

Fiqh al-Bī'ah and Animal Protection: A Ḥadīth-Based Study on the Prohibition of Cruelty to Cats

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the prophetic prohibition against harming cats and situates it within the context of contemporary Indonesian animal protection laws. Utilizing a qualitative-descriptive method, the research analyzes hadiths relevant to environmental jurisprudence (fiqh al-bī'ah) and compares their ethical messages with Indonesia's legal framework on animal welfare, particularly Law No. 18 of 2009, Law No. 41 of 2014, and Law No. 5 of 1990. The findings reveal that Islamic teachings emphasize compassion, ecological harmony, and moral accountability toward all living beings, including animals. These principles strongly resonate with modern legal norms that prohibit abuse, neglect, and cruelty, while requiring humans to ensure the physical and psychological well-being of animals. The analysis demonstrates that the ethical foundation of fiqh al-bī'ah not only aligns with state regulations but also enriches them by offering spiritual motivation for humane treatment. Therefore, this study concludes that integrating Islamic environmental ethics can significantly reinforce the effectiveness of Indonesian animal protection laws and promote a more sustainable, responsible, and humane ecological culture.

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INTRODUCTION

Public awareness of the urgency of animal protection has continued to increase alongside the growing discourse on environmental ethics in modern society. In Indonesia, various forms of violence against animals—ranging from neglect and abuse to killing—are still frequently encountered and have sparked debates regarding the extent to which existing regulations are capable of providing effective protection. In fact, the government has enacted several legal instruments, such as Law No. 18 of 2009 on Animal Husbandry and Animal Health, which was amended by Law No. 41 of 2014, as well as Law No. 5 of 1990 concerning the Conservation of Living Natural Resources and Their Ecosystems. (*Peliharaan Satwa yang Dilindungi, Ini Sanksinya* | Klinik Hukumonline, t.t.) Nevertheless, the

enforcement of these laws continues to face numerous challenges, whether cultural, social, or related to law enforcement mechanisms.

From an Islamic perspective, the issue of animal protection has long constituted an integral part of the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). Moral principles concerning living beings are reflected in *fiqh al-bi'ah*, a discipline that examines the relationship between human beings and the environment. One frequently cited prophetic tradition recounts the story of a woman who was punished for neglecting a cat until it died, underscoring the strict prohibition against acts of injustice toward animals and demonstrating the significant attention Islam pays to the welfare of non-human creatures.

The existing literature indicates that studies on *fiqh al-bi'ah* have developed considerably, particularly in relation to ecological ethics. However, relatively few works have directly connected this discourse with Indonesia's positive law on animal protection. This gap in the literature is important to address so that religious values may be harmonized with state legal frameworks in strengthening public awareness of environmental conservation and the protection of living beings. (Suryani, 2020)

This article seeks to present an in-depth analysis of the *ḥadīth* prohibiting cruelty to cats and to relate it to the Indonesian legal system. This approach not only emphasizes the theological dimension but also offers practical contributions toward reinforcing the ethics of animal protection. Accordingly, the objective of this study is to explore the meanings of *ḥadīths* related to *fiqh al-bi'ah* and to elucidate how these teachings can support the more effective implementation of animal protection laws.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative–descriptive approach aimed at gaining an in-depth understanding of the meaning of the *ḥadīth* prohibiting cruelty to cats and its relevance to animal protection law in Indonesia. (*Microsoft Word - Ahmad Sarip Saputra_Fo2918326*, t.t.) The research data consist of both primary and secondary sources. (Sulung & Muspawi, 2024) Primary data are derived from *ḥadīths* related to the prohibition of harming animals as recorded in *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, with particular emphasis on the narration concerning a woman who was punished for neglecting a cat. Secondary data include literature on *fiqh al-bi'ah*, scholarly works on environmental ethics in Islam, as well as various national regulations such as Law No. 18 of 2009, Law No. 41 of 2014, and Law No. 5 of 1990 concerning the conservation of natural resources.

All data were collected through library research by examining classical texts, contemporary literature, and legal documents. The collected data were then analyzed using content analysis to identify ethical themes within the *ḥadīths*, followed by semantic interpretation to comprehend their linguistic context and moral messages. Subsequently, the interpretive findings were compared with Indonesian legal provisions through a comparative analysis to assess the alignment between the principles of *fiqh al-bi'ah* and the modern legal framework. This study

adopts an integrative paradigm by linking Islamic normative values with contemporary legal realities, thereby enabling a holistic reading of the ḥadīth texts and their relevance within Indonesia's animal protection system.

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The issue of animal protection in the Islamic perspective is rooted in the concept of *fiqh al-bi'ah*, a branch of Islamic jurisprudence that addresses ethics and norms governing human interaction with the natural environment. This concept views animals not merely as resources to be utilized, but as integral components of the ecosystem endowed with basic rights that must be protected (Musa, 2010). Islam emphasizes that safeguarding the environment and all creatures within it constitutes part of the divine trust (*amānah*) inherent in humanity's role as *khalīfah* (steward) on earth. This principle is firmly supported by the Qur'an and the Sunnah, which explicitly prohibit all forms of destruction and injustice toward living beings (Ubaidillah, 2010). Such prohibition is clearly articulated in Qur'an, Sūrat al-A'rāf (7):56, which states that humans are forbidden from causing corruption on earth after God has set it in order (Safrilsyah & Fitriani, 2014). In the contemporary context, this principle remains highly relevant given the increasing incidence of animal abuse—particularly against cats—highlighting the urgent need to integrate religious teachings with effective legal enforcement. The following sections elaborate on the foundations of Islamic law, the ethical messages of the ḥadīths, and the implementation of Indonesian law in achieving comprehensive animal protection (ACH. NABILUL HIKAM FIXpdf, t.t.).

The discussion of animal protection within the Islamic framework is fundamentally grounded in *fiqh al-bi'ah*, which focuses on the relationship between human beings and their environment. In this context, the environment encompasses all of God's creation, including humans, plants, and animals. *Fiqh al-bi'ah* positions animals as living beings endowed with rights, ecological functions, and moral status that must be respected (ACH. NABILUL HIKAM FIXpdf, t.t.) These principles are derived from the Qur'an and ḥadīths, which unequivocally prohibit acts of destruction, neglect, and violence against living creatures.

Sūrat al-A'rāf (7):56 explicitly addresses the prohibition of environmental destruction:

“And do not cause corruption on the earth after it has been set in order. Pray to Him with fear and hope. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to those who do good.”

This verse contains a clear injunction against acts that negatively affect the balance of nature, including the abuse of animals as part of the life system preserved by God. (BAB 1.pdf, t.t.) Ibn Kathīr's exegesis affirms that all forms of *ifsād* (corruption) on earth, whether minor or major, fundamentally contradict humanity's mission as God's vicegerent (*khalīfah*) (Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2012).

The relevance of *fiqh al-bi'ah* to contemporary issues of animal protection becomes increasingly evident when examined in light of present social realities. Animals—particularly cats, which are closely associated with human life—hold significant ecological and historical roles (*FIQH BI'AH DALAM PERSPEKTIF AL-QURAN* | *At-Thullab : Jurnal Mahasiswa Studi Islam*, t.t.). Nevertheless, acts of violence against animals continue to occur frequently. This discrepancy between religious teachings and social behavior indicates that religious values have not been fully internalized in everyday practice. Consequently, *fiqh al-bi'ah* offers a crucial perspective for framing the treatment of animals as an integral component of environmental ethics (Prayogi dkk., 2025).

Within the Indonesian context, this concept holds dual significance. First, as the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, Islamic values can serve as a strong moral foundation for fostering social awareness regarding the importance of animal protection (*BAB 1.pdf*, t.t.). Second, *fiqh al-bi'ah* can function as an ethical support for positive law, including the Criminal Code, laws on animal husbandry and animal health, and government regulations on animal welfare. The integration of religious teachings with national legal frameworks is therefore essential in creating a holistic approach to reducing animal cruelty and cultivating a sustainable culture of ecological protection (*Permen LHK No. P.106/MENLHK/SETJEN/KUM.1/12/2018*, t.t.).

In conclusion, this section affirms that *fiqh al-bi'ah* is not merely a theoretical construct, but a practical framework that reinforces the messages of the Qur'an and the Sunnah while aligning with state legal efforts. Its principles provide a robust spiritual, moral, and ethical foundation for developing a more humane, just, and sustainable system of animal protection. (*Microsoft Word - BAB III 48-61.docx*, t.t.).

Fiqh al-Bi'ah as a Shari'ah Foundation for the Protection of Living Beings

Environmental preservation in the Islamic perspective is commonly referred to as *fiqh al-bi'ah* (Islamic environmental jurisprudence). Semantically, this term is composed of two words forming a *muḍāf-muḍāf ilayh* construction, namely *fiqh* and *al-bi'ah*. Etymologically, the term *fiqh* derives from the root *faqiha-yafqahu-fiqhan*, which denotes *al-'ilm bi al-shay'* (knowledge of something) and *al-fahm* (profound understanding). Terminologically, *fiqh* is defined as the discipline that studies practical *Shari'ah* rulings (*al-aḥkām al-shar'iyyah al-'amaliyyah*) derived from detailed textual evidences (*adillah tafṣiliyyah*) (*PENERAPAN HIFDZUL BI'AH DALAM FATWA KUPI TENTANG HARAMNYA KERUSAKAN LINGKUNGAN*, t.t.).

Meanwhile, the term *al-bi'ah* refers to the environment, understood as an integrated spatial system encompassing various elements such as material objects, energy, natural conditions, and living beings—including humans and all their activities—which interact with one another and influence the continuity of life and the well-being of all creatures within it. (*Fiqih Islam Wa Adillatuhu 1* (Dr. Wahbah Az-Zuhaili) - *azman1204* | *Membalik PDF Dalam talian* | *FlipHTML5*, t.t.).

Based on these definitions, *fiqh al-bi'ah* may be understood as a set of Islamic legal norms derived from detailed scriptural sources that regulate human conduct toward the environment. Its primary objective is to realize *maṣlaḥah* (public

welfare) for all inhabitants of the earth while preventing environmental degradation. Consequently, Islamic environmental jurisprudence constitutes a form of Shari'ah-based knowledge that focuses on ecological concerns and simultaneously functions as a normative instrument to critique human actions that tend toward environmental destruction or excessive exploitation of nature.

The Qur'an explicitly addresses the prohibition of environmental corruption in Sūrat al-A'rāf (7):56:

“And do not cause corruption on the earth after it has been set in order. Invoke Him with fear and hope. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to those who do good.” (*Qur'an Kemenag*, t.t.).

This verse underscores a clear and categorical prohibition against acts that lead to environmental damage after God has established balance and order in the earth, thereby reinforcing the ethical and legal foundations of *fiqh al-bi'ah* as an essential component of Islamic teachings on the protection of living beings and the natural world.

The Prophet Muḥammad's Message on Animal Rights in Ḥadīth

This perspective is consistent with the ḥadīths of the Prophet Muḥammad, which affirm that animals possess inherent rights—what may be described in contemporary terms as animal rights. These rights refer to the fundamental entitlements of animals regardless of species, breed, or sex. They include the right to life, the right not to be subjected to cruelty, the right to be free from hunger and thirst, the right to be protected from pain and suffering, and the right to be free from exploitation. In fact, the concept of animal rights has evolved over centuries within Islamic teachings. Through numerous ḥadīths, the Prophet emphasized that, like human beings, animals possess rights, as they are living creatures capable of experiencing pain and suffering.

In one ḥadīth, the Prophet stated:

“Narrated by Abū Hurayrah: The Messenger of Allah said, ‘When you travel through fertile land, give the camels their due by allowing them to graze from the land. When you travel during a time of drought, hasten in your journey and provide them with their feed. And when you stop for the night, avoid staying on the road, for the road is the pathway of animals and the dwelling place of crawling creatures and insects at night.’” (*Kisah Muezza, Kucing Kesayangan Rasulullah SAW*, t.t.)

In addition, there is a well-known ḥadīth concerning a woman who was punished for neglecting a cat. The Prophet said (reported by al-Bukhārī and Muslim):

“A woman was punished because of a cat which she confined until it died. She neither fed it nor let it go free to eat from the vermin of the earth.” (*Inilah Dalil Menyayangi Kucing*, t.t.)

This ḥadīth clearly demonstrates that cruelty toward animals constitutes a grave sin, and that neglecting animals to the point of suffering or death incurs severe divine punishment. It affirms that animals are living beings endowed with fundamental rights, foremost among them the right to life. The Prophet Muḥammad explicitly forbade harming cats and other animals. Nevertheless,

instances of animal cruelty continue to occur, reflecting a deficiency in moral awareness among some individuals.

Taken together, these two ḥadīths serve as a foundational basis for asserting that animal abuse stands in direct contradiction to Islamic law and ethical teachings.

Indonesian Law, Cases of Animal Cruelty, and the Integration of Islamic Values as a Practical Solution

Although Islamic values strongly emphasize the rights and welfare of animals, social practices in Indonesia indicate that acts of animal cruelty remain prevalent. Cases such as the killing of cats in Malang (2024), incidents of cat consumption in Semarang (2024), and acts of animal abuse carried out for social media content demonstrate a persistent lack of public awareness and ethical sensitivity. This is particularly concerning given that Indonesia already has a number of legal instruments aimed at protecting animals, including Article 302 of the Indonesian Criminal Code (KUHP), Law No. 41 of 2014 on Animal Husbandry and Animal Health, and Government Regulation No. 95 of 2012 (Pinontoan, 2021)

Nevertheless, the enforcement of these regulations has often been ineffective. In this context, the integration of religious values becomes critically important. If left unaddressed, the continued tolerance of animal abuse may not only result in further harm to animals but could eventually have broader social repercussions, affecting human life itself. Human indifference toward suffering in the surrounding natural environment may constitute the initial stage of increasingly arrogant and oppressive behavior toward both nature and fellow beings.

As emphasized in the research framework, the findings indicate that the integration of ḥadīth teachings, *fiqh al-bi'ah*, and national legal frameworks can significantly strengthen a culture of animal protection within society (*PERLINDUNGAN SATWA DALAM ISLAM*, t.t.) (*PERLINDUNGAN SATWA DALAM ISLAM*, n.d.). Religious values provide ethical legitimacy grounded in spirituality and morality, while Indonesian law functions as a regulatory instrument to ensure that animal protection is implemented in concrete and enforceable ways. This synergy represents an effective strategy for fostering sustainable environmental awareness, cultivating a more compassionate society, and reducing cases of animal cruelty in Indonesia. Consequently, animal protection should be understood not merely as a legal obligation, but also as an expression of religious devotion and ecological responsibility.

CONCLUSION

This study affirms that *fiqh al-bi'ah*, Qur'anic verses, and the Prophetic ḥadīths provide a strong ethical foundation for environmental stewardship and the protection of animals as living beings endowed with fundamental rights. Islamic teachings explicitly prohibit all forms of cruelty, neglect, and destructive behavior toward animals, as emphasized in Q. al-A'rāf (7):56 and in numerous ḥadīths

concerning animal welfare. On the other hand, although Indonesia has established legal instruments such as the Criminal Code (KUHP), the Law on Animal Husbandry and Animal Health, and Government Regulations on Animal Welfare, their implementation continues to face tangible challenges, particularly in cases of violence against cats across various regions. Therefore, the integration of religious values and national regulations is essential to strengthening public awareness and cultivating a culture of animal protection. Such synergy enables animal protection to be understood not merely as a legal obligation, but also as an expression of religious devotion and an ecological responsibility inherent in humanity's role as *khalifah* (steward) on earth.

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