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ZUHD AND PLEASURE: A COMPARATIVE ACCOUNT BETWEEN IMAM ALI'S NAHJ AL-BALĀGHHA AND MOORE'S ETHICS

Qusthan Firdaus

*Universitas Multimedia Nusantara and Universitas Surya
Email : qusthan@abqary.net*

ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mendiskusikan *zuhd* sebagai sebuah penanda etis (*an ethical bon mot*) sekaligus membandingkannya dengan argumen Moore mengenai kesenangan. Memaksimalkan *output* dan meminimalkan *input* merupakan dua premis dasar yang menyusun *zuhd*. Keduanya membawa kepada kewajiban positif dan negatif. Kewajiban positif berakar pada hak untuk berekspresi secara bebas sementara kewajiban negatif berakar pada hak untuk bekerja pada lingkungan yang adil dan disukai. Di samping itu, argumen Moore mengenai kesenangan tidak memadai untuk menjadi sebuah penanda etis karena bersifat subjektif. Dengan demikian, *zuhd* memiliki kualitas yang lebih baik daripada kesenangan untuk menjadi sebuah penanda etis.

Kata-kata Kunci: Zuhud, pleasure (Kesenangan), Penanda etis, Kewajiban positif, Kewajiban negatif.

ABSTRACT

This article discusses about *Zuhd* as an ethical sign (*an ethical bon mot*), all at once to compare it with Moor's argument on pleasure. Maximizing output and minimizing input constitute two basic premises which composed *zuhd*. Both of them lead to positive and negative duties. Positive duty is rooted on right to express freely, while negative duty is rooted on right to work in just and prefer domain. Moreover, Moor's argument of pleasure is insufficient to be an ethical sign, for it is very subjective argument. By this, *Zuhd* has a better quality than pleasure to be an ethical sign or marker.

Keywords: Zuhud, Pleasure, Ethical bon mot, Positive duties, Negative duties.

Introduction

Most Indonesian Muslims do not know much about *zuhd*. This is a great shame because *zuhd*, in fact, is an essential way to assist Muslims to live properly. Indeed, *Nahj al-Balāgha* provides a comprehensive account of *zuhd*. As a collection of Imam Ali's speeches, sermons, letters, and thoughts, *Nahj al-al-Balāgha* did not give a comprehensive account of *zuhd* but then Allama Murtadha Mutahhari shapes the concept of *zuhd* coherently. Moreover, Muslims might consider *zuhd* as a challenging contribution to ethics. In contrast, Moore establishes pleasure and pain as two fundamental measures in ethics. His view is consistent with the utilitarian approach to ethics. Therefore, this paper would like to compare the notion of *zuhd* with Moore's concept of pleasure and pain.

Some questions would be discussed in this paper such as: could *zuhd* be an ethical bon mot in Islam? If it could be, then how could it be? Moreover, what sort of components is in *zuhd*? In contrast, if it could not, then why not? In order to seek the answer, then we will discuss the meaning of *zuhd* in section two. By discussing the meaning of *zuhd*, we might see whether or not *zuhd* could be an adequate ethical framework. Moreover, I will discuss Moore's concept of pleasure and pain in section three. Since Moore did not conceive a definitive meaning of what pleasure and pain are, then I might claim that his argument in favor of pleasure is incoherent. Section four will deal with rights and duties as well as its assortments because such would hopefully help us in establishing that *zuhd* is a duty instead of a right. In contrast, I will also consider pleasure as a right in section five because the

meaning of pleasure implies subjectivity. As a consequence, pleasure is attached to persons, and such attachment seems to be the part of moral entitlement.

The Meaning of *Zuhd*

There are three meanings of *zuhd*; *first*, a meaning which implies some similarities with asceticism, *second*, a meaning which does not imply a similarity with asceticism, *third*, a connotative meaning of *zuhd* which is provided by Imam Ali. These meanings are necessary for Muslims to comprehend *zuhd*, but the second would be more beneficial to avoid disputes. Thereby, discussing those three meanings will be done in this section.

First of all, both *zuhd* and asceticism point to the notion of renouncing the world. Consequently, people are easily to conceive that *zuhd* and asceticism are similar (NN 2010). If one rejects the world, then he or she could not reject it partially. He or she should reject it wholly. Yet, it seems to be unrealistic because he or she cannot live without some vital motions such as breathing or refuse to use the water either for drinking or for taking a shower. Some monks might be able not to consume meats and having sex but they cannot live without breathing. Thereby, rejecting the world partially is reasonable while a total rejection of the world is obviously impossible. In other words, both *zuhd* and asceticism imply a partial rejection of the world. Indeed, we should know which pleasures which are rejected by *zuhd* and by asceticism. Thereby, distinguishing between *zuhd* and asceticism is essential here. On the one hand, asceticism might lead a person to monasticism (*rahbaniyya*) which is obviously

rejected by the Prophet Muhammad. He states:

"I, who am your Prophet, am not such. In this way, the Prophet made them to understand that Islam is a religion of life and society, not a monastic faith. Moreover, the comprehensive and multi-faceted teachings of Islam in social, economic, political and moral spheres are based on reverence for life, not on its renunciation." (Mutahhari 2009, 96)

Consequently, asceticism contains a potential power to mislead Muslims to a way of life which is refused by the Prophet Muhammad. On the other hand, *zuhd* does not have a similar potential power because *zuhd* itself means something different with asceticism.

Secondly, *zuhd* means maximizing output and minimizing input. This short but powerful meaning is firstly provided by a high school teacher, Akbar Parwarish, as "minimizing the intake and maximizing the output", but then Murtadha Mutahhari composes it well into "drawing a minimum of intake for the sake of maximizing the output." (Mutahhari 2009, 112-113) Such meaning of *zuhd* might be the best because, firstly, it does not fully reject the world, and secondly, it summarizes some various meanings of *zuhd*.

Thirdly, Imam Ali gives two connotative meanings of *zuhd*. We do not know why he does so but we might reckon that such meanings are more practicable for the Arabs at the time. He says in *hikma* 439:

"All *zuhd* is summarized in two sentences of the Holy Quran: 'Allah, the Most Exalted, says., So that you may not grieve for what escapes you, nor rejoice in what has come to you' [57: 23] Whoever does not grieve over what he has lost and does not rejoice over what comes to him has acquired *zuhd* in both

of its aspects." (Mutahhari 2009, 93)

Such example renders some lessons. First of all, Imam Ali points a practical example of *zuhd* in Qur'an because there is no literal meaning of *zuhd* in Qur'an itself. It does so because Qur'an does not deal with details. Even though *zuhd* itself is necessary in Islam, it does not mean that *zuhd* should be literally written in Qur'an. Yet, the implicit meaning of *zuhd* is already included by Qur'an as Imam Ali has been shown. Secondly, the non-existence of *zuhd*'s literal meaning in Qur'an does not mean that *zuhd* is not essential in Islam. In contrast, the essence of *zuhd* is daily done by the Prophet Muhammad and Imam Ali.

Moreover, Imam Ali composes his own words about *zuhd* as follow: "O people! *Zuhd* means curtailing of hopes, thanking Allah for His blessings and bounties, and abstaining from that which He has forbidden." (Mutahhari 2009, 94) Therefore, Imam Ali seems to place some restrictions on Muslims' expectation over the worldly life. This is problematic because the notion of hopes is essential in the worldly life. Had human held no hopes, then human being would not make any progress in life. In fact, Muslims do *shalat*, *zakat*, fasting, pilgrimage, and other goodnesses. By doing those things, Muslims actually hope for some rewards in the day of resurrection (*ma'ad*). Indeed, hoping for the best and planning for the worst seem to be a bon mot in a world where some Muslim countries are unjustifiably invaded by the Western countries. For example - disregarding the problem of translation of Imam Ali's words in Arabic, and the word 'curtailing' in English - curtailing of hopes might mean that the Iranian people should not hope that Israel and US would not attack Iran because such would not be consistent with Imam Ali's definition of *zuhd*. On

the contrary, the Iranian people should maximize their hopes, and they already did some military preparations, then hoping that there would be no total war against their country though there might be some skirmishes. This hope is justified because maximizing hope is essential here for the Iranian people to live peacefully. In short, life without hopes is meaningless because one should live in an optimistic way.

Nevertheless, the notion of 'curtailing' could be abandoned if, and only if, Imam Ali's emphasis is limited on the notion of abstaining from Allah's restrictions, and praising Allah's bounties and blessings. If this is the case, then what is so distinctive with the notion of *zuhd*? *Zuhd* would not be much different with other Islamic teachings. Therefore, I think that there is a problem with Imam Ali's definition of *zuhd* here. If this argument is sound, then we need to examine another definition of *zuhd*.

A comprehensive account about the meaning of *zuhd* is provided by Kinberg. Kinberg explores the meaning of *zuhd* as follow:

- 1) *Zuhd* is not the Islamic philosophy of life. (Kinberg 1985, 29) He or she divides *zuhd* into a general and repressing all evil inclinations is the main condition to be a *zāhid*. (Kinberg 1985, 31)
- 2) *Tawakkul* (trust in Allah) and *ridha* (contentment) are parts of *zuhd*. (Kinberg 1985, 33) Moreover, *zuhd* also deals with *qishar al-'amal* (a hope for short duration because he just thinks about death or yearning for death), and not necessarily be asceticism. (Kinberg 1985, 34) Consequently, a *zāhid* might be in poverty because he favours *qishar al-'amal* though it does not mean that *zuhd* is poverty. (Kinberg 1985, 35) In short, asceticism is

not required by *zuhd* though *zuhd* confines life, and a reasonable, normal life is not forbidden by *zuhd*. (Kinberg 1985, 40)

- 3) *Wara'* (scrupulosity) is having conscience in doing actions or caution and hesitation in making decisions. (Kinberg 1985, 41) *Wara'* only requires the minimal sources for subsisting. (Kinberg 1985, 42) Therefore, *wara'* is the *zāhid's* way of life though there is no statement which says *zuhd* as *wara'*. (Kinberg 1985, 41; 43)
- 4) In short, Kinberg believes that *zuhd* supposes to be ethics or a general way of conduct because *zuhd* is based on *wara'* which is a social concept in Islam as well as a set of practical guides for daily life. (Kinberg 1985, 43-44)

Zuhd might be not the Islamic philosophy of life but it does not imply that it cannot be used as an ethical principle. I myself imagine that the Islamic philosophy would be so much more comprehensive than an ethical idea. In contrast, the Islamic philosophy would also deal with the metaphysics, mysticism, philosophy of God, philosophy of religion, cosmology, political philosophy, and other disciplines in philosophy itself. Moreover, Kinberg's fourth premise implies an important point here. *Zuhd* could minimally be ethics in Islam. Yet, he or she does not develop it further. Therefore, we will compare *zuhd* with Moore's account of pleasure in section three.

Having discussed some meanings of *zuhd*, we acquire a set of scope of *zuhd*. Firstly, *zuhd* inhabits a different domain compared to asceticism. Secondly, *zuhd* plays its roles in the worldly life though it also compels Muslims to prepare themselves to face death. Thirdly, a limited amount of resources for subsistence

is demanded by *zuhd*. Fourthly, subjects of *zuhd* are Muslims while objects of *zuhd* are anything which surrounds Muslims.

The first scope is so essential because the failure to distinguish both of them would imply some contradictions with the Islamic law such as encouraging marriage to those who are able to do it or no restriction for consuming meats. Moreover, asceticism plays only in the worldly life but *zuhd* prepares Muslims to face death. However, the third premise shares a similar message with asceticism.

Now, we already figured out the scope of *zuhd* which is necessary for putting *zuhd* as an ethical bon mot in Islamic teaching. Such framework would hopefully be flexible in facing many problems. In addition to such scope, we need to compare *zuhd* with other ethical principles. This comparison is important because it would enrich our comprehension about *zuhd* itself. I will compare *zuhd* with Moore's account of pleasure in the next section.

Moore's Balance of Pleasure

Moore's balance of pleasure appears in his ethical account of utilitarianism. I will discuss his three principles of ethics here. Afterward, I will confront his balance of pleasure with *zuhd*. By confronting these two notions, I could acquire a comparison which might be beneficial for putting *zuhd* as an ethical bon mot.

Moore's account of balance of pleasure is located in his first principle of ethics which could be summarized into several basic premises as below:

- 1) There are three general categories of balance of pleasure, to wit, (a) an action where pleasure outweighs pain, (b) an action where pain outweighs pleasure, and (c) an action which implies a balance between pleasure and pain. (Moore 1966, 9)
- 2) Indeed, there is another principle which says a voluntary action is wrong whenever other possible actions cause more pleasure over pain but the subject does not choose it, and an action is right whenever other possible actions cause more pain over pleasure but the subject does not choose it. (Moore 1966, 11-12)
- 3) Moreover, it is necessary to distinguish between the notion of 'right' with the notion of 'duty' or 'ought.' Consequently, it is not always a duty to accomplish an action which is right, and a rightful voluntary action does not always be a duty. (Moore 1966, 15)
- 4) In short, Moore classifies three categories of actions viz., (a) all voluntary actions ought not to be done if less pleasure appears as its implications compared to other possible actions; (b) all voluntary actions ought to be done if the maximum pleasure (or more pleasure) appears as its implications compared to other possible actions; (c) all voluntary actions are right if a maximum pleasure (or as much pleasure) appears as its implications compared to other possible actions. (Moore 1966, 17)

Moore's second premise obliges agents to seek for the greatest pleasure as well as the least pain of an available action. In short, the greatest pleasure means equally with the right

action. This is obviously problematic because an action which contains the greatest pleasure as well as the least pain for an agent might entail a heavy burden on society. Consequently, there might be a tension between the pleasure of an agent against the pleasure of all individuals. Moreover, it is not easy to determine which actions would objectively put a heavy burden on society. Therefore, the second premise handicaps Moore's account. In addition to the second premise, it is supported by the fourth premise especially on the 4 (b).

Moreover, Moore does not give any specific meaning of what pleasure is and what pain is in his *Ethics*. Consequently, an obscurity might appear whenever an agent explores some possible actions to be done. Generally, pleasure means enjoyment and satisfaction which are caused by an activity or an event. Such enjoyment and satisfaction are embedded on our feelings. Therefore, pleasure might be subjective in the sense that it is different to various people. For instance, consuming meats is a pleasure for some people. In contrast, vegans conceive that consuming meats is a cruelty. Additionally, there is a pleasure principle which says that the id commands individuals to naturally favor pleasure instead of pain. Here, Moore's balance pleasure shows its attraction because it is easy to be done by most persons. Moreover, pain means mental suffering or injury which causes very unlikely physical sensation. This definition does not mean that all individuals would avoid it because some people consciously prefer pain over pleasure such as they who practice asceticism, *zuhd*, and Buddhism. Overall, those meanings of pleasure and pain might be twisted in different cultural and religious contexts. For instance, Buddhism honors suffering in its teaching with which, in Moore's ethical account, could not be justified to be done. If this account

is plausible, then pleasure and pain are not the appropriate principles of ethics.

Moore puts pleasure and pain on the center of his thought of utilitarianism. This view is supported by Moore's second part of his principles that could be summarized as follow:

- 1) If pain outweighs pleasure, then anything which causes it is intrinsically bad. In contrast, if pleasure outweighs pain, then anything which causes it is intrinsically good. (Moore 1966, 32-33)
- 2) There are five ways which determine whether or not anything is intrinsically better compared to another viz:
 - (a) "while both are intrinsically good, the second is not so good as the first"
 - (b) "while the first is intrinsically good, the second is intrinsically indifferent"
 - (c) "while the first is intrinsically good, the second is intrinsically bad"
 - (d) "while the first is intrinsically indifferent, the second is intrinsically bad"
 - (e) "while both are intrinsically bad, the first is not so bad as the second." (Moore 1966, 33)
- 3) It is a duty to prefer an action out of two actions with which the previous causes better total effects than the latter. An exception could be made if, and only if, there is a third available action which also causes better total effects. (Moore 1966, 33)

In addition to the previous two principles, Moore believes that those principles could be justified insofar as the third principles are well accepted to wit:

- a) All right voluntary actions have some characteristics. (Moore 1966, 118)
- b) Goodness is the total consequences of right actions. (Moore 1966, 118)
- c) If there are a set of action A and a set of action B meanwhile A is intrinsically better than B, then a similar action to A is intrinsically better than a similar action to B. (Moore 1966, 118)

Nevertheless, Moore's second part of argument is problematic because it is not always consistent between (x) the pain which outweighs pleasure and (y) the moral status of its causes. Premise (x) might be caused by an intrinsically good cause. For instance, study in universities would cause more pain than pleasure for some individuals. Yet, the cause of such pain is good viz., a better future for students who study in universities compared to those who merely complete their study in high schools.

In a nutshell, Moore's balance of pleasure might be incoherent because there is no crystal clear definition of what pleasure is as well as what pain is. Indeed, his second and fourth premises are problematic because even though pleasure has an objective meanings for all, but persons have various ways to handle it, to wit, whether to avoid or to favor it. Moreover, some persons believe in a saying 'no pain, no gain' which implies that we should take pain in order to earn something. Nevertheless, we do not have

to follow Moore in order to earn the best result because, sometimes, the best result comes out from the most painful action.

Rights and Duties

Rights mean all moral and legal entitlements. Such entitlements are naturally given to humans. Indeed, Muslims might reckon that Allah conferred a bundle of rights to human. Such is plausible because Muslims believe that God created the universe as well as owning it. Therefore, God might transfer the rights of ownership over some parts of the universe. For example, Allah gave a right to human to justly utilize planet Earth for the sake of our welfare. Moreover, rights imply duties. Duties are all moral and legal obligations. Had one failed to accomplish a duty, then one would harm himself or others. Therefore, it is a must to accomplish a duty because it is grounded on the human rights.

In contrast, most Indonesians believe that duties precede rights. Accomplishing duties is so essential in life before a person pursues his rights. Such relation between duties and rights is not coherent because it contains some problems which are shown by some following examples. Firstly, some Indonesian youths do not work because their parents wish those youths have a chance to fully study either in universities or colleges. If duties precede rights, then they would have no rights to live because they do not accomplish their duties to work. Consequently, others might arbitrarily harm the students because students loosen their rights to live. Secondly, such opinion might be limited to a specific right such as a right to receive

a payment after doing some works. In other words, payment which is earned after doing some works does not mean that duties precede rights. It is simply a working mechanism in most organizations nowadays. On the contrary, rights precede duties because rights are naturally embedded in human. No one may harm those rights unjustly. Indeed, there are at least two types of right and two types of duty which we will discuss below.

First of all, the negative natural duties. It means some obligations which ought to be avoided by agents. If they fail to avoid it, then there would be some moral and legal consequences which should be paid by the agents. For example, some parts of the Ten Commandments such as do not kill others, do not steal, do not wish to own others' properties, do not worship other gods but Him, and so on. Negative natural duties could be understood as a minimum obligation in our world. Therefore, there are less doubts about the existence of such negative natural duties. In addition to the negative natural duties, I conceive that *zuhd* is not a part of it because its meaning (minimizing input, maximizing output) is not consistent with the negative natural duties.

Secondly, the positive natural duties. It is some obligations which ought to be done by agents. Slightly different from the negative natural duties, the positive natural duties merely imply the moral consequences if agents fail to accomplish it. Moreover, there are more doubts over the positive natural duties. Libertarians, for instance, never believe that the positive natural duties do exist. Had the positive natural duties held by persons, then those persons must be indiscriminate and there is no consensus about the limits of assistance which should to be delivered by agents. For instance,

a benefactor would prefer to help his or her neighbors or families instead of individuals who live on halfway around the globe. In other words, distance matters according to the proponents of positive natural duties. Nevertheless, technology eases an Indonesian benefactor to send some money to the distant needy in Africa in real time. Additionally, proponents of positive natural duties cannot agree with the dose of assistance which should be done. Islam, for instance, obliges Muslims to spend 2.5% for the so called *zakat*; a certain Christian sect compels Christians to spend 10% for donation to the church; meanwhile an atheist utilitarian philosopher like Peter Singer urges people to spend their wealth up to the limit where, had they crossed it, then they would suffer painstakingly (the marginal utility).

In addition to the relation between rights and duties, there is a unique verse in the Law Number 39/1999 about Human Rights which literally admits that rights imply duties. It says: "Every human right implies the fundamental duties and responsibility to honor others' rights as well as the government's task to honor, to protect, to uphold, and to advance it" (article 69 verse 2). It means that the Indonesian law considers rights as the source of duties though most Indonesians do not conceive it in the same way. In short, I will not consider duties imply rights because such relation is not valid. Thereby, exploring the meaning of rights and duties precisely would hopefully assist us in determining whether or not *zuhd* is a duty as I will discuss in the next section.

Zuhd as a duty

This section will explore the notion of *zuhd* as a duty for Muslims. A duty means an obligation which is appointed to individuals morally and legally. Individuals submit to duties because of several factors. Firstly, a supreme divine power such as God obliges them to do so. In other words, God compels individuals to deliver some duties. Ten Commandments are the example of it. If individuals fail to accomplish those duties, then God would punish them or remark their failure with sins, and consequently, they would be thrown to hell in the afterlife. In contrast, God would pay their goodness with paradise in the afterlife. Yet, this factor is considered only by the religious individuals. Secondly, a superstructure such as ethics which contains the golden rules (treat others like we wish to be treated by others). It is impossible that a person denies all types of duties because, at least, he has a positive duty to himself. For instance, he ought to feed himself.

If *zuhd* is a duty, then it might be either the positive duties as well as the negative duties for some reasons. Firstly, the premise (maximizing input) is a positive duty because Muslims are obliged by Qur'an to reach the peak of their abilities, services, and works in order to earn goodness from Allah. Secondly, the premise (minimizing input) could be comprehended as a negative duty to some extents because it contains an inhibition to take much from surroundings. Therefore, Muslims ought not to be greedy, and they ought to preserve resources for others now and the future.

A challenging question against such account is by what right that the premise '*zuhd* as a duty' based on? Thereby, separating

zuhd into two premises is important here.

- Maximizing output ~> a positive duty ~> based on what right?
- Minimizing input ~> a negative duty ~> based on what right?

On the one hand, a right to freedom of expression seems to be consistent with the first premise. In this case, a *zāhid* would fully express his abilities to reach the ultimate goals. On the other hand, a right to just and favorable conditions of work seems to be consistent with the negative duty because a *zāhid* favors a limited material to finish his works. Had a *zāhid* failed to absorb as minimum natural resources as possible because of no convincing reasons, then he is no longer a *zāhid*. In other words, *zuhd* contains two duties which are based on two rights. Therefore, *zuhd* is the Islamic forte in ethics.

Zuhd is ordered by Allah as is written in Qur'an 57: 23. It means *zuhd* could not be free from the existence of God. God Himself who commands our natural and moral life. However, some atheists arbitrarily reject the existence of God. Indeed, Hare identifies three general ways which are used by atheists to reject the existence of God. First of all, they strive to establish some naturalistic substitutes such as the capitalist 'invisible hand;' the Marxist believe in grabbing means of production by the working class in order to create a radical economic change in society; or the theory of evolution. (Hare 2002, 34;51) Secondly, lowering the moral demand. Consequently, such demand would fit with our natural capacities. For instance, we cannot expect the same quality of musical performance between a professional and a third grade student in elementary school. Therefore, we should lower our expectation about the student's

performance. (Hare 2002, 34; 42) Thirdly, raising our natural capacities - or in Hare's words are 'puffing up the capacity' - so we do not need the existence of God to accomplish the moral demands because it would handicap our potentials. An example of this way is *Dyscophus antongilii* or the tomato frog which puffing up itself in order to make timid its enemies. (Hare 2002, 34-35)

Nevertheless, Hare conceives those three ways contain some flaws. The first way is rejected by Hare because making a better world could not depend merely on the impersonal force. (Hare 2002, 51) Moreover, the second way fundamentally ignores the uniqueness of persons. (Hare 2002, 50) Lastly, the third way is problematic because it presumes that we could produce virtues by education or other technique. In contrast, Hare believes that we should hope for the divine assistance in order to seek virtues. (Hare 2002, 40-41) Consequently, there is a gap in moral life which denies the existence of God. Yet, Hare himself admits that this gap does not directly create a need to the existence of God. (Hare 2002, 53)

However, Hare did not mention what the gap is. Whatever the gap is, *zuhd* might fill the moral gap because goodness has a source, and the source of all things is Allah. Planet Earth is indirectly created by Allah, and therefore humans ought to preserve it. Such preservation lies in *zuhd*. Had Islam were totally wrong, and there were no Day of Resurrection (*Ma'ad*), then *zuhd* at least assists Muslims to live frugally and rightfully. Moreover, *zuhd* could be used either by Muslims or non-Muslims because it deals with living in an economical but useful way. This might be an advantage of *zuhd* compared to other principle as I will discuss in the next section.

Pleasure as a Right

Having discussed *zuhd* as a duty, then I will explore the notion of pleasure as a right here. Regarding our definition of pleasure in section three, then I strive to explore its potential as a right. In addition to such claim, I cannot say that pleasure is a duty because enjoyment and satisfaction are entitled on persons. So does the meaning of pain. Either pleasure or pain is naturally subjective. Moreover, there are at least two types of right viz., the negative natural rights, and the positive natural rights.

On the one hand, the negative natural rights mean all negative moral and legal entitlements on individuals. Those entitlements are negative because it is left on its potential, and it requires no action to make the potentials function. For instance, the right to live means the right not to be killed in the sense of negative natural rights. In other words, the state will not kill its citizens in order to fulfill the state's duty to protect its citizens' right to live. In contrast, the state would not feed its citizens had they were hungry because it means the state overlaps on delivering the right to live.

On the other hand, the positive natural rights mean all positive moral and legal entitlements on individuals. Those entitlements are positive because it requires some actions to deliver it. For example, the right to live means the right to be fed by the state had there were some hungry poor citizens. Most, if not all, human right activists would favor this definition because it takes the maximum form of a set of rights. They would reckon the negative meaning of right to live is ridiculous.

Now, I will examine whether pleasure

is a type of positive or negative natural right. Regarding its meaning, pleasure seems to be a part of positive natural right because it contains enjoyment and satisfaction. For example, a poor hungry citizen could not enjoy and be satisfied by his conditions unless he or she were an ascetic. Moreover, pleasure is attached in such a way on every individual including Muslims. Therefore, Muslims themselves have a right to please either themselves or others. Yet, the articulation of such right on Muslims' life is probably different from others. On the one hand, Muslims prefer not to please themselves as long as there is so much misery out there. On the other hand, Muslims are prone to please others before pleasing themselves. In other words, Muslims ought not to be egoistic by pleasing themselves before serving others. Indeed, some Muslims consider serving others as a pleasure for themselves. This is a distinctive notion of pleasure in Muslims' world compared to Moore's account of pleasure.

Although pleasure is a right, it does not mean that pleasure be universal in itself. On the contrary, pleasure could be considered as a relative account. If pleasure and pain are taken as the ethical principles, then we might march to the moral relativism. I am not saying that moral relativism is totally bad but it seems a bad thing in the Islamic world. Such perception might be caused by a misconception of what the moral relativism is. For instance, Moh. Nasrin Nasir provided an interesting way to tackle moral relativism. His argument could be summarized as follow:

- 1) Moral relativism means the position of no position. Consequently, no absolute value is regarded by the moral relativism. Therefore, it differs from tolerance which means

different religions and culture be accommodated. (Nasir 2011, 165)

- 2) Ethics aims to shape the human being into a perfect condition while the perfect human being is a product of the perfect soul. Now, the main duty of philosophy is making perfect the soul. (Nasir 2011, 166)
- 3) Muhammad taught us that the knowledge of God is the beginning of religion. Thereby, knowing God through his attributes and names is necessary for students. As a result, inculcating good traits as shown on the God's names would shape our souls into the perfect condition. (Nasir 2011, 169)
- 4) Moral relativism could be avoided by actualizing and believing the divine names because they are transcendent. The notion of transcendence is necessary here because it is immutable. (Nasir 2011, 171)
- 5) In short, the perfect soul would lead to Ibn 'Arabi's perfect man (*al-insān al-kāmil*) who conceives that the divine names and the macrocosm are embedded on himself though he perceives that he is merely microcosm. Therefore, he realizes that he could reach the level of perfection. (Nasir 2011, 172)

Nevertheless, his first premise is problematic because there is a main value which is held by moral relativism, to wit, three approaches in ethics are incommensurable. Therefore, persons should not hold only one approach in solving their ethical problems.

In other words, moral relativism might leap interchangeably from the virtue ethics, the deontological account of ethics, and the teleological account of ethics. Such leap depends on the situations, available options, and the character of individuals in facing the ethical problems. Whatever the decision is, it contains the hidden value. Persons might be prone to the teleological account on some of their life time but they might also prefer the deontological ethics for most of their life time, and they might favor the virtue ethics in the idealistic way of life. In short, moral relativism is not totally impartial. In contrast, pleasure and pain could not be taken as an ethical bon mot as well as an ethical principle because some actions could be perceived as pleasure or pain by different subjects. If this account is sound, then Nasir's first premise is irrelevant though his prescription on the fourth premise still be valuable.

Conclusion

Zuhd contains two fundamental premise. On the one hand, the first premise deals with the positive duty which obliges Muslims to maximize output in life. This positive duty is based on the right to freedom of expression because expression includes our works and outputs. On the other hand, the second premise deals with the negative duty which obliges Muslims to minimize input in life. This negative duty is based on the right to just and favorable conditions of work. Therefore, *zuhd* contains two positive duties which are based on two rights. This is the special quality of *zuhd* compared to pleasure. Moore's account of pleasure seems problematic because many people might consider pleasure and pain in various ways. As a consequence, pleasure and pain be subjective while subjectivity might

not be a universal ethical principle. All in all, *zuhd* could be an ethical bon mot in Islam. It could be so because it has the special quality as I have discussed above.

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