goes into great detail on the subject of agriculture,³ which plays a very significance role in the daily life of a Muslim. The Islamic teaching puts a high value on efforts to consolidate the agricultural industry. Al-Qur'an as a main source of Islamic jurisprudence

³ In Arabic, the word agriculture refers to *al-Filahah* means the act of clearing and cutting, when applied to the soil has the meaning of "to break up in order to cultivate or to plough". From Pre-Islamic times the word *filahah* has assumed a wider meaning to denote the occupation of husbandry and agriculture. In this sense, it is synonymous with *zira'ah*, to which the ancients preferred *filahah* (all the earlier writers called their works on agriculture *Kitab al-Filahah*). See *The Encycloepadia of Islam* (1965), Vol. II, Netherlands: Leiden, p.899.



emphasizes on the important of water⁴ in agriculture.⁵

Allah S.W.T. says to the effect:⁶

“Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of creation), before we clove them asunder? We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?”

It can be inferred from this verse that Allah S.W.T. brings to life plants and animals in this world from water⁷, which has been sent down from sky. As such, Allah S.W.T. has provided a continuous water supply for all his creations.⁸ Rain that has been sent down by Allah S.W.T. from sky to bring life and fertilize plants on the earth will finally bring a lot of benefits to mankind, be it in the form of fruits for eating or leaves and trunks of trees for healthy and medication purposes.⁹

⁴ Surface were all leveled, the whole surface would be under water, as the mean elevation of land sphere- level would be 7,000 to 10,000 feet below the surface of the ocean. This shows the predominance of water on our globe. That all life began in the water is also a conclusion to which our latest knowledge in biological science points. Apart from the fact that protoplasm, the original basis of living matter, is liquid or semi-liquid and in a state of constant flux and instability, there is the fact that land animals, like the higher vertebrates, including man, show in their embryological history, organs like those of fishes, indicating the watery origin of their original habitat. The constitution of protoplasm is about 80 to 85 per cent of water. See *The Holy Qur'an: English Translation of the Meanings and Commentary* (1410H.), Madinah: King Fahd Holy Qur'an Printing Complex, p.924.

⁵ Abu Bakar Abdul Majeed (2006), “Enhancing Food Security in the Era of Information and Communications Technology in the Muslim World”, in Shaikh Mohd Saifuddeen Shaikh Mohd Salleh, *et.al.* (eds.), *Food and Technological Progress: An Islamic Perspective*, Kuala Lumpur: MPH Group Publishing Sdn. Bhd., p.58.

⁶ Surah al-Anbiya'21:30.

⁷ According to the majority of *al-Mufasssirun*, water here means sperm (*Nutfah*). See Ibn al-Humam (2003), *Fath al-Qadir*, Vol.3, Riyadh: Dar `Alim al-Kutub, p.405; al-Maraghi, Ahmad Mustafa (1998), *Tafsir al-Maraghi*, Vol. 16-18, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-`Ilmiyyah, p. 163.

⁸ Abu Bakar Abdul Majeed (2006), *op.cit.*, p.58.

⁹ A lot of researches have been done proved that certain plants nutrients can be of benefit to our health. Our body for instance, is unable to manufacture many of the essential compounds needed for all its life-sustaining tasks, from building bones, making blood and muscle to regulating brain, liver and heart function. In one



Allah S.W.T. stresses further in the al-Qur'an:¹⁰

The likeness of the life of the present is as the rain which We send down from the skies. By its mingling arises the produce of the earth, which provides food for men and animals: (It grows) till the earth is clad with its golden ornaments and is decked out (in beauty): The people to whom it belongs think they have all powers of disposal over it: There reaches it Our command by night or by day, and We make it like a harvest clean-mown, as if it had not flourished only the day before! Thus do We explain the signs in detail for those who reflect”.

Ibn Kathir explained that Allah S.W.T. has made a parable in this verse regarding the nature of our present life with the rain, which comes down in drops and mingles with the earth. From the rain or water produced all kinds of good and useful vegetables and fruits for men and animals. The earth is covered in its bravery of green and gold and all kinds of colours. A hailstorm or a blast, comes and destroy it, or it may be even normally that the time of harvest comes and the fields are stripped bare by some blight or disease. Therefore, all that is left is only dust and ashes.¹¹

six-year study by Harvard Medical School and Harvard School of Public Health, evaluated that tomato products (which contain large quantities of lycopene) showed a measurable relationship to reduce prostate cancer, breast cancer and cervical cancer risks. This is because, as consumption of tomato products increased, levels of lycopene in the blood increased, and the risk of all these cancers decreased. Another example of healthy supplement derived from plants is Lutein, found in dark green leafy vegetables such as spinach, plus various fruits and corns. Researches have indicated that Lutein promotes long-term eye maintenance by acting as a filter against the damaging effects of the sun, particularly retinal damage and macular degeneration. See *The Star*, April 27, 2008:SF15 “Plant Power”. Besides, *Leonus Sibiricus* (a type of nut) proved by recent research by Malaysia Agriculture Research and Development Institute (MARDI) that this kind of nut enriches with nutrition such as protein, carbohydrates, mineral (calcium, phosphorus, ferrous, sodium and calcium) and vitamins (A, B1 and B2). See *Berita Harian*, July 8, 2008:15 “Khasiat Kacangma”.

¹⁰ Surah Yunus 10:24.

¹¹ Ibn Kathir (2004), *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Vol.7, Riyadh: Dar al-'Alim al-Kutub, pp.351-352. Cf. Al-Shawkani (2003), *Fath al-Qadir*, Vol.2, Riyadh: Dar al-'Alim al-Kutub, pp.437-438.



From the perspective of history, we can observe the story of Saba', which had been mentioned in the al-Qur'an. The tribe of Saba' was famous with agriculture activities and owned advanced technologies of agricultural. It was said that the tribe has long miles of fruits farms and when harvesting period came, the tribe only has to bring along baskets in order to pick up their fruits.¹²

Allah S.W.T. states to the effect:¹³

There was, for Saba', aforesaid, a sign in their homeland-two gardens to the right and to the left. Eat of the sustenance (provided) by your Lord, and be grateful to him: a territory fair and happy, and a Lord Oft-Forgiving!.

According to Ibn Kathir, in this verse Allah S.W.T. tells the story of Saba'¹⁴ tribe (*Qabilah*) lived in Yemen in the time of Solomon and Queen Bilqis, in a happy and prosperous country, amply irrigated from the Ma`rib dam¹⁵. Its road were skirted by gardens on both sides, right and left, where at any given point, you always saw two gardens. It produced fruits, spices, and frankincense, and got the name of Araby the Blest for that part of the country.¹⁶

Saba' was a great emperor, given with arable lands and farms as well as green crops. Its residents live with peace and harmony. Allah S.W.T. has commanded Saba' resident to enjoy all the sustenance provided to them and be grateful to Allah Almighty. However, the people of Saba' ignored Allah's injunction and Allah S.W.T. has withdrawn all the privileges and arable agriculture lands given to them. It was said that, about 13 prophets have been sent to the tribe but they refused to accept

¹² Mastura Mohd. Zain (2008) "Menimba pahala daripada hasil bumi". *Berita Harian*, May 13, p.11.

¹³ Surah Saba'34:15.

¹⁴ Saba' was originally name of a person namely Saba' Bin Yushjab Bin Ya`rib Bin Qahtan Bin Hud. See al-Shawkani (2003), *op.cit.*, Vol.4, p.319.

¹⁵ Ibn Kathir (1998), *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, Vol.3, Riyadh: Dar al-Salam, pp.700-703.

¹⁶ Al-Shawkani (2003), *op.cit.*, Vol.4, pp.319-321. See also The Holy Qur-an: English Translation of the Meaning and Commentary, *op.cit.*, p.1278.

Allah's exclamation.¹⁷

Allah S.W.T. states to the effect:¹⁸

But they turned away (from Allah), and We sent against them the flood (released) from the Dams, and We converted their two garden (rows) into "gardens" producing bitter fruit; and tamarisks, and some few (stunted) lote-trees. That was the requital We gave them because they ungratefully rejected faith, and never do We give (such) requital except to such as are ungrateful rejecters.

The above verses justified that although Allah S.W.T. has given a lot of privileges to the people of Saba' and because they rejected the true faith and became arrogant of their prosperity and skill in irrigation engineering, in respect of the wonderful works of the dam therefore, Allah has converted all the privileged into bad requital when a mighty flood came and the dam was burst and destroyed everything they have. This spectacular crisis is a requital for those who reject true faith commanded by Allah S.W.T.¹⁹

Meanwhile, Islam views agriculture sector as an obligation of the society (*Fard al-Kifayah*).²⁰ As such, from the perspective of Islam, getting involved in this important sector is an honorable endeavor. This is

¹⁷ Mastura Mohd. Zain (2008) "Menimba pahala daripada hasil bumi". *Berita Harian*, May 13, p.11; al-Shawkani (2003), *op.cit.*, Vol.4, pp.319-324; Ibn Kathir (1998), *op.cit.*, Vol.3, pp.700-703.

¹⁸ Surah Saba' 34:16-17.

¹⁹ Al-Shawkani (2003), *op.cit.*, Vol.4, p.321; Ibn Kathir (1998), *op.cit.*, Vol.3, p.703.

²⁰ *Fard al-Kifayah* is differed from *Fard al-`Ain*. *Fard al-`Ain* is any action and benefit, which are repeated from time to time such as praying five times a day, as a mean to obey Allah and it is regarded as a compulsory action for every man. Conversely, *Fard al-Kifayah* is any action that is not recurring from time to time such as bathing dead body when someone died. *Fard al-Kifayah* is compulsory (*Wajib*) upon people of the society (*al-Mukaliffin*) according to the majority of Islamic scholars. When someone in the society has carried out the duty, the responsibility for the whole society has been removed. See Ibn Najjar (2003), *Sharh al-Kawkab al-Munir*, Vol.1, Makkah: Jami'ah 'Umm al-Qura, pp.374-376.

because a person who is involved in food production is not only looking after himself, but also the rest of the community. This is actually akin to donation (*sadaqah*) in Islam.²¹

Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. said:²²

There is none amongst the Muslims who plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person or an animal eats from it, but is regarded as a charitable gift for him.

Allah S.W.T. stresses to the effect:²³

The parable of those who spend their wealth in the way of Allah is that of a grain of corn: it groweth seven ears, and each ear hath a hundred grains. Allah giveth manifold increase to whom he pleaseth: and Allah careth for all and he knoweth all things.

In elaborating this verse, al-Qurtubi of the opinion that, this verse shows agriculture sector is an obligation of the Muslim society (*Fard al-Kifayah*) and this very important job will give revenues and income sources to mankind.²⁴

In the time of Prophet Muhammad s.a.w., he had given close attention to agricultural activities as well as in monitoring farmer's entitlements. After Islam had attained victory in Khaybar, the Prophet s.a.w. has made a partnership contract with the Jew in sharing crops.²⁵

²¹ Mohd. Effendi Norwawi (2006), "Food Security from the Malaysian Perspective", in Shaikh Mohd Saifuddeen Shaikh Mohd Salleh, *et al.*, *Food and Technological Progress: An Islamic Perspective*, Kuala Lumpur: MPH Group Printing (M) Sdn. Bhd., p.7.

²² Al-Bukhari (1999), *Sahih al-Bukhari*, "Kitab al-Harth wa al-Muzara'ah", Riyadh: Dar al-Salam, Hadith No. 2320, p. 372; Muslim (1998), *Sahih Muslim*, "Kitab al-Musaqat wa al-Muzara'ah", Riyadh: Dar al-Salam, Hadith No:3969, p.679.

²³ Surah al-Baqarah 2:261.

²⁴ Al-Qurtubi (1995), *Jami' al-Ahkam al-Qur'an*, Vol.3, Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, pp.305-306.

²⁵ Al-Shawkani (2003), *op.cit.*, Vol.3, pp.7-8.

In a hadith narrated by Ibn `Umar, Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. said:²⁶

The Prophet s.a.w. made a deal with the people of Khaybar that they would have half the fruits and vegetation of the land they cultivated.

Concept of Reviving Idle Land (*Ihya' al-Mawat*)

The word *al-Ihya'* literally means making a thing to recover or reviving land by putting fence surrounding it, or cultivating and developing on it.²⁷ *Al-Mawat* refers to a thing that has no spirit or soul, or land that has no possessor or it also can be defined as an idle land without any development on it.²⁸ From the perspective of Hasan `Ayub, *al-Mawat* means land with no prosperous.²⁹

From the *fiqh* terminology, *al-Ihya'* is rehabilitation of idle land by constructing building (house or factory) or doing agricultural project or ploughing or any other attempts. *Al-Mawat* refers to a land with no activity on it, no water supply, no ownership and no one extracting for its benefit.³⁰

According to Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence, idle land means a land with no prospect on it, because the land has no water supply or engulfing with water and no one owned that land.³¹ Al-Shafi'i pointed out that idle land is land with no development on it has no control by

²⁶ Al-Bukhari (1999), *op. cit.*, "Kitab al-Harth wa al-Muzara'ah", Hadith No:2329, p.374; Muslim (1998), *op.cit.*, "Kitab al-Musaqat wa al-Muzara'ah", Hadith No:3962, p.678.

²⁷ Ibn Manzur (1994), *Lisan al-`Arab*, Vol.9, Beirut: Dar al-Sadir, p.233.

²⁸ Ibn al-Humam (2003), *Sharh Fath al-Qadir*, Vol.8, Riyadh: Dar `Alim al-Kutub, p.136. *Al-Mawat* also means destroy and outworn. See Ibn Qudamah (1992), *al-Mughni*, Vol.8, Cairo: Hijr, p.145.

²⁹ Ayub, Hasan (2006), *Fiqh al-Mu`amalat al-Maliyyah fi al-Islam*, Cairo: Dar al-Salam, p.443.

³⁰ Al-Sharbini al-Khatib, Muhammad (1958), *Mughni al-Muhtaj*, Vol.2, Cairo: Matba`ah Mustafa al-Babi al-Halabi, p.361; Ibn Juzayy (1976) *al-Qawanin al-Fiqhiyyah*, Beirut: Dar al-Qalam, p.339; al-Dardir (1880), *al-Sharh al-Kabir*, Vol.4, Cairo: Matba`ah al-Azhariyyah, p.66.

³¹ Al-Maydani (1998), *al-Lubab fi Sharh al-Kitab*, Vol.1, Beirut: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-`Arabi, p.218.

anyone either the land is located near or far away from developed area.³² Succinctly, from the *fiqh* perspective, the revival of idle land consists of elements such as clearing, cultivating, hedging, spreading and existing of water supply.³³

The legality of reviving idle land has clearly stated in the following *hadith*:

*Whoever cultivates uncultivated land (belonging to nobody) will possess it.*³⁴

*Whoever cultivates uncultivated land will possess it, provided that the land does not belong to any Muslim, otherwise one has no right to plant anything in it oppressively.*³⁵

*He who cultivates land that does not belong to anybody is more rightful (to own it).*³⁶

Generally, all the above *hadith* proved that reviving idle land is legal from *shari'ah* perspective and it can be in any form like providing water supply, doing agriculture activities, constructing house, hedging or any other efforts. Yet, not all kind of idle land can be revived. The majority of *fuqaha'* agreed that land with no possessor and has no sign of previous revival may automatically belongs to those who success in reviving it.³⁷

³² Al-Sharbini al-Khatib (1958), *op.cit.*, Vol.2, p.361.

³³ Al-San`ani (1960), *Subul al-Salam*, Vol.3, Cairo: Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-`Arabi, p.82.

³⁴ This *hadith* was narrated by `Umar. See al-Bukhari (1999), *op. cit.*, Hadith No:2335, p.375. This same hadith also was narrated by Jabir Bin `Abdullah and has been recorded in *Jami` al-Tirmidhi* (1999), Riyadh: Dar al-Salam, "Abwab al-Buyu'", Hadith No:1379, p.335.

³⁵ This *hadith* was narrated by `Amru Bin `Auf. See al-Bukhari (1999), *op. cit.*, Hadith No:2335, p.375.

³⁶ This *hadith* was narrated by `A'ishah. See al-Bukhari (1999), *op. cit.*, Hadith No:2335, p.375.

³⁷ Ibn Qudamah (1992), *op.cit.*, Vol.5, p.513; al-Buhuti, *op.cit.*, Vol.4, p.206.

They also agreed that land which is possessed by someone via buying or giving (*hibah*) cannot be revived except for the owner himself as possession of land is permanent basis.³⁸ The above discussion of idle land from four different schools of Islamic jurisprudence shows that their views and usage of valid evidence (*dalil*) are similar with one and another but the only difference are on the aspects of conditions and usage limitation of idle land.³⁹

AGRIBUSINESS FROM THE LIGHT OF AL-QUR'AN AND AL-SUNNAH

This section will be begin with a discussion of seeking *halal* earnings as the Islamic law has laid down detailed rules and regulations regarding livelihoods and earnings. Islam also, however discouraged all persons from remaining unemployed without reason.⁴⁰

The Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. was very mindful about the economic utilization of resources, with the concept that all the resources are a gift from God containing the suggestion that they should be utilized carefully. As such, the Holy Prophet s.a.w. has laid emphasis on intensive development of human resources, and assigned a high value on industry, efficiency and labor.⁴¹

Parasitic dependence on others, idleness or beggary are discouraged by Islam. People are encouraged to put in hard work and earn livelihoods instead of wasting their energy in idle pursuits. It is in this spirit that past times, which do not add any utilities have been disliked by the *shari`ah*.⁴²

In his prayer, Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. asked Allah S.W.T. to refuge himself from hunger, poverty and destitution. The Prophet s.a.w. said in the following *hadith*:

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ Al-Zuhayli, Wahbah (1985), *al-Fiqh al-Islami wa Adillatuh*, Vol.6, Beirut: Dar al- Fikr, p.4620.

⁴⁰ Jammah-e-Islami Pakistan, "Islamic Laws Regarding Profession And Earning", <http://www.jamaat.org/islam>, 30th November 2008.

⁴¹ Akram Khan, Muhammad (1992), *Economic Teachings of Prophet Muhammad*, Delhi: Oriental Publications, p. 214.

⁴² *Ibid.*

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*Allah, I seek thy refuge from hunger for it is the evil
bed-fellow.⁴³*

*Allah, I seek thy refuge against poverty, and I seek thy
refuge from paucity and humiliation, and I seek thy
refuge that I do wrong or wrong is done to me.⁴⁴*

Islamic law has therefore prohibited begging, with an exception for a individuals in grave difficulties. The attitude of Islam towards man's position in the world is that Allah S.W.T. has made the earth for the benefit of man, to whom He has given control over. It is the duty of man to profit from this favor and to exert himself to seek Allah's bounties throughout the earth.⁴⁵

Allah S.W.T. says to the effect:⁴⁶

*It is He who has made the earth manageable for you,
so traverse ye through its tracts and enjoy of the
sustenance which He furnishes, but unto Him is the
Resurrection.*

It can be inferred from the above verse that Allah has created the earth full with various kind of sustenance and sources for earnings, water, minerals, and therefore provided many things for man to cultivate and do business with, so that they may enjoy all sustenance for their benefit. As such, man has managed to make paths through deserts and over mountains, through rivers and seas by means of ships, through the air by means of airways, and bridges and tunnels and other means of communication.⁴⁷

⁴³ Al-Nasa'i (1999), *Sunan al-Nasa'i*, Riyadh: Dar al-Salam, Hadith No:5471, p. 744; Abu Dawud (1999), *Sunan Abu Dawud*, Riyadh: Dar al-Salam, "Kitab al-Witr", Hadith No: 1547, p. 228.

⁴⁴ This *hadith* was narrated by Abu Hurayrah. See *Sunan al-Nasa'i*, *op.cit.*, "Kitab al-Isti'adhah", Hadith No: 5464, 743; Abu Dawud (1999), *op.cit.*, "Kitab al-Witr", Hadith No: 1544, p. 227.

⁴⁵ Al-Qaradawi, Yusuf (1960), *The Lawful And The Prohibited In Islam*, Kamal El-Helbawy *et.al.* (trans.), Indianapolis: American Trust Publications, p. 125; Chapra, M. Umer (1992) *Islam and the Economic Challenge*, Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, p. 203.

⁴⁶ Surah al-Mulk 67:15.

⁴⁷ *Sayyid Qutb (1986), Fi Zilal al-Qur'an*, Vol.6, Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, p. 3637;

Man has only been able to do so because Allah S.W.T. has given him the necessary intelligence and has made the earth tractable to that intelligence. Therefore, man should try their best to benefit for all sustenance provided to them and be thankful to Allah, the true creator for everything.⁴⁸

Islam and Business

Trade and commerce have always been a part of Islam, with the Holy City of Mecca a center of commercial activities in pre-Islamic times. It was the annual trading center of Mecca that provided Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. the forum for preaching Islam. Early Muslims were engaged in trade, travelling to distant lands in connection with business, through which, Islam reached East and West Africa, and East Asia through business and trade.⁴⁹

From the perspective of history, Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. was born and lived in Mecca, which is also known before as a merchant republic. Financial operations of considerable complexity were carried on in this city. When Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. was a young man under the guardianship of his uncle, Abu Talib, Mecca was a city whose commerce was expanding and whose power and prestige were growing.⁵⁰

In the twelfth year of Muhammad's life, Abu Talib made the decision to go for merchandise to Damascus (Syria). He did not intend to originally take Muhammad with him because of the hardship of the journey and the passage through the desert, but Muhammad did not wish to be separated from his uncle, and prevailed upon him to take him to

al-Maraghi (1998), *op.cit.*, Vol. 28, pp. 29 - 30, 154; *The Holy Qur-an And The Translation Of Its Meanings and Commentary*, Madinah: King Fahd Holy Qur-an Printing Complex, p. 1786.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁹ Kattih, Abdoulrahman, "Islam & Business", The Islamic Education and Services Institute, http://www.2discoverislam.com/projects/business_ethics.htm, 30th November 2008.

⁵⁰ Siddiqui, Abdul Hameed (1999), *The Life of Muhammad*, Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, p. 24; Choudhury, Golam W. (1993), *The Prophet Muhammad: His Life and Eternal Message*, Kuala Lumpur: WHS Publications Sdn. Bhd., p. 22; Sarwar, Hafiz Ghulam (1967), *Muhammad The Holy Prophet*, Lahore: Kashmiri Bazar, p. 50.

Damascus along with him.⁵¹

At Muhammad's insistence, his uncle Abu Talib took him on that commercial trip. During this journey, Muhammad was exposed to the realities of commercial and business life. In this journey, Abu Talib made such a profit (that he had never done before) that he never needed to make a similar journey thereafter.⁵²

From this trip, Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. exhibited his qualities whereby he saw was not only unique in religious and spiritual matters but he was also equally honest and thorough in temporal matters. He earned the title *al-Amin* for his integrity and honesty, which were equally important in commercial life to capital or money.⁵³

The Qur'an and *al-Hadith* of the Prophet s.a.w. urge Muslims to engage in trade and commerce, and undertake journeys for which the Qur'an refers to as "*seeking the bounty of Allah*". Allah mentions those who travel for the purpose of trade side by side with those who fight in His cause.⁵⁴

Allah S.W.T. says to the effect:

*Others travelling through the land, seeking of Allah's bounty, yet others fighting in Allah's cause.*⁵⁵

Allah S.W.T. mentions merchant ships, which are the principal means of transporting goods throughout the world, as one of His favors to mankind and encouraging people to engage in exports and imports goods activities.⁵⁶ Allah S.W.T. says to the effect:

⁵¹ Ibn Hisham (1981), *Sirah al-Nabawiyyah*, Vol.1, Beirut: Dar al-Fikr, pp. 194-195; Sarwar (1967), *op.cit.*, pp. 50-51; Siddiqui (1999), *op.cit.*, p. 51.

⁵² Ibn Hisham (1981), *op.cit.*, Vol.1, p. 194; Sarwar (1967), *op.cit.*, p. 51; Choudhury (1993), *op.cit.*, p. 23.

⁵³ Choudhury (1993), *op.cit.*, p. 23; Salah, M. A. (1995), *Muhammad: Man and Prophet*, Great Britain: Element Books Limited, p. 39.

⁵⁴ Al-Qaradawi (1960), *op.cit.*, p. 136.

⁵⁵ Surah al-Muzammil 73: 20.

⁵⁶ Mahmud Saedon Awang Othman (1999), "Kepentingan dan Keperluan Syariat Islam dalam Kegiatan Mu'amalah", in Abd. Jalil Borham (ed.) *Sains Muamalah Islam Di Malaysia*, Skudai: Penerbit Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, pp 28-30;

*And thou seest the ships therein that plough the waves,
that ye may seek (thus) of the bounty of Allah that ye
may be gratefeful.*⁵⁷

Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. by his words and deeds, delineated the rules of trade, encouraging Muslims to engage in it. Some of Muhammad's sayings are the following:

*An honest and trustworthy Muslim merchant will be
with the martyrs on the Day of Resurrection.*⁵⁸

*An honest and trustworthy merchant will be with the
Prophets, the trustful and the martyrs.*⁵⁹

It is not surprising that the Prophet s.a.w. held the status of an honest merchant equal to that of a soldier or martyr in the cause of Allah S.W.T. His evaluation was confirmed by the experiences of life, with striving for the cause of Allah S.W.T. is not limited to the battlefield but also extends to the economic front as well. The Prophet s.a.w. promised merchants a high status with Allah S.W.T. and a great reward in the Hereafter.⁶⁰

Earning Through Agribusiness

Land has been an important factor of production since ancient times. Emphasis on the development of dead/barren lands is indicative of the Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. interest in the utilization of resources for the well-being his people. Good peasant-landlord relationships are fundamental for the economic well-being of the population dependent on the soil.⁶¹

al-Qaradawi (1960), *op.cit.*, p. 136.

⁵⁷Surah Fatir 35: 12.

⁵⁸ This *hadith* was narrated by Ibn `Umar. See Ibn Majah (1999), *Sunan Ibn Majah* (1999), Riyadh: Dar al-Salam, "Abwab al-Tijarat", Hadith No:2139, p. 307.

⁵⁹ This *hadith* was narrated by Abu Sa`id. See al-Tirmidhi (1999), *Jami` al-Tirmidhi* (1999), Riyadh: Dar al-Salam, "Abwab al-Buyu", Hadith No:1209, p. 295.

⁶⁰ Sadeq, AbulHasan Muhammad (1990), *Economic Development In Islam*, Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications (M) Sdn. Bhd., pp. 24-25; al-Qaradawi (1960), *op.cit.*, p. 139.

⁶¹ Akram Khan (1992), *op.cit.*, p. 41; Afzul-Ur-Rahman (1980) *Economic Doctrines of Islam*, Vol. 2, Lahore: Islamic Publications Ltd., p. 108.

The Holy Prophet s.a.w. had given general instructions to regulate the peasant-landlord relationships, but details of the law were left to in a temporal context within the framework of *Shari'ah*. In addition to this, He s.a.w. placed a high value on the economic welfare of the people, with some traditions suggesting that the Holy Prophet s.a.w. desired to see his followers at a higher echelon on the ladder of development⁶².

After establishing the state of Medina, one of the first steps, which the Holy Prophet s.a.w. took was the establishment of brotherhood among the *Ansars* of Medina and *Muhajirs* or immigrants from Mecca. This brotherhood was, in fact, a step towards the economic rehabilitation of the newly arrived immigrants, with Medina as an agrarian base was engaged in agriculture.⁶³

Prophet Muhammad s.a.w. invited people to develop the dead land (*al-Mawat*), and creed that the dead land belongs to the person who develops them. The Prophet s.a.w. also instituted many laws regarding cultivations and marketing of agricultural products.⁶⁴

Islam however does not permitted cultivation of plants, which has been prohibited such as opium and cannabis for instance, cultivation and sale of any prohibited substances to non-Muslims is forbidden in Islam.⁶⁵

In the Qur'an, while referring to His bounties and favors to mankind, Allah S.W.T. mentions the principles needed for the pursuit of agriculture. Allah S.W.T. has spread out the earth and made it suitable and fertile for cultivation and production. This is a bounty to human beings, which we ought to recall and be thankful for. Al-Qur'an has encouraged agriculture in many of its verses.⁶⁶

⁶² Al-Sadr, Muhammad Baqir (1983), *Iqtisaduna*, Vol.2-Part.1, Tehran: World Organization for Islamic Services, pp. 126-127; Chapra (1992), *op.cit.*, pp. 263-265; Akram Khan (1992), *op.cit.*, p. 41.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ Afzul-Ur-Rahman (1980), *op.cit.*, pp. 159-163; al-Sadr (1983), *op.cit.*, Vol.2-Part.1, pp. 107-120; Akram Khan (1992), *op.cit.*, p. 41.

⁶⁵ Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan,, "Islamic Laws Regarding Profession and Earning", <http://www.jamaat.org/islam>, 30th November 2008.

⁶⁶ Al-Qaradawi (1960), *op.cit.*, p. 128; Afzul-Ur-Rahman (1980), *op.cit.*, pp. 87-88; Mastura Mohd. Zin, "Menimba pahala daripada hasil bumi", *Berita Harian*: May 13, 2008, p. 11.

Allah S.W.T. stresses in the Qur'an:

*It is He who sendeth down rain from the skies, with it We produce vegetation of all kinds, from some We produce green (crops), out of which We produce, close-compounded grain out of the date-palm and its sheaths (or spathes) (come) clusters of dates hanging low and near, And (then there are) gardens of grapes, and olives, and pomegranates, each similar (in kind) yet different (in variety), when they begin to bear fruit, feast your eyes with the fruit and the ripeness thereof. Behold! in these things there are signs for people who believe.*⁶⁷

*And the earth We have spread out (like a carpet), set thereon mountains firm and immovable, and produced therein all kinds of things in due balance. And We have provided therein means of subsistence, for you and for those for whose sustenance ye are not responsible.*⁶⁸

*It is He who has spread out the earth for (His) creatures. Therein is fruit and date-palms, producing spathes (enclosing dates). Also corn, with (its) leaves and stalk for fodder, and sweet-smelling plants. Then which of the favors of your Lord will ye deny?*⁶⁹

In all these *Qur'anic* verses there is encouragement for mankind to engage and involve in agriculture activity, for it has been made easy for him as a divine favor.⁷⁰ Prophet Muḥammad s.a.w. said in a *hadith* narrated by Anas:⁷¹

⁶⁷ Surah al-An'am 6:99.

⁶⁸ Surah al-Hijr 15:19-20.

⁶⁹ Surah al-Rahman 55:10-13.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Al-Bukhari (1999), *op.cit.*, "Kitab al-Harth wa al-Muzara'ah", Hadith No:2320, p.372; Muslim (1998), *op.cit.*, "Kitab al-Musaqat wa al-Muzara'ah", Hadith No:3970, p. 679.



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*When a Muslim plants a plant or cultivates a crop,
no bird or human being eats from it without its being
accounted as a rewardable charity for him.*

The implication of this hadith is that the reward for a person who plants a tree or a crop which continues to produce crop or items which can be eaten or used, even though he may sell it to someone else.⁷²

CONCLUSION

This article has covered aspects relating to the agriculture and agribusiness from the perspective of al-Qur'an and *al-Sunnah*. In the being of this article, there was a discussion in detail of the concept of earning and agribusiness from the al-Qur'an and *al-Sunnah* spirit. Islam honors persons who involves in and seek *halal* livelihoods in the agriculture sector, in which their efforts are regarded as acts of charity and good deeds.

It can be concluded that Islam as an all-encompassing way of life has elaborated aspects related to agriculture, land revival and agribusiness comprehensively from the very beginning of Islamic appearance. All these concepts and aspects of agricultural activities if apply accordingly in our modern economic life will contribute greatly to the development of our *ummah* and nations.

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⁷² Al-'Asqalani, Ibn Hajar (1956), *Fath al-Bari*, Vol.5, Riyadh: Maktabah al-Riyad al-Hadithah, p. 4; al-Qaradawi (1960), *op.cit.*, p. 129.



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