

Ecological Kufr in Modern Era: A Thematic Interpretation and Its Enviromental Implications

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ABSTRACT

The increasingly worrying ecological crisis demands a re-reflection of spiritual values and environmental ethics in Islam. The Qur'an teaches the principle of balance (mizan) and man's responsibility as a caliph in managing nature. This study seeks to analyze the concept of ecological kufr in the Qur'an through the study of several verses that mention environmental damage (fasad fi al-ard) and denial of Allah's favor. The analysis was carried out by examining the meaning of the verse contextually and intertextually through an approach of interpretation and ecotheological reflection. The study results show that destructive behavior towards nature is a tangible form of theological denial, which brings moral and spiritual consequences to human life. This research confirms the importance of revitalizing revelation-based environmental ethics to answer modern ecological challenges. Thus, the Qur'an can be a normative foundation for building environmental awareness and sustainable conservation strategies.

Keywords: Ecological Kufr, Qur'an, Ecological Damage, Environmental Conservation

ABSTRAK

Krisis ekologis yang semakin mengkhawatirkan menuntut refleksi kembali nilai-nilai spiritual dan etika lingkungan dalam Islam. Al-Qur'an mengajarkan prinsip keseimbangan (*mizan*) dan tanggung jawab manusia sebagai khalifah dalam pengelolaan alam. Penelitian ini berusaha menganalisis konsep *kufur ekologis* dalam Al-Qur'an melalui studi sejumlah ayat yang menyebutkan kerusakan lingkungan (*fasad fi al-ard*) dan penyangkalan nikmat Allah. Analisis dilakukan dengan meneliti makna ayat secara kontekstual dan intertekstual melalui pendekatan interpretasi dan refleksi ekoteologis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perilaku merusak terhadap alam adalah bentuk nyata dari penyangkalan teologis, yang membawa konsekuensi moral dan spiritual dalam kehidupan manusia. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya merevitalisasi etika lingkungan berbasis wahyu untuk menjawab tantangan ekologi modern. Dengan demikian, Al-Qur'an dapat digunakan sebagai landasan normatif dalam membangun kesadaran ekologis dan strategi konservasi berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: Kufur Ekologis, Al-Qur'an, Kerusakan Ekologis, Konservasi Lingkungan

INTRODUCTION

The ecological crisis is a significant problem that continues to overshadow modern human life. Climate change, increasingly intense natural disasters, environmental degradation, and air and water pollution are some of the real signs of the breakdown of the balance of the earth's ecosystem. Ironically, the leading cause of these kinds of damage comes precisely from human behavior, especially when humans neglect their responsibilities as guardians and prosperers of the earth. From the Islamic theological perspective, neglect of ecological responsibility can be categorized as a form of denial or "*kufṛ*" of God's trust, which is called ecological *kufṛ*.

This concept departs from the realization that the Qur'an has given serious attention to the universe as part of the signs of God's greatness. The Qur'an contains a stern warning against the damage done by humans on earth, both through the use of terms such as *fasād* and *halaka* as well as the prohibition against excessive attitude (*isrāf*), extravagance (*tabzīr*) and irresponsible luxury living (*itraf*) (Abidin & Muhammad, 2020). Environmental damage in the Qur'an is not just a physical problem but also reflects moral and spiritual damage that is rooted in the loss of human awareness of his position and role as the caliph of Allah on earth (Rijal Ali et al., 2023)

At the same time, the Qur'an also provides a normative and ethical framework for how humans should interact with nature. Principles such as *al-i'mār* (prospering the earth), *ihyā' al-mawāt* (reviving dead soil), and maintaining balance (*al-mīzān*) are the foundation for the paradigm of environmental conservation in Islam (Iqbal, 2020). These principles affirm that humans are not only given the right to utilize natural resources, but also burdened with the responsibility to protect them for the long-term benefit, both for present and future generations.

In the context of natural disasters, the Qur'an also explains that many disasters that occur directly result from human behavior (Hidayat, 2024). This understanding implies that ecological disasters are not solely the fate or will of nature but are also a form of response to natural systems that are damaged by human actions. Therefore, responding to the environmental crisis is not only a scientific or technocratic responsibility but also a moral and spiritual responsibility rooted in faith and piety.

However, ecological awareness in society, especially Muslims, still tends to be low. This can be seen from the lack of environmental literacy based on the Qur'an, as well as the uneven understanding that protecting the environment is an integral part of worship and religious mandate (Rahman, 2022). In fact, many verses of the Qur'an convey messages about

the importance of building a relationship of love and responsibility towards nature as God's creation. A superficial understanding of religious teachings often leads society to focus only on the ritualistic aspects, while the ethical and ecological message of revelation tends to be overlooked.

Nafisah, in 2019, introduced the concept of ecological interpretation by placing *hifz al-bī'ah* (environmental protection) as part of *ushul al-sharia*. He relates *hifz al-bī'ah* to *maslahah* in *maqāṣid al-syariah* (*hifz ad-dīn*, *hifz an-naḥs*, *hifz an-nasl*, *hifz al-'aql*, *hifz al-māl*) (Nafisah, 2019). Thus, nature preservation is an integral part of Islamic faith and sharia. Wagiman Manik, in 2023, will reinterpret Qur'anic verses about ecology to formulate a conservation action plan. He points out that the Qur'an explicitly condemns the destruction of nature caused by humans (e.g., QS al-A'raf [7]:56) and at the same time affirms the role of man as a caliph who prospers the earth (QS Hud [11]:61) (Kroll et al., 2019). Based on this understanding, Wagiman designed an educational book based on the Qur'an, which aims to form a smart society with life, namely a society that is wise towards nature and active in environmental conservation. Meanwhile, Mardiana, in 2013, used a thematic interpretation approach to explore the concept of the environment in the Qur'an and its preservation efforts. This study includes the definition of environmental terms according to the Qur'an, conservation principles, and the urgency of the environment for human survival (Mardiana, 2013)

Seeing this reality, the study of *ecological kufr* becomes very relevant, especially by using a thematic interpretation approach to Qur'anic verses related to the environment. This study aims to identify Qur'anic values that can be used as a basis for building the ecological awareness of the ummah and to explore the theological implications of human neglect of his ecological responsibilities. With this approach, a new perspective will be born in environmental conservation efforts that are not only technical but also rooted in spiritual values and divine revelation.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method with a library research approach. The study focuses on the theme of ecological kufr in the perspective of the Qur'an, which is analyzed through the method of thematic interpretation (*tafsir maudhu'i*). This approach was chosen because it allows the author to systematically explore the verses of the Qur'an related to the theme of environmental damage and human disbelief, in order to gain a complete and deep understanding.

The primary data in this study are four verses of the Qur'an that are directly related to the issue of ecological damage and human disbelief towards the mandate to protect the earth, namely Surah Al-Baqarah verse 11, Surah Al-Ma'idah verse 64, Surah Al-A'raf verse 56, and Surah Al-Anbiya' verse 22. The secondary data is in the form of references from classical and contemporary tafsir books such as Tafsir al-Ṭabari, al-Qurṭubi, al-Misbah by Quraish Shihab, as well as relevant scientific literature from journals that discuss ecological themes in the Qur'an.

The analysis stage begins with collecting related verses, then classifying key words such as fasad (damage), islah (repair), and kufr (denial) through a semantic approach. Interpretation is carried out by considering the context of the verse, the correlation between the verses, and the explanations of previous and contemporary mufasssir. Furthermore, the results of the study of each verse are arranged thematically to capture the general pattern of the Qur'an in describing the relationship between environmental damage and human spiritual disbelief.

In closing, the analysis is drawn into the contemporary context to see how these Qur'anic messages can be actualized in environmental conservation efforts. The author seeks to show that the concept of ecological kufr is not only an ethical problem, but also a reflection of the failure of humans to understand and carry out the spiritual mandate as a caliph on earth. Thus, this research is expected to be able to make a conceptual contribution to the formation of ecological awareness based on revelation values.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The Qur'an's explanation of the concept of Ecological Kufr, as well as the phenomenon of environmental damage caused by human actions.

To understand how the Qur'an views the problem of environmental damage caused by human actions, it is necessary to directly examine several verses that talk about it. These verses describe the impact of human actions on nature. Therefore, the following will be presented some relevant verses of the Qur'an, to be analyzed in order to explore the Divine messages related to human ecological responsibility and not forget to explain the damage caused by humans as evidence of these verses.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ قَالُوا إِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُونَ

When it is said to them, "Do not do any harm to the earth," they answer, "We are only the ones who make amends." (Q.S. al-Baqarah: 11)

This verse is in a series of verses that describe the characteristics of hypocrites. In this context, the Qur'an tells about those who outwardly appear to be the bearers of good, but

actually do damage on earth. The moral message of this verse is very strong: the harm does not always come from those who openly oppose goodness, but also from those who pretend to be reformers (*muṣliḥ*), when their actions are counterproductive to the order of life.

Hamka argued that they tried to block the revision, religious and physical structuring carried out by the Prophet and his faithful followers. They did not hesitate to see this, then they acted as if they accepted in opposing the improvement. When reminded well, he replied that they meant well (Hamka, 1982).

According to Ibn Jarir al-Tabari (d. 310 AH) in his interpretation:

قال أبو جعفر: يقول تعالى ذكره: وإذا قيل لهؤلاء المنافقين: لا تفسدوا في الأرض بالكفر بالله وتكذيب رسوله، وموالاته أعداء الله من اليهود، فإنكم إن فعلتم ذلك فقد أفسدتم في الأرض، قالوا: إنما نحن مصلحون، يقول: إنما نحن على دين، وإن الذي نحن عليه هو الحق، ونحن مصلحون في الأرض. (محمد بن جرير الطبري، 2000)

Abu Ja'far said: Allah Almighty said: "And when it is said to these hypocrites: Do not cause damage to the earth by disbelieving Allah, denying His Messenger, and associating with the enemies of Allah among the Jews. If you do that, then you have done damage to the earth." They say: "We are the ones who make amends," that is, they claim that they are above the true religion and that what they are doing is good on earth.

According to al-Ṭabari, this verse refers to hypocrites who show faith verbally, but whose hearts are full of disbelief. They do damage by spreading slander, opposing the truth, and supporting falsehood. However, they consider themselves to be the perpetrators of improvement. This interpretation shows that damage is not only physical destruction, but also social, spiritual, and moral chaos.

This interpretation shows that the damage on earth is not only physical, but also includes disbelief and rejection of the truth. In the context of ecological kufr, actions that damage the environment in the name of goodness or development can be considered as a form of disbelief against Allah's mandate to humans as caliphs on earth.

And according to Al-Qurtubi (d. 671 AH) in his interpretation:

قال ابن عباس: لا تفسدوا في الأرض، أي: لا تعصوا الله، فإن من عصى الله فقد أفسد في الأرض. وقال قتادة: إنما فسادهم في الأرض: عملهم بالمعصية، ومن عصى الله في الأرض فقد أفسد. (محمد بن أحمد القرطبي، 2006)

Ibn Abbas said: "Do not do any harm to the earth," that is: do not disobey Allah, for whoever disobeys Allah, he has caused damage to the earth. Qatadah said: Indeed, their deeds on earth are their deeds of disobedience, and whoever disobeys Allah on earth, he has done damage.

Al-Qurṭubī emphasizes that the term "damage" (*faṣād*) in this verse is broad, including acts of destroying Allah's law, causing injustice, and behavior that weakens people's faith. He

also said that their claim to be *muṣliḥ* was a form of hypocrisy, because there was no agreement between words and deeds.

This interpretation emphasizes that disobedience is a form of corruption on earth. In the context of ecological kufr, the exploitation of nature without considering its impact is a form of disobedience that causes environmental damage, which is contrary to Allah's command to protect the earth.

According to Quraish Shihab (contemporary) in his interpretation:

Damage on earth includes everything that disturbs the general order, be it in the form of disbelief, hypocrisy, tyranny, or environmental destruction. In *Tafsir al-Misbah*, Quraish Shihab explains that this verse describes social conditions that are very relevant to today. Many parties in the name of development and modernity actually damage the order of life, including the natural environment. They claim to be the pioneers of progress, when what happens is the exploitation of resources and the abandonment of human and divine values.

Quraish Shihab emphasizes that the damage in this verse is not limited to the moral aspect, but also includes physical damage such as environmental destruction. Claiming to make temporary repairs is actually damaging the environment is a form of ecological kufr, because it denies the responsibility of humans as guardians of the earth (Shihab, 2002).

The author concludes this verse explaining that hypocrites feel that they have done good things, even though they have indirectly damaged nature and the environment. So what is meant by damage is not only in the form of directly damaging damage, but there are things or human actions that indirectly damage nature.

For example, in flood disasters, floods are disasters due to inhibition of water absorption and river flow so that water explodes to land. Apart from high rainfall, human lack of awareness of environmental cleanliness and causes mountains of garbage in river flows (Dampak Kerusakan Alam Bagi Kehidupan, 2021).

The phenomenon of hypocrisy that humans are not aware of is also found in miners in Central Java. The illegal mining now does not only take materials in the river. However, it has pushed into the TNGM land by felling trees and then dredging the material underneath and causing more than 200 hectares of land in the TNGM area to be damaged (Jauh Hari Wawan S, 2025).

Motor vehicle fumes contain carbon monoxide and nitrogen oxides that cause air pollution. These exhaust gases contribute greatly to global warming which has an impact on extreme weather and climate change. ("7 Contoh Kerusakan Lingkungan Akibat Ulah Manusia

dan Dampaknya,” 2024) Therefore, humans must be more aware and not hypocritical in order to realize that they have directly or indirectly damaged nature.

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ يَدُ اللَّهِ مَغْلُولَةٌ غُلَّتْ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَلُعِنُوا بِمَا قَالُوا بَلْ يَدُهُ مَبْسُوطَةٌ لِّيُفِيقَ كَيْفَ يَشَاءُ وَلْيَرْيَدَنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنْهُمْ مَّا أُنزِلَ إِلَيْكَ مِنْ رَبِّكَ طُغْيَانًا وَكُفْرًا وَالْقَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَمَةِ كُلَّمَا أَوقَدُوا نَارًا لِلْحَرْبِ أَطْفَأَهَا اللَّهُ وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا وَاللَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

The Jews said, "The hand of Allah is bound (miserly)." Actually, it is their hands that are shackled. They were cursed because of what they had said. Instead, His hands are open (Most Merciful). He provides sustenance as He wills. (The Qur'an) which has been revealed to you from your Lord will surely increase iniquity and disbelief for most of them. We will cause enmity and hatred among them until the Day of Judgment. Every time they lit the fire of war, God extinguished it. They seek to (cause) damage on earth. Allah does not like those who do evil (Q.S. al-Ma'idah: 64)

This verse is part of the criticism of the Bani Israel group that spreads hostility and slander. But universally, this verse also represents human behavior that consciously and systemically undermines the earth's order. In the contemporary context, acts of exploitation of natural resources and environmental pollution can be categorized as a form of *fasād fī al-ard*, which is a reflection of ecological *kufṛ* that is, a denial of the divine mandate to protect the earth.

According to Ibn Jarir al-Ṭabarī (d. 310 AH) in his interpretation:

قال أبو جعفر: يقول جل ثناؤه: ويسعى هؤلاء الذين كفروا من بني إسرائيل في الأرض فسادًا، بمعاصي الله والكفر به، وقتل من لم يرضَ بدينهم من أهل الإيمان، ونقض ما أخذ الله عليهم من الميثاق، وركوب ما حرمه عليهم ربه، في الأرض، وأخذ أموال الناس بالباطل، وقطع السبل، وما أشبه ذلك من معاصي الله. (محمد بن جرير الطبري، 2000)

They walk the earth with destruction: i.e. immorality against Allah, disbelief, murder of believers, violation of covenants, mistaking of property, and the like.

At-Ṭabarī interprets that the behavior of the *fasād* in question is behavior that destroys the social system and justice, including tyranny against Allah's creation such as the environment. This shows a form of ecological *kufṛ* because it deviates from God's command to prosper the earth.

The interpretation of al-Ṭabarī emphasizes that damage is not just a social act, but also includes an act against the earth physically. Therefore, the perpetrators of environmental damage can be categorized as people who commit *fasād fī al-ard*, which in Qur'anic values is a form of *kufṛ* against the mandate to protect the earth.

According to the Qurtubi (d. 671 AH) in its interpretation:

قيل: يسعون فيها بالفساد، أي بالجور والظلم وقطع الطرق، وسفك الدماء، وأخذ الأموال، وإفساد الزرع والنسل، وتخريب المعمور. وهذا كله داخل في معنى الفساد في الأرض. (محمد بن أحمد القرطبي، 2006)

They spread destruction by tyranny, cutting off roads, bloodshed, taking property, destroying agriculture and descendants, and destroying the built environment. All of these are included in the meaning of "fasād" on earth.

The view of the Qurtubi affirms that the destruction of the earth includes all forms of tyranny, including the arbitrary exploitation of natural resources, which in the modern context can be understood as an ecological crisis.

The damage referred to by al-Qurtubi in structural and physical forms can be contextualized today as ecosystem destruction, unenvironmentally friendly development, or corruption in natural resource management. All of them are a form of denial of Divine values, so they fall into the category of ecological kufr, namely the attitude of disobedience to the mandate of the caliph *fi al-ard*.

According to Quraish Shihab (contemporary) in his interpretation:

The phrase they seek to cause havoc on the earth' can include any form of destructive behavior that not only causes suffering to fellow human beings, but also causes the destruction of God's ecosystem and created order. They use the pretext of interests or security, when in fact what they are doing is a form of arrogance and rejection of Divine values.

Quraish Shihab sees that this verse has strong ecological significance. He associated fasād with ecological damage as a form of disbelief in the mandate of the human caliphate.

For Quraish Shihab, humans who consciously pursue material interests to ignore environmental impacts have committed tangible forms of damage that the Qur'an condemns. Therefore, this behavior is a denial of the value of monotheism *rubūbiyyah*, which is to believe that this earth belongs to Allah and must be protected, not arbitrarily controlled (Shihab, 2002).

This verse is part of the criticism of the Bani Israel group that spreads hostility and slander. But universally, this verse also represents human behavior that consciously and systemically undermines the earth's order. In the contemporary context, acts of exploitation of natural resources and environmental pollution can be categorized as a form of *fasad fi al-ard*, which is a reflection of ecological kufr that is, a denial of the divine mandate to protect the earth.

The author also draws a firm line from Allah : They seek (cause) damage on earth. God does not like those who do harm. In the shari'a we are required to do Allah's commands and

stay away from His prohibitions. So it is clear that this verse prohibits doing damage on this earth.

We can see that 30% of the 2.5 million hectares of coral reefs in Indonesia are damaged. Coral reef damage increases the risk of disasters to coastal areas, threatens marine biodiversity, and decreases marine fisheries production. (Website Resmi Dinas Lingkungan Hidup dan Kebersihan Kabupaten Bandung, 2019).

This is caused by fishermen who often use bombs or cyanide to paralyze fish but often damage coral reefs in the sea. This verse should be a reflection of humans so that they no longer do things that have the potential to damage nature because God doesn't like it.

Humans can start doing things for improvement, including tree planting, which is very important and very effective during the rainy season. In addition to being useful for increasing land cover, it can also contribute to improving the quality of the environment, such as improving air quality, reducing the greenhouse effect, and of course increasing the biodiversity that grows in it (Admin dlh, 2025).

Then do not dump waste into rivers and seas. Factories must maximize the use of waste so that there is no arbitrary dumping and damage to the ecosystem and make terraced planning for soil that has slopes so that erosion does not occur due to lack of water infiltration and soil is easily eroded ("5 Cara Mencegah Kerusakan Alam," 2021).

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِينَ

Do not do damage to the earth after it is well regulated. Pray to Him with fear and hope. Indeed, Allah's mercy is very near to those who do good. (Q.S. al-A'raf: 56)

In his interpretation, Quraish Shihab emphasizes that environmental damage is a form of exceeding the boundaries that is forbidden by Allah. The verse warns humans not to do damage to the earth after Allah repairs it, either through natural laws, ecological order, or through man's role as caliph. He also attributed the destruction on earth to the rejection of the teachings of the prophets who were sent to improve life, including mentioning man's relationship with nature. In other words, environmental destruction is a form of denial of God's treatise, because it includes teachings to protect and preserve the earth. Allah has created the earth in a good, balanced, and habitable state, by providing water, air, soil, plants, and other ecosystems as a form of His grace. So, when humans are destroying this system through forest burning, pollution, overexploitation, and neglect of sustainability, they have actually betrayed their role as guardians of the earth (Shihab, 2011).

However, the religiosity that we are witnessing, there are many cases that occur. In Indonesia, the islands of Sumatra and Kalimantan are subscribed to large-scale natural destruction cases, be it illegal logging or forest and land fires. The Central Kalimantan and South Sumatra regions have again experienced forest fires due to illegal land clearing for oil palm plantations. In fact, previously the government had carried out a massive peat restoration program to repair damaged ecosystems (*Menimbang Kembali Aturan Adat Membakar Lahan*, 2025).

Other damage is caused by human activities that are not environmentally friendly such as forest destruction and forest conversion, mining, air, water, and soil pollution and so on (Admin dlh, 2019). Then environmental damage due to coal spills in the West Aceh sea (Safrina, 2024).

There is an important thing that we must always do, which is to remind ourselves of the essence of our creatures as well as our humanity. We must always realize that our position in this world is as a creature as well as a human being. This awareness will remind us that we have obligations that we must fulfill in addition to having weaknesses and limitations that we must acknowledge (Ali Sodikin, 2022).

The author concludes this verse emphasizing that everything on earth has been arranged and created by Allah in its best version, so we should never feel more informed in acting, which results in destroying nature.

لَوْ كَانَ فِيهِمَا آلِهَةٌ إِلَّا اللَّهُ لَفَسَدَتَا فَسُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَرْشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

If in both (heaven and earth) there were gods other than Allah, of course both would have perished. Glory be to Allah, the Lord of the Throne, from what their nature is. (Q.S. al-Anbiya': 22)

Aqidah always goes hand in hand with humans (their hearts, eyes, and minds) in traveling to research the great phenomena of the universe, namely the sky and earth, the mountains and valleys, day and night, the sun and the moon and others. They are led to the view that all phenomena have a single system in the universe that governs them and runs them. The unity of this universe system shows that its creator is One. He is the Creator, the Ruler, the Possessor, and there is no ally for Him in His kingdom, just as there is no ally for Him in creation (Sayyid Qutb, 2000).

(If there are both) in the heavens and on the earth (gods other than Allah of course both have perished) it means that it will deviate from the usual order as we are witnessing it now, it is due to the competition between two powers that are not compatible with each other, one has its own decrees and the other is the same. (So Holy) holiness (Allah Rabb) the Creator (Arasy)

i.e. the throne or Al Kursi (from what they attribute) of what the disbelievers attribute to Allah جل جلاله such as having allies and so on (Jalaluddin al-Mahalli & Jalaluddin as-Suyuthi, 2005).

"If it were both,"

They are the heavens and the earth, "gods other than Allah, they will perish."

With this verse, people are invited to think in an orderly way, that is, that the Almighty is impossible to multiply. He must be one. All of nature, its heavens and its earth must be governed by ONE God. If there are multiple gods, there is a god of the sky, there is. God of the Earth. There is a god of the land, there is a god of the sea. There is a god who regulates the wind, there is also a god who regulates the rain and so on, the earth and the sky must be damaged. Because God has fought for power. Or the power of one god is corrupted by another (Hamka, 1985).

This verse explains that Allah is the only god and if there were someone other than Allah the world would have been destroyed. In this modern era, we can make this verse the basis to continue to do good deeds and do good simply because Allah and this world have been regulated by Allah the Creator, whatever our actions, especially towards nature, must be in accordance with what Allah has ordained. This limitation makes us think more about what we do and pay attention to the impact of our actions.

One example of action that we can take is to apply the 3R principle of "Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle" to prevent overexploitation of natural resources. For example, by reusing items that are still suitable for use to prevent undecomposed piles of waste that can damage the environment ("5 Contoh Kerusakan Lingkungan Akibat Manusia & Pencegahannya," 2024). Then with a call to protect and revive ecosystems around the world ("Hari Lingkungan Hidup 2024: Degradasi Lahan Membuat Kehidupan Masyarakat Dunia Terancam," 2024) and other actions starting from the smallest things around us.

All of this is solely because mankind was sent by Allah SWT as its representative to lead the earth, in the Qur'an it is often mentioned that human beings are the caliphs of Allah who are given responsibility for the preservation of nature (Hendrik Khoirul Muhid, 2021).

Implications of Understanding the concept of ecological kufr in the Qur'an on environmental conservation and protection efforts in the modern era

Qur'anic verses such as Q.S. Al-Baqarah:11 condemn human behavior that destroys the earth despite claiming to be the bringer of goodness. This verse describes moral hypocrisy, in which claims of improvement are used to justify acts of exploitation of natural resources that actually cause great damage. In this context, development that is not based on the value of

sustainability and responsibility is considered a form of *fasad* (damage) that is rejected by Islamic teachings. Similarly, in Q.S. Al-Ma'idah: 64, it is explained that damage on earth is part of an act of tyranny, which reflects injustice to Allah's creation, including humans, animals, and the ecosystem as a whole. This attitude shows a form of betrayal of man's mandate as a caliph, who is supposed to protect and prosper the earth, not destroy it (Muhammad Quraish Shihab, 2002).

Furthermore, Q.S. Al-A'raf: 56 gives a strict prohibition that humans should not do damage after Allah created the earth in a balanced and good state. This verse reinforces the message that ecological balance is part of the divine order that must be maintained. In this framework, destroying the environment means violating God's will and ignoring the principle of spiritual responsibility (Amina Wadud, 1999). Meanwhile, Q.S. Al-Anbiyā': 22 points out that if the divine order is disturbed—as in the analogy if there are two gods in the universe—then there will be chaos and corruption. Symbolically, this verse can also be understood that imbalances in the management of nature caused by greed, uncontrolled power, and weak spiritual awareness will lead to the destruction of the ecosystem. These four verses synergistically form a solid spiritual and ethical foundation for Muslims in building a responsible ecological awareness in the midst of the challenges of modern times (Musdah Mulia, 2005).

The ecological crisis today is not merely an environmental or scientific issue but a deeply spiritual one. As Amirullah (2015) argues, this crisis is rooted in modern society's spiritual detachment from nature and the marginalization of God from the ecological narrative (Amirullah, 2015). When God is excluded from the understanding of nature, humans lose sight of their sacred role as stewards and become exploiters instead. Islamic scholars have responded to this with the concept of *ecothology*, which reestablishes the link between divine revelation and ecological responsibility (Powell & Ham, 2008). Ecotheology recognizes that the universe is a sign (*āyah*) of God's presence and wisdom, and that human disobedience and moral failure are key drivers of environmental degradation (Ali et al., 2023).

Classical and contemporary tafsir scholars such as *Ṭabārī* and *Ṭabāṭabā'ī* interpret the Qur'an's ecological verses as assigning humans the role of *khalīfah fī al-arḍ*—vicegerents on earth—entrusted to use natural resources responsibly while preserving the integrity of creation (Ihsan et al., 2024). This understanding emphasizes that nature is not a commodity to be consumed but a trust to be safeguarded. In practical terms, such theological principles have inspired communities to adopt environmentally responsible practices that blend traditional

wisdom with modern knowledge (Tarlton & Ward, 2006). For instance, the Kramatjaya Forest Farmers Group in Indonesia exemplifies this integration by combining terraced agriculture with modern coffee processing technologies (Tarlton & Ward, 2006). Their sustainable approach to Arabica coffee cultivation demonstrates how local customs and religious values can coalesce with scientific innovation to protect natural resources (Tridakusumah et al., 2021).

Islamic teachings such as *khilafah* (stewardship) and *amanah* (trust) further strengthen the foundation for ecological responsibility. According to Natrisia Hutagalung (2024), these concepts are not abstract ideals but operational principles that guide human interaction with the environment (Natrisia Hutagalung, 2024). They call for sustainable living, conservation efforts, and environmental justice. The Qur'an provides specific guidance for ecological care in verses like Ar-Rum 41–42, Al-A'raf 56–58, and Al-Baqarah 60 (Rodin, 2017). These verses collectively warn against corruption and encourage the maintenance of cleanliness, reforestation, and responsible land management (Ihsan et al., 2024). These prescriptions are part of a broader Qur'anic vision that sees the earth as a sacred trust deserving of reverence and care (Rodin, 2017).

To translate these teachings into meaningful action, a holistic approach is required—one that includes education, public policy, legal frameworks, and spiritual renewal. Environmental interpretation, as a form of conservation communication, plays a vital role in this regard. Research by Kim & Coghlán (2018) and Kim et al. (2011) shows that well-designed interpretation programs at natural sites can influence environmental attitudes and promote pro-environmental behavior (Aise et al., 2011) (Kim & Coghlán, 2018). These programs help individuals see the connection between their actions and broader ecological impacts, reinforcing both site-specific and general environmental commitments (Kohl, 2005). While interpretation has its limitations often more effective at the local level it remains a key strategy in aligning public behavior with conservation goals (Kohl, 2008).

In conclusion, the Qur'an provides a rich theological foundation for addressing the environmental crisis, emphasizing ethical stewardship, justice, and spiritual accountability. By reintegrating divine values into ecological discourse, Islamic teachings offer both a moral compass and a practical guide for environmental conservation. Through a combination of scriptural interpretation, community practice, and educational outreach, Muslims can contribute meaningfully to solving the global ecological crisis, fulfilling their role as true *khalīfah* on earth.

CONCLUSION

This article introduces the concept of *ecological kufr* as a form of human denial of Allah's trust to safeguard the earth, as reflected in environmental destruction caused by human actions. Using a thematic interpretation approach to verses such as QS. Al-Baqarah: 11, Al-Mā'idah: 64, Al-A'rāf: 56, and Al-Anbiyā': 22, the author emphasizes that ecological degradation is not merely a technical or scientific issue, but also a theological and spiritual problem. When humans exploit nature irresponsibly, it reflects a rejection of the values of *tawhid* (oneness of God), *khilafah* (stewardship), and *amanah* (trust). In this view, the Qur'an serves as a normative foundation for shaping Muslim ecological consciousness and redefining development paradigms in line with revelation-based environmental ethics.

Furthermore, the article highlights the importance of integrating religious values with scientific approaches in environmental conservation efforts. The Islamic concept of *ecotheology* invites believers to regard nature as divine signs (*āyāt*) that must be respected and preserved. Implementing this value can promote sustainable conservation models rooted in spirituality and moral responsibility, as demonstrated by several local communities. Thus, this study not only contributes to theoretical discourse but also offers practical directions for education, public policy, and thematic da'wah relevant to contemporary ecological issues.

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