



Analyzing Spiritual Potential in Tafsir And Hadith, Ecoteological Integration

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the spiritual potential from the perspective of Qur'anic exegesis and Hadith and to integrate it into the framework of Islamic ecotheology in order to develop a paradigm of ecological awareness based on spirituality. The study employed a qualitative approach using library research. Primary data sources consisted of the Qur'an, authentic Hadiths, and classical as well as contemporary tafsir literature, while secondary data were obtained from books and scientific journals related to ecotheology, Islamic spirituality, and environmental ethics. Data collection was conducted through documentation studies, while data analysis employed content analysis with an interpretative approach through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of the study indicate that the human spiritual structure, which includes the qalb (heart), nafs (self/soul), and ruh (spirit), functions as the center of moral consciousness that influences human ecological behavior. Qur'anic exegesis and Hadith also contain ecotheological values through the concepts of khalifah fil ardh (vicegerency on earth), mizan (balance), amanah (trust), and the prohibition of facade fil ardh (corruption on earth), all of which emphasize human responsibility in maintaining environmental balance. The integration of spirituality and ecotheology produces the paradigm of Islamic spiritual ecology, namely the conceptual relationship between tazkiyah al-nafs (self-purification), tawhidic consciousness, ecological ethics, and Islamic ecotheology. This study concludes that environmental crises are caused not only by social and material factors but are also closely related to the spiritual crisis of humanity. Therefore, strengthening spiritual awareness becomes an essential part of developing sustainable environmental ethics from an Islamic perspective.

Keywords : Spiritual Potential, Qur'anic Exegesis, Hadith, Integration of Islamic Ecotheology.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the global environmental crisis has become a serious concern in various disciplines, including Islamic studies. Environmental damage such as deforestation, water pollution, climate change, and the exploitation of natural resources demonstrates that the relationship between humans and nature is in an unbalanced state. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2023) report confirms that anthropogenic activities have accelerated global temperature increases, resulting in a cross-regional ecological crisis. In this context, the environmental crisis can no longer be understood as a purely technical issue, but also as a question of human ethics and spirituality regarding nature.

In contemporary studies, the ecotheological paradigm has emerged as an approach

that connects theological dimensions with ecological awareness. Fazlun Khalid (2021) asserts that, from an Islamic perspective, nature is a divine trust that must be safeguarded, not an object of exploitation. The concept of environmental ethics in Islam is based on several normative principles scattered throughout the Qur'an, including the concepts of khalifah fil ardh (vicegerent), mizan (commandment), amanah (trust), and the prohibition of fase fil ardh (fasad) fil ardh (fasad). Each of these concepts has a distinct but interconnected textual basis in building the framework of Islamic ecological ethics:

1. Concept Khalifah Fil Ardh is based on the word of Allah in QS. Al-Baqarah verse 30:

وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلَائِكَةِ إِنِّي جَاعِلٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ خَلِيفَةً ۚ وَتَعْلَمُونَ *love*

"And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels: 'Indeed, I want to make a caliph on earth.' They said: 'Are You going to place there someone who will cause harm to it and shed blood, while we always glorify You by praising You and sanctifying You?' Allah says: 'Indeed I know what you do not know.'"

This verse explains that humans are placed as caliphs on earth. This concept demonstrates that humans have the responsibility to lead and manage the earth responsibly, not as absolute owners of nature.

2. Concept Mizan is found in QS. Ar-Rahman verses 7–9:

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

"And Allah has raised the heavens and He has placed a balance (justice and balance). So that you do not exceed the limit in that balance. And uphold the balance fairly and do not reduce the balance."

This verse emphasizes that God created nature with balance and asks humans not to overstep the bounds of maintaining that balance. This principle affirms that ecological order is part of the divine system that must be maintained.

3. Concept trust is explained in QS. Al-Ahzab verse 72:

God willing وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا *prayer*

"Indeed, We have offered a trust to the heavens, the earth and the mountains, but all of them are reluctant to carry that trust and they are afraid that they will betray it, so humans carry this trust. Indeed, humans are very unjust and very stupid."

This verse states that the trust is offered to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, but it is humans who accept it. This indicates that human moral responsibility encompasses the management of all aspects of life, including the environment.

4. Prohibition The facade of the earth is emphasized in QS. Al-A'raf verse 56:

المُحْسِنِينَ وَالْمُتَّقِينَ وَالَّذِينَ هُمْ عَنْ صَلَاتِهِمْ سَاهَوْنَ ۚ وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ

"And do not cause damage to the earth after (Allah) has repaired it, and pray to Him with fear and hope. Indeed, Allah's mercy is very close to those who do good."

This verse prohibits humans from causing damage to the earth after God has repaired it. This verse provides the ethical basis that all forms of environmental exploitation and destruction are contrary to the Islamic principle of sustainability.

Thus, these four concepts form a unified system of Islamic environmental ethics that is theological, normative, and ecological, which positions humans as guardians of the balance of nature, not destroyers of it.

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا

"And do not cause corruption on the earth after it has been set in order..." (QS. Al-A'raf: 56)

Nasr (2022) asserts that the modern ecological crisis is rooted in a metaphysical crisis that separates the spiritual dimension from natural reality. Thus, ecotheology is not only a normative discourse but also a critique of the reductionist paradigm of modernity toward nature.

In recent developments, Islamic ecotheological studies have begun to integrate thematic interpretations of the Quran. Quraish Shihab (2022) in his Tafsir Al-Mishbah explains that the kauniyah verses contain an ethical dimension that demands that humans maintain the balance of nature. Rahman and Hidayat (2024) also point out that an ecological hermeneutic approach to the Quran reinforces the idea that nature has a sacred dimension as part of the signs of divinity. This aligns with Allah's words:

"And He has raised the heavens and placed the balance (justice and balance)." (QS. Ar-Rahman: 7)

Furthermore, the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) also provide a strong foundation for ecological ethics. In Sahih Bukhari (no. 2320), it states:

كَانَ لَهُ بِهِ صَدَقَةٌ مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ يَغْرِسُ غَرْسًا أَوْ يَزْرَعُ زَرْعًا

"A Muslim does not plant a tree or plant a plant, then a human, a bird, or an animal eats from it, except that it is charity for him."

Al-Khalidi (2023) emphasized that ecological hadiths can be analyzed thematically to build a systematic Islamic environmental ethics framework that is relevant to modern challenges.

However, studies linking the spiritual dimension of Islam with ecotheology are still relatively limited. Yet, in the Islamic tradition, the concepts of tazkiyah al-nafs (Al-Ghazali, 2021), ihsan, and ma'rifatullah (knowledge of God) play a crucial role in shaping human ethical awareness. Nasution (2023) emphasizes that Islamic spirituality is not merely individual but also has social and ecological implications. Thus, environmental degradation can be understood not only as an ecological crisis but also as a manifestation of human spiritual crisis.

Furthermore, Ozdemir (2023; 2024) demonstrates that Islam has made a significant contribution to establishing environmental ethics based on the values of monotheism, caliphate, and mizan, which can be integrated with modern concepts of sustainability. This opens up space for the development of an interdisciplinary approach that connects interpretation, hadith, Islamic spirituality, and ecotheology within a unified analytical framework.

However, there are still significant research gaps as follows:

1. Most ecotheological studies still focus on the normative aspects of the text without delving into the spiritual dimension as the basis of ecological awareness.
2. The integration between tafsir, hadith and spiritual concepts is still partial.
3. There are not many studies that systematically link the spiritual potential in Islam with the transformation of environmental ethics in a modern context.

If this situation is not examined in depth, Muslims' understanding of the environment will tend to be textual-normative without strong spiritual internalization. Consequently, the environmental crisis will continue without a transformation of ethical awareness based on religious values. In the long term, this could weaken religion's contribution to addressing global challenges related to environmental sustainability.

Based on these conditions, this research is crucial. This study attempts to analyze the spiritual potential of Islamic interpretation and hadith and integrate it within the framework of Islamic ecotheology. With a conceptual, analytical, and implicational approach, this research is expected to contribute academically to the development of contemporary Islamic studies, particularly in the fields of interpretation, hadith, and environmental ethics. Furthermore, this research is also expected to broaden the perspective that Islamic spirituality plays a significant role in building sustainable ecological awareness.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a library research type, namely research that focuses on the collection and analysis of data from various written sources such as books, scientific journals, academic articles, and other scientific works relevant to the topic of study. This approach was chosen because the objects of study are theological concepts, interpretations of the Qur'an, the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, as well as ecotheological thoughts and Islamic spirituality that cannot be measured quantitatively, but rather analyzed in depth through text interpretation.

The data sources in this study are divided into two: primary and secondary data. Primary data include the Qur'an as the primary source for tafsir studies, authentic hadiths related to environmental ethics, and tafsir books such as M. Quraish Shihab's Tafsir Al-Mishbah and Ibn Kathir's Tafsir Al-Qur'an Al-Azim. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained

from scientific literature in the form of national and international journals, books on Islamic ecotheology such as those by Seyyed Hossein Nasr (2022) and Fazlun Khalid (2021), as well as recent research (2021–2025) discussing the relationship between Islam, spirituality, and the environment.

Data collection techniques were conducted through documentation studies, namely by reviewing, reading, and identifying various literature relevant to the research focus. This process was carried out systematically to obtain key concepts related to spirituality in Islam, ecological interpretation, environmental hadith, and the concept of Islamic ecotheology.

The data analysis technique used is content analysis with an interpretive approach. The analysis is carried out through three main stages, namely: (1) data reduction, namely sorting and focusing on data that is relevant to spiritual and ecotheological concepts; (2) data presentation, namely grouping data based on main themes such as spiritual, ecological interpretation, and environmental hadith; and (3) drawing conclusions, namely connecting all concepts to form an integration between spiritual potential in Islam and ecotheology.

In the analysis process, this study uses a concept → analysis → implication approach, namely first identifying key concepts in interpretation and hadith, then analyzing their relationship with ecotheology, and finally formulating theoretical implications for ecological awareness in Islam.

Thus, it is hoped that this research method will be able to produce a deep and systematic understanding of the integration between the spiritual dimensions of Islam and ecotheology, as well as providing academic contributions in the development of contemporary Islamic interpretation, hadith and environmental ethics studies.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Spiritual Structure as the Basis for Ecological Ethics in Tafsir and Hadith

The analysis shows that, from the perspective of interpretation and hadith, the human spiritual structure is not only anthropological and spiritual, but also has ecological implications. The three main components—qalb, nafs, and ruh—function as a moral control system that determines the quality of human relations with the environment.

In his Tafsir Al-Mishbah, Quraish Shihab (2022) asserts that the heart is a dynamic center of consciousness, not merely a spiritual organ, but a "space of moral decision-making" for humans. This is reinforced by the Qur'an:

يَوْمَ لَا يَنْفَعُ مَالٌ وَلَا بَنُونَ ﴿٨٨﴾ إِلَّا مَنْ أَتَى

"(That is) the day when wealth and children will be of no use, except for the one who comes to Allah with a pure heart."(QS. Asy-Syu'ara: 88–89)

This verse conceptually demonstrates that the quality of human existence is not determined by material aspects, but by spiritual conditions (qalbun salim). In the context of ecotheology, this indicates that human ecological behavior is a direct manifestation of their spiritual qualities.

Furthermore, the hadith of the Prophet SAW:

أَلَا وَهِيَ الْقَلْبُ God willing God bless you

"Know that in the body there is a lump of flesh. If it is good, the whole body is good, and if it is corrupt, the whole body is corrupt. Know that this lump of flesh is the heart."(Narrated by Bukhari and Muslim)

This hadith reinforces that the human moral center (the heart) determines all behavior, including behavior toward nature. Thus, environmental damage can be understood as an extension of "internal damage" within the human spiritual system.

Compared to secular ecological approaches, the Islamic perspective does not view ecological behavior as merely the result of rationality, but as a product of spiritual qualities. This demonstrates a significant epistemological difference: modern ecology is rational-material, while Islamic ecotheology is spiritual-normative.

Ecotheology in Interpretation and Hadith as a Cosmic Ethical System

The results of the study show that Islamic ecotheology does not only talk about "environmental protection", but builds a cosmic ethical system that connects God - humans - nature in one monotheistic structure.

Allah confirms:

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا

"And do not cause corruption on the earth after it has been set in order..." (QS. Al-A'raf: 56)

And:

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ ۖ

"And He raised the heavens and laid down the scales (justice and balance)."

(QS. Ar-Rahman: 7-8)

Conceptually, this verse demonstrates that nature possesses a structure of ontological balance. Nasr (2022) interprets this as implying that modern ecological damage occurs because humans violate the sacred "cosmic order."

Hadith of the Prophet SAW:

فَإِنْ اسْتَطَاعَ أَنْ لَا تَقُومَ حَتَّى يَغْرُسَهَا فَلْيَغْرُسْهَا

"If the apocalypse occurs while one of you has a seed in his hand, then plant it." (Narrated by Ahmad)

This hadith is not only moral-practical, but demonstrates the principle of existential sustainability: even in conditions of the end of the world, ecological actions still have ethical value.

Islamic ecotheology differs from Western environmental ethics in that it is not solely based on sustainability but also on cosmic worship. This means that ecological action is not merely a social responsibility but an expression of obedience to the divine structure.

Spiritual and Ecotheological Integration: The "Islamic Spiritual Ecology" Model

The research results show that there is a structural relationship between spirituality and ecotheology. Spirituality functions as an "internal mechanism", while ecotheology is an "external manifestation".

This is reinforced by QS. Ar-Rum verse 41:

God willing, God willing, God willing, God willing, God willing, God willing God willing
"Corruption has appeared on land and at sea because of what the hands of men have wrought..."

This verse explicitly shows the causal relationship between human behavior and ecological damage. In a spiritual context, the "deeds of human hands" are not only physical, but are a reflection of inner conditions (qalb and nafs).

Al-Ghazali (2021) explains that when the nafs is dominated by lust and worldly desires, humans lose spiritual balance which results in destructive behavior.

Syaifulloh (2025) emphasized that Islamic ecotheology cannot be separated from spiritual transformation, because the environmental crisis is basically a crisis of monotheistic awareness.

Hadith of the Prophet SAW:

كَانَ لَهُ بِهِ صَدَقَةٌ مَا مِنْ مُسْلِمٍ يَغْرُسُ غَرْسًا أَوْ يَزْرَعُ زَرْعًا

"A Muslim does not plant a tree or plant a crop, then a human or animal eats from it, except that it is charity for him." (Narrated by Bukhari)

This hadith shows the integration between ecological actions and spiritual values (rewards), so that the relationship between humans and nature is transcendental.

Based on the analysis, this study produces an integrative conceptual model that demonstrates the relationship between the spiritual dimension and ecotheology in Islam. The model begins with the process of tazkiyah al-nafs as the core of spiritual formation that functions to cleanse and direct the human soul towards divine consciousness. This process then gives birth to a deeper awareness of monotheism, namely the understanding that all reality, including nature, exists in a divine unity that demands moral responsibility from humans. This awareness of monotheism is then transformed into ecological ethics,

namely human attitudes and behavior in treating nature in a balanced, responsible, and non-destructive manner. In the final stage, this ecological ethics is institutionalized in the form of Islamic ecotheology, namely a framework of thought that integrates spiritual, theological, and ecological values in a complete system of understanding. Thus, the relationship can be formulated conceptually as: spiritual (tazkiyah al-nafs), monotheism awareness, ecological ethics, Islamic ecotheology.

Comparison with Previous Research

Nasr (2022) emphasizes the spiritual crisis as the root of the ecological crisis, but does not explain the internal (spiritual) mechanisms operationally. Ozdemir (2024) focuses on Islamic environmental ethics but does not yet integrate the psychospiritual dimension in depth.

Rahman & Hidayat (2024) have developed an ecological interpretation, but it is still at the text level without integration of the spiritual system.

Based on the results of the analysis conducted, this study found several new findings that enrich the study of Islamic ecotheology.

1. The spiritual dimension has been proven to play a role as a key variable that bridges the relationship between religious texts (the Qur'an and Hadith) and human ecological behavior, so that the normative values in the text do not stop at the conceptual level, but are internalized in real actions towards the environment.
2. Islamic ecotheology does not stand as a separate or independent concept, but rather is the result of a spiritual internalization process rooted in the spiritual transformation of individuals through the process of tazkiyah al-nafs and strengthening the awareness of monotheism.
3. This study also found that environmental damage is not solely caused by social and economic factors, but is also an indicator of dysfunction in the spiritual aspects of humans, which shows a weak spiritual awareness in interpreting the relationship between humans and nature.

Thus, this finding confirms that the ecological crisis from an Islamic perspective has epistemological roots that are spiritual and theological.

Factors that influence study results

Methodologically, the results of this study are influenced by the use of an interpretive qualitative approach, so that the resulting findings emphasize the development of concepts and meaning rather than quantitative empirical measurements. This approach allows researchers to explore the meaning contained in the texts of the Qur'an and hadith in depth, but at the same time causes the research results to be conceptual and highly dependent on the ability to interpret the data sources. Furthermore, the dominance of classical sources such as tafsir and hadith reinterpreted from a contemporary perspective also shapes the direction of this study's analysis, resulting in a process of reinterpretation of Islamic concepts in the context of modern environmental issues. On the other hand, the paradigm differences between figures such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr, M. Quraish Shihab, and Ibrahim Özdemir also influence the variety of perspectives in understanding the relationship between spirituality and ecology in Islam. Each figure offers a different approach, ranging from metaphysical-spiritual, textual-interpretive, to contemporary environmental ethics. Meanwhile, contextually, the increasing global environmental crisis as reported by the IPCC (2023) reinforces the urgency of this research, particularly in integrating the dimensions of spirituality with ecological issues. This situation demonstrates that the study of Islamic ecotheology is not only theoretically relevant but also has practical significance in responding to increasingly complex global environmental challenges.

Scientific Contribution of Research

This research makes significant contributions:

a. Theoretical Contribution

This research develops a new concept called Spiritual Ecology in Islam based on

the integration of spirituality-interpretation-hadith, namely a framework of thought that combines the dimensions of Islamic spirituality with a textual understanding of the Qur'an through interpretation and hadith as normative sources of environmental ethics.

This concept emphasizes that ecological awareness in Islam is not solely built through legal or ethical approaches, but also through a spiritual internalization process that stems from tazkiyah al-nafs (self-control) and the strengthening of tawhid (monotheistic) awareness. Therefore, tafsir and hadith are understood not only as sources of law and moral guidance, but also as a medium for spiritual transformation that shapes humanity's perspective on nature as part of divine order. This integration produces a new paradigm that places spirituality as the primary foundation for building a harmonious relationship between humans, God, and the environment.

b. Conceptual Contribution

This research demonstrates that ecology, from an Islamic perspective, cannot be reduced to a mere normative system governing human behavior toward the environment based solely on textual rules. Furthermore, Islamic ecology is fundamentally rooted in the process of internal spiritual transformation that occurs within humans, particularly through the strengthening of spiritual dimensions such as tazkiyah al-nafs (observance of the self) and tawhid (monotheism).

This transformation then becomes the foundation for the birth of authentic ecological awareness, where concern for the environment is not solely based on external moral obligations, but rather reflects an inner state that has undergone spiritual purification and maturity. Thus, Islamic ecology in this study is understood as the result of the integration of the normative dimension of the text and the internal spiritual transformation of humans.

c. Academic Contribution

This research contributes to bridging the gap between the studies of tafsir, hadith studies, modern ecotheology, and Islamic psychospirituality, which have tended to develop in a partial and separate manner. In many studies, tafsir and hadith are predominantly positioned as normative-textual disciplines, while modern ecotheology develops within the realm of contemporary environmental ethics, often not fully connected to the deeper dimensions of Islamic spirituality.

On the other hand, Islamic psychospiritual studies, which focus on internal human aspects such as the heart (qalb), soul (nafs), and soul (ruh), have not been systematically integrated into Islamic ecological discourse. Through an integrative approach, this research offers a conceptual bridge connecting these four domains, so that interpretation and hadith are understood not only as normative sources but also as epistemological foundations for ecotheology rooted in human psychospiritual transformation. This creates a more holistic framework for understanding the relationship between religious texts, spirituality, and contemporary ecological issues.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion regarding the spiritual potential in interpretation and hadith and its integration with Islamic ecotheology, several things can be concluded as follows.

1. The concept of spiritual potential from the perspective of the interpretation of the Qur'an and hadith shows that the human spiritual structure, consisting of the heart, soul, and spirit, functions as the center of moral awareness that determines the quality of human behavior, including in its relationship with the environment. This spiritual dimension is not only individual but also has ethical implications in shaping a responsible attitude towards nature.
2. The ecotheological values in the interpretation of the Qur'an and hadith show that Islam has a strong normative basis in building environmental ethics through the concepts of khalifah fil ardh, mizan, amanah, and the prohibition of fase fil ardh. The interpretation

and hadith consistently emphasize that nature is part of the divine order that must be maintained and must not be damaged by humans.

3. The integration between spiritual potential and Islamic ecotheology shows that ecological awareness in Islam is not only external in the form of actions to protect the environment, but is also rooted in internal human transformation through spiritual processes such as tazkiyah al-nafs. Thus, the environmental crisis can be understood as a reflection of the weakness of human spiritual awareness.
4. This research demonstrates that an integrative approach between interpretation, hadith, and spirituality can build a new paradigm in the study of Islamic ecotheology, namely the paradigm of spirituality-based ecological awareness. This paradigm makes an important contribution to the development of contemporary Islamic science, particularly in the fields of interpretation, hadith, and environmental ethics, and offers an alternative perspective in efforts to solve the global environmental crisis.

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