

## THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN INTEGRATING THE ECOLOGICAL VALUES OF THE QUR'AN (A THEMATIC STUDY OF VERSES ON THE ENVIRONMENT IN THE ERA OF GLOBAL CLIMATE CRISIS)

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### Abstract

The global climate crisis is a multidimensional threat that not only impacts the natural ecosystem, but also the sustainability of human life. Various secular and technocratic approaches have been applied to overcome this crisis, but have not been able to touch the moral and spiritual roots of the problem. This article aims to examine the ecological values in the Qur'an through a thematic interpretation approach (tafsīr al-mawdū'ī) to verses related to the environment, and to examine their relevance in responding to the challenges of the contemporary climate crisis. The results of the study show that the Qur'an contains transcendental ecological principles such as the concept of khalifah, mīzān (balance), the prohibition of fasād (damage), and the recommendation not to be excessive (isrāf), which function as the basis for Islamic environmental ethics. The integration of these revealed values offers a new paradigm that can overcome the spiritual vacuum in conventional approaches. Thus, a religious approach based on the Qur'an has the potential to be a significant contribution in building collective ecological awareness and encouraging an environmentally friendly civilization.

**Keywords:** Al-Qur'an, Ecological Values, Global Climate Crisis

### Abstrak

Krisis iklim global merupakan ancaman multidimensi yang tidak hanya berdampak pada ekosistem alam, tetapi juga pada keberlanjutan kehidupan manusia. Berbagai pendekatan sekuler dan teknokratis telah diterapkan untuk mengatasi krisis ini, namun belum mampu menyentuh akar persoalan yang bersifat moral dan spiritual. Artikel ini bertujuan mengkaji nilai-nilai ekologis dalam Alquran melalui pendekatan tafsir tematik (tafsīr al-mawdū'ī) terhadap ayat-ayat yang berkaitan dengan lingkungan, serta menelaah relevansinya dalam merespons tantangan krisis iklim kontemporer. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Alquran memuat prinsip-prinsip ekologis transendental seperti konsep khalifah, mīzān (keseimbangan), larangan fasād (kerusakan), dan anjuran untuk tidak berlebihan (isrāf), yang berfungsi sebagai landasan etika lingkungan Islam. Integrasi nilai-nilai wahyu ini menawarkan paradigma baru yang mampu mengatasi kekosongan spiritual dalam pendekatan konvensional. Dengan demikian, pendekatan religius berbasis Alquran berpotensi menjadi kontribusi signifikan dalam membangun kesadaran ekologis kolektif dan mendorong peradaban ramah lingkungan.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The current climate crisis is one of the most pressing issues in human history. Climate change, characterized by global warming, polar ice melting, sea level rise, tropical forest destruction, and biodiversity loss, has had multidimensional impacts on global ecological, social, economic, and political aspects (Legg, 2021). This condition is not merely a natural crisis, but also an ethical, spiritual, and humanitarian crisis. Nature, which was previously considered a sacred entity with intrinsic value, is often positioned in the modern paradigm as an object of exploitation for short-term economic interests.

The dominant secular and technocratic approaches to tackling the climate crisis, such as carbon mitigation policies, industrial regulations, and renewable energy development, have shown partial success but have not touched on the deepest root of the problem, namely human awareness in treating nature sustainably. The anthropocentric framework of thinking, which prioritizes humans as the center and rulers of the earth, has encouraged consumptive and exploitative lifestyles that destroy the balance of the ecosystem (Nasr, 1996). Therefore, a more comprehensive alternative approach is needed, one of which is a religious and spiritual approach. The relationship between religion and the environment has been the subject of various interdisciplinary scientific discourses, especially since the mid-20th century. In the context of Islam, the connection between the teachings of the Quran and ecological values has begun to receive more attention with the increasing awareness of the global climate crisis and the failure of secular approaches to address environmental issues in depth.

Religion, as a value system that governs human relationships with God, fellow human beings, and nature, has great potential in shaping collective ecological awareness. Islam, as the second largest religion in the world, contains very strong teachings on environmental sustainability, human responsibility as caliphs (QS. Al-Baqarah: 30), the prohibition of causing destruction (*fasād*) (QS. Al-A'raf: 56), and the command to maintain balance (*mīzān*) (QS. Ar-Rahman: 7–9). However, these values have not been fully mainstreamed in contemporary religious discourse or in public policy related to the environment.

In this context, the Quran, as the main source of Islamic teachings, contains a treasure trove of ecological values that can be used as a foundation for building environmental ethics based on spirituality. A thematic study of Quranic verses discussing water, soil, air, animals, plants, and the balance of nature will provide a much-needed new perspective in responding to the challenges of the global climate crisis. This approach is expected to bridge modern environmental science and Islamic spiritual ethics, resulting in a more holistic and transformative paradigm in building ecological sustainability.

Thus, this article integrates a *maudhu'i* interpretation approach, contextual reading, and systematic mapping of basic ecological values in the Quran. This research will not only enrich the contemporary thematic interpretation, but also contribute to the formulation of

relevant and transformative Islamic environmental ethics.

The research questions focus on: Quranic verses that directly or indirectly contain ecological values and environmental messages; the meaning of these verses when analyzed thematically in the framework of *maudhu'i* interpretation; the basic ecological values contained in the Qur'an, their relevance to the current global climate crisis, and the contribution of ecological values in the Qur'an to the development of environmental ethics based on Islamic spirituality.

The general objective of this article is to explore the contribution of the Quran in addressing environmental issues through a thematic approach to verses related to ecology. Specifically, the objectives of this study include: Identifying Quranic verses related to the theme of the environment and ecology, such as verses about water, soil, air, flora and fauna, and the command to maintain the balance of nature. Analyzing the ecological values contained in these verses using a thematic interpretation approach (*tafsir maudhu'i*) in order to explore the spiritual and ethical dimensions of environmental management. Deriving the basic principles of Islamic ecology based on the Qur'an, such as the principles of *tawazun* (balance), *khalifah* (ecological leadership), *fasād* (prohibition of destruction), and *israf* (prohibition of excess), Evaluating the relevance of these values in facing the challenges of the global climate crisis, as well as exploring their potential as a foundation for religious and contextual environmental ethics and education.

## METHOD

This study uses qualitative library research with a thematic approach in the study of the Quran. This approach was chosen because it is in line with the objective of conducting an in-depth study of verses related to a specific theme, in this case the theme of the environment and ecology, and linking them to the reality of the contemporary global climate crisis. The thematic interpretation approach (*tafsīr al-mawḍū'ī*) is a method of interpreting Quranic verses based on specific themes in a holistic, comprehensive, and systematic manner.

This method involves the following steps: Determining the main theme to be studied, namely *ecological values in the Quran*, Compiling all Quranic verses that are directly or indirectly related to the theme of the environment, such as verses about water, soil, air, animals, plants, the balance of nature, the prohibition of destruction, and the role of humans as caliphs, Classifying these verses into sub-themes, Analyzing the meaning of these verses based on various classical and contemporary exegetical literature, such as *Tafsir al-Ibnu Katsir*, *Tafsir Kemenag RI*, *Tafsir al-Mishbah*, *Tafsir al-Azhar*, *Tafsir Mukhtashar*, and other thematic works, and Relating these values to the contemporary ecological context, especially the issue of global climate crisis, as an effort to integrate the text of revelation and the socio-ecological reality. The data sources in this study include Primary Data: The Quran as the main source of study Relevant tafsir books, both classical and contemporary, such as: *Tafsir al-Ibnu Katsir*, *Tafsir Kemenag RI*, *Tafsir al-*

*Mishbah, Tafsir al-Azhar, Tafsir Mukhtashar*, and Books and scientific journal articles on Islamic ecology and the climate crisis.

The collected data was analyzed using content analysis to interpret the explicit and implicit meanings of the verses studied. The analysis process was conducted qualitatively by considering the linguistic and semantic contexts, as well as the interpretations of the mufasssir. The data from the interpretations were then combined with contemporary realities through an integrative-contextual approach, resulting in a synthesis between revelatory values and modern challenges.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Environment in the Perspective of the Qur'an

The Qur'an is the holy book of Muslims, and among its functions are as *al-huda* (guidance), *al-bayyinah* (explanation of guidance), *al-furqan* (distinguishing between right and wrong), *al-Syifa'* (enlightenment of the mind and heart), *al-rahmah* (bringing goodness to the world and the hereafter), and *al-Dzikr* (reminder) (Nata, 2022). The Qur'an is not only read and memorized for the sake of ritual worship and in the hope of receiving rewards; nor is it merely understood as knowledge. The presence of the Qur'an motivates those who believe in it to develop science, culture, and civilization.

The Qur'an positions nature as signs (*āyāt*) of God's power that must be preserved, respected, and utilized in a balanced manner. Nature is not merely a material object, but part of a cosmic order that contains a spiritual dimension. In QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 164, Allah mentions various elements of nature, such as the alternation of night and day, rain, plants, wind, and clouds, as signs for those who think.

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمُوتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَأَخْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَخَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

*"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of night and day, the ships that sail the seas with cargo beneficial to mankind, the water that Allah sends down from the sky, thereby reviving the earth after its death, and He spreads therein all kinds of animals, and the blowing of the winds and the clouds controlled between the heavens and the earth, (all of that) are indeed signs (of Allah's greatness) for people who understand."* (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 164) (Kemenag RI, 2017)

In Tafsir Ibnu Katsir (al-Mubarakfuri, 2011), it is explained that this verse shows signs (of Allah's oneness and greatness) for those who think, in that there is clear evidence of the oneness of Allah SWT. This verse directs humans to reflect on the order of nature as an ecological system that demonstrates balance (*mīzān*), which, if disturbed, will cause ecological damage and global ecological imbalance.

## Humans as Khalifah and Ecological Responsibility

The Quran establishes humans as caliphs (representatives of God) on earth (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30), who are entrusted with managing nature responsibly, not exploitatively. This responsibility is not only ethical, but also theological. The position of humans as caliphs is not a license for domination, but rather a mandate for stewardship.

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً

“And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels, ‘I am going to place a vicegerent on earth.’” (QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30) (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2017)

In Tafsir Al-Mukhtashar (Sheikh Dr. Shalih bin Abdullah bin Humaid (Imam of the Grand Mosque), 2024), it is explained that the main duty of humans is to prosper the earth based on obedience to Allah. Then the angels feared that they would cause destruction there and shed blood indiscriminately.

In this context, environmental destruction and climate change are forms of betrayal of the mandate of khalifah, when humans exceed their limits, exploit nature excessively, and reject the value of simplicity. Human consciousness that emphasizes their position as caliphs will cause humans to feel most entitled to control and exploit nature in order to meet all their needs, but humans often act to exploit nature beyond their needs. (Jumarddin La Fua, 2017)

From time to time, this planet has experienced rapid economic growth and technological advances, enabling the development of machines used to destroy forests, such as mining industries, which have contributed to accelerating environmental degradation. Continuous exploitation will ultimately disrupt the natural balance of the ecosystem and ultimately threaten God's creation, including humans. This seems to confirm the angel's prophecy when humans were appointed as God's caliphs on earth, namely the prophecy about the destructive nature of humans and their hostility towards one another (Jumarddin La Fua, 2017). There needs to be introspection and self-improvement in each individual about how nature is often damaged by us without us ever preserving it. A good and livable environment is a necessity for all living creatures.

## The Principle of Tawazun (Balance) and the Prohibition of Destruction (Fasād)

One of the strongest ecological concepts in the Quran is mīzān (balance), as mentioned in QS. Ar-Rahman [55]: 7-9 (Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, 2017).

وَأَقِيمُوا الْوَزْنَ بِالْقِسْطِ وَلَا تُخْسِرُوا الْمِيزَانَ ۖ وَلَا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ ۚ وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ

“And He raised the heavens and established the balance, so that you may not disturb that balance. Uphold that balance fairly and do not diminish it.”

Buya Hamka (Amrullah, 2003) in his Tafsir explains that all objects in the sky, namely millions of stars, are placed in balance and consideration, and humans are required to emulate God's creation of nature. With balance and consideration, Hamka says that we humans must maintain order and put things in their proper place.

The word *mizan*, according to M. Quraish Shihab, can mean a weighing device, justice, or balance. According to Quraish, Allah juxtaposes the words *al-samaa* (sky) and *miizaan* (justice) to indicate the importance of justice by attributing it to the entire universe, which is also the realm of truth and virtue (Shihab, 2002). This verse forms the basis of Islamic ecological ethics: every system in nature has an internal balance that must be maintained. The global climate crisis, in this context, is the result of human violations of the principle of *mīzān*, committed through pollution, deforestation, exploitation of fossil fuels, and lifestyle inequalities.

As interpreted by M. Quraish Shihab above, the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' Tafsir (Kemenag RI, 2016) also explains that verses 7-9 above imply that Allah SWT created the heavens as a place to descend His commands and prohibitions to His servants through angels to chosen prophets. This is so that humans do not exceed and overstep the boundaries of justice in order to maintain the balance that has been established for all His creatures.

Furthermore, in QS. Al-A'rāf [7]: 56 (Kemenag RI, 2017) emphasizes:

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا

“And do not cause corruption on the earth after (Allah) has repaired it...”

This verse reinforces the prohibition against *fasād* (corruption) in any form, including ecological damage. Any action that damages the ecosystem is considered a form of injustice to the earth and other creatures. From this verse and the interpretations above, we can learn the importance of justice and balance. Humans, as *khalifah fi al-ardh* (stewards of the earth), are obliged to carry out His mandate by always paying attention to justice and balance for all living creatures. Humans must not act arbitrarily by disrupting the balance of nature and exploiting it for personal gain.

### **The Concept of *Isrāf* and Sustainable Consumption**

The climate crisis is closely related to consumptive lifestyles and overproduction. The Qur'an strictly prohibits excessive behavior (*isrāf*), as stated in QS. Al-A'rāf [7]: 31:

لَا يَحِبُّ الْمُسْرِفِينَ ۚ يُبَيِّنُ آدَمَ خُذُوا زِينَتَكُمْ عِنْدَ كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَكُلُوا وَاشْرَبُوا وَلَا تُسْرِفُوا إِنَّهُ

“...Eat and drink, but do not be excessive. Indeed, Allah does not like those who are excessive.”

According to the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' Tafsir (Kemenag RI, 2016), in this verse, Allah commands us to wear appropriate clothing when worshipping,



whether during prayer, tawaf, or other acts of worship. Allah also commands humans to eat and drink in moderation without excess.

In a modern context, israf can be interpreted as a lifestyle that wastes energy, food, and resources. The Quran encourages a moderate, frugal, and sustainable lifestyle, which is in line with the concept of sustainable development in the global agenda. Israf in an ecological context can also be the use of goods with the potential to produce a lot of waste. Indonesia is one of the ten most populous countries in the world. This is because the population of Indonesia influences consumption activities and is directly proportional to the increase in waste generation, which has a major impact on environmental damage. The current increase in waste is caused by the high population and high standard of living of modern society, which encourages people to continuously use plastic (Rustan, Agustang, & Idrus, 2023)

One solution to reduce waste is to adopt a zero-waste lifestyle, which is a lifestyle that minimizes waste production and management as much as possible. The zero waste lifestyle has begun to be implemented in various developed or Western countries, especially those that already understand the dangers of environmental damage. The zero waste movement is a more effective long-term solution than disposing of waste in landfills (Rustan et al., 2023).

### **Integration of Revelatory Values and Global Ecological Challenges**

When secular and technocratic approaches to the environment fail to touch on the moral and spiritual dimensions of humanity, the values of the Quran present themselves as an alternative that reaches the deepest consciousness. Values such as amanah, syukur, tawazun, and khalifah are capable of changing the way we view nature from an object of exploitation to a spiritual partner in carrying out the mission of sustainability on earth.

Through a thematic interpretation approach, the ecological values in the Qur'an are proven to be not only normative but also visionary and relevant to today's challenges. These values need to be mainstreamed in education, policy, and community movements as an effort to build a civilized ecological civilization. The values contained in the Qur'an and Hadith can be used as a basis for thinking and acting for Muslims in responding to environmental damage. The wealth of values contained in the verses of the Qur'an and Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad SAW can be a driving force for Muslims in preserving nature and the environment because it is a sacred command (Jumarddin La Fua, 2017).

### **CONCLUSION**

This study shows that the Quran contains ecological values that are highly relevant in addressing the current global climate crisis. Through a thematic approach (tafsir maudhu'i), it was found that the verses of the Quran not only contain prohibitions against destruction (fasād) and commands to maintain balance (mīzān), but also emphasize the responsibility of humans as caliphs on earth. Concepts such as amanah, tawazun, khalifah, israf, and syukur are principles of environmental ethics that are transcendental and touch

on human spiritual awareness. The climate crisis is not merely a technical issue, but touches on the moral and spiritual aspects of humanity. Therefore, the contribution of religious teachings, especially Islam through the Quran, is very important in building collective ecological awareness and a holistic and sustainable environmental management paradigm. This study also proves that a secular-technocratic approach that ignores the value dimension is insufficient in resolving the ecological crisis. Instead, an integrative approach that involves revelatory values and spiritual dimensions can provide more fundamental and long-term solutions.

**Academic Implications:** This research opens up space for the development of thematic interpretations of the Quran based on contemporary issues, particularly in the fields of ecology and sustainability. More interdisciplinary studies are needed that combine Islamic studies, environmental science, and public policy based on Quranic values.

**Practical Implications:** The ecological values of the Quran can be mainstreamed into Islamic education curricula, religious sermons, and religious social campaigns to build awareness and an environmentally friendly lifestyle. Religious and educational institutions need to integrate these principles into the practical lives of the community.

Further research is needed with a broader approach, including the integration of hadith, maqashid sharia, and environmental fiqh approaches as the basis for formulating a comprehensive Islamic environmental ethic. Cooperation between religious institutions, academics, and environmental activists is needed to formulate sustainable development policies based on religious values. Policy makers and community leaders are expected to view the environment not only materially but also spiritually, so that the policies that are created are based on value awareness, not just economic targets.

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