



Islamic Environmental Conservation: Navigating the Challenges and Demands of Globalization

Addressing the issue of natural destruction from a religious perspective requires an additional dimension that focuses on solutions to the underlying causes of environmental degradation. Scholars contend that the degradation of nature stems from a spiritual crisis afflicting humanity. To address this challenge, this study employs a qualitative method with content analysis as its analytical tool to uncover a value system capable of revitalizing human spirituality within an ecocentric framework. The research reveals that eco-theology, eco-fiqh (*fiqh al-bi'ah*), and eco-sufism all share a common theme in exploring divine entities through the natural world. The equilibrium of nature emerges as the central element that enhances worship, servitude, and the embodiment of divine values, thereby enriching human spirituality. Consequently, the cultivation of human spirituality is achieved through the processes of utilization (*al-intifā'*), the abstraction of divine values (*al-i'tibār*), and conservation (*al-iṣlāḥ*). These three environmental ethics examine human behavior towards the universe and delve into the relationships among all living beings within this vast universe.

Keywords: *Deforestation, Islamic Ethics, Eco-theology, Eco-fiqh, Eco-sufism.*

Problem kerusakan alam yang dihubungkan dengan nilai-nilai keagamaan sebagai basis dasar konservasi membutuhkan komponen pendekatan lain yang menyoal penyelesaian terhadap penyebab utama kerusakan alam. Para pengkaji mengklaim kerusakan alam sebagai akibat dari krisis spiritual yang melanda manusia. Untuk menyelesaikan problem ini, penemuan terhadap basis nilai untuk membangun ulang spiritualitas manusia dalam konteks ekosentrisme dilakukan dalam penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan analisis konten sebagai alat analisisnya. Penelitian ini menemukan konsepsi eko-teologi, eko-fikih (*fiqh al-bi'ah*), dan eko-sufisme bermuara pada penemuan entitas ketuhanan yang dilakukan oleh manusia melalui alam. Keseimbangan alam menjadi elemen utama yang menyempurnakan ibadah, penghambaan, dan penyatuan terhadap nilai-nilai ketuhanan yang dapat mengisi ruang spiritualitas manusia, sehingga bangunan spiritualitas manusia dibentuk melalui pemanfaatan (*al-intifā'*), abstraksi nilai ketuhanan (*al-i'tibār*), dan konservasi (*al-iṣlāḥ*). Tiga etika lingkungan ini mengkaji perilaku manusia terhadap alam semesta dan menyelami hubungan di antara semua makhluk hidup dalam alam semesta yang luas ini.

Kata Kunci: *Deforestasi, Etika Islam, Eco-teologi, Eco-fikih, Eco-sufisme*

Author:

Umar Faruq Thohir¹
Achmad Gunaryo²
Agung Suwandar³
Raharjo⁴

Affiliation:

¹ IAIN Ponorogo, Indonesia
^{2,4} UIN Walisongo Semarang, Indonesia
³ Western Sydney University, Australia

Corresponding author:

umarfaruqthohir@iainponorogo.ac.id

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Introduction

A pervasive spiritual malaise, identified as the underlying cause of numerous ecological predicaments,¹ significantly impedes efforts to address environmental concerns through technological advancements, conservation policies, and political interventions. The profound spiritual void within individuals, which hinders their connection to the divine, reshapes their life aspirations towards materialism and rationality, fostering an anthropocentric worldview.² Consequently, nature is often exploited solely for material gratification, neglecting its crucial role in nourishing the human spirit. This dysfunctional relationship between humanity and spirituality,³ which contributes to environmental degradation, can be reimagined by reinterpreting religious concepts within an ecocentric framework. Eco-theology, eco-fiqh (*fiqh al-bī'ah*), and eco-sufism have emerged as transformative pathways to address this ecological crisis. This approach upholds religion as the cornerstone for addressing environmental degradation while emphasizing the urgent need to resolve the spiritual crisis, the primary driver of ecological harm.

Prior research has often overlooked the significance of ethical codes that guide individuals towards rediscovering their purpose

and revitalizing their spirituality. Numerous studies have established the foundational principles of religion to address a broad spectrum of human challenges, including environmental ones. Two distinct research directions have emerged in utilizing religion to address environmental issues. The first is the promotion of religious ethics pertaining to the conservation of nature. This initiative envisions the cultivation of these ethical values as a shared responsibility among religious leaders,⁴ religious doctrines,⁵ and educational institutions.⁶ The second is the creation of religious values specifically aimed at crisis resolution. This perspective contends that the degradation of nature can be mitigated by integrating divine values,⁷ fiqh principles,⁸ and the manifestation of divinity⁹ within the realm of environmental conservation. The tendency to perceive religion as a comprehensive problem-solving framework inadvertently reinforces another facet of anthropocentrism. This approach, however, fails to acknowledge the pervasive crisis that afflicts modern humanity and underpins various real-world challenges.

This research aims to unveil the framework of Islamic values that can reshape contemporary human spirituality in relation to the natural world. To achieve this objective, the research explores three key aspects. The first aspect

¹ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man* (London: Unwin Paperbacks, 1990), 3.

² Muhammad Faqih Nidzom and Alifia Kurnia Zainiati, "Mafhūm Al-'Adālat 'Inda Ibn Miskawaih Wa Dauruhā Fi Ri'Āyat Al-Bī'At," *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin* 23, no. 1 (December 7, 2022): 137–46, <https://doi.org/10.14421/esensia.v23i1.3175>.

³ Lora Stone, *Religion and Environmentalism: Exploring the Issues* (California: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2020), 142.

⁴ Jens Koehrsen, "Muslims and Climate Change: How Islam, Muslim Organizations, and Religious Leaders Influence Climate Change Perceptions and Mitigation Activities," *WIREs Climate Change* 12, no. 3 (May 24, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.702>.

⁵ Wildana Wargadinata, Iffat Maimunah, and Rohmani Nur Indah, "Eco-Religious Approach to Deforestation by Indonesian Istighosa Community," *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 19, no. 56 (2020): 166–78.

⁶ Jessica L. Crowe, "Transforming Environmental Attitudes and Behaviours Through Eco-Spirituality and Religion," *International Electronic Journal of Environmental Education* 3, no. 1 (2013): 75–88.

⁷ Sukiman Sukiman, "The Ecological Theology of the Indonesian Gayo Tribe: The Integration of Tawhīd Values into Their Trade Tradition," *Afkaruna: Indonesian Interdisciplinary Journal of Islamic Studies* 17, no. 2 (December 24, 2021), <https://doi.org/10.18196/afkaruna.v17i2.11520>.

⁸ Mohammad Farid Fad, "Revitalization of Fiqh Al-Bī'ah in the Implementation of Green Banking for Islamic Bank," *Journal of Islamic Economics Lariba* 7, no. 1 (December 8, 2021): 11–24, <https://doi.org/10.20885/jielariba.vol7.iss1.art2>.

⁹ Syafwan Rozi, "Understanding the Concept of Ecosufism: Harmony and the Relationship of God, Nature and Humans in Mystical Philosophy of Ibn Arabi," *Ulumuna* 23, no. 2 (December 30, 2019): 242–65, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujis.v23i1.354>.





examines the broader ethical principles surrounding environmental concerns, laying the groundwork for understanding the contemporary human crisis. The second aspect illuminates the core concepts within the discourse of environmental ethics, which have been addressed in various studies. The third aspect establishes the connection between the ethical values enshrined in Islamic teachings and the eco-centric paradigm. These three facets collectively form the fundamental framework for addressing the spiritual crisis among Muslims within the context of nature conservation.

This research embarks upon the assumption that Islam, as a comprehensive and encompassing belief system, intrinsically furnishes its followers with fundamental guidance on environmental stewardship. The primary sources of Islamic knowledge, the Qur'an and the Sunnah, explicitly underscore the significance of conserving the environment.¹⁰ While these teachings may lack detailed specifics, they serve as a foundational framework for shaping Islamic ecology. Consequently, it becomes imperative to thoroughly explore Islamic principles linked to the environment and their practical implementation and revival. This Islamic concept forms the ethical and spiritual bedrock for environmental preservation efforts.¹¹

This article presents a comprehensive literature review highlighting the paramount importance of environmental protection in safeguarding the natural world and fostering a sustainable future for a healthier existence. Drawing upon a diverse range of literature sources, the review meticulously examines the critical role of environmental conservation in ensuring the well-being of humanity and the planet. Data for this review is meticulously gathered from a wide spectrum of environmental

conservation-related materials, encompassing books, academic journals, and even mass media publications. The collected data is then subjected to rigorous content analysis, ensuring a thorough and nuanced exploration of the subject matter.

Global Ethics and Environmental Issues

At its core, globalization refers to the rapid advancements in communication, transportation, and information technology that have effectively shrunk the world, bringing distant places within easy reach.¹² In this era of globalization, it's evident that cultural and religious values from around the globe are colliding and intermingling, fueled by the communication, transportation, and information services enabled by technological modernization. This convergence and friction will inevitably lead to fierce competition, involving both influence and impact: conflicting and colliding with opposing values, potentially leading to the domination of one over the other, or harmonizing and yielding a synthesis and an antithesis.¹³

The prevailing perspective of modern science and technology is characterized by its secular, mechanistic, and reductionistic approach. In its secular nature, science has moved away from reliance on predetermined a priori principles, instead grounding itself in observations derived from the five senses and the inductive method. Mechanistically, the universe and even humanity itself are often perceived as intricate machines functioning on predictable mechanisms, capable of being analyzed and understood independent of the larger wholes they constitute. This reductionistic tendency reduces the complex reality of the universe, including human existence, to a single

¹⁰ Wijaya, Aksin, Suwendi Suwendi, Sahiron Syamsuddin. "Observing Islam With Ethics: From Hatred Theology to Religious Ethics". *QJIS: Qudus International Journal of Islamic Studies*, vol. 9, No. 1 (2021) 175-208.

¹¹ Nidzom, Muhammad Faqih, and Alifia Kurnia Zainiati. "Mafhūm Al-'Adālat 'inda Ibn Miskawaih Wa Dauruhā Fi Ri'āyat Al-Bī'at". *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu*

Ushuluddin 23, no. 1 (December 7, 2022): 137–146. Accessed January 25, 2023. <https://ejournal.uin-suka.ac.id/ushuluddin/esensia/article/view/3175>.

¹² A. Qodri Azizy, *Melawan Globalisasi, Reinterpretasi Ajaran Islam* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka pelajar, 2004), 19.

¹³ Azizy, 20.





perspective, neglecting the intricate interconnectedness of its various aspects.

Despite the remarkable technological progress we've witnessed, we continue to grapple with the persistent and worsening issues of poverty, hunger, child mortality, unemployment, human suffering, and environmental degradation. Far from diminishing, these challenges seem to be intensifying, threatening many with economic collapse, social upheaval, political marginalization, ecological catastrophe, and moral decay.¹⁴

The ambitious endeavor of modernism, with its promise of human liberation and progress, has not only failed to achieve its lofty goals but also engendered a host of detrimental consequences for humanity and the natural world. In response to these shortcomings, a new paradigm, postmodernism, has emerged, offering a fresh perspective on our relationship with the world. Born in Europe and spreading like wildfire to America and beyond, postmodernism¹⁵ stands as a critique of modernism's unfulfilled "project." Modernism, once heralded as a beacon of progress, promised to emancipate humankind from the shackles of backwardness and irrationality.¹⁶ However, the harsh realities of the modern world have exposed the flaws in this grand narrative.

The detrimental effects of modernism have been so profound that it is not an overstatement to say that modern humans have unwittingly ignited fires that have engulfed their own hands. The world is now grappling with the consequences of these crises, recognizing that their roots extend beyond material concerns and delve into the realm of the transcendental – the

way humans perceive and interact with nature. The modern world, devoid of a spiritual horizon, has lost its compass in navigating the complexities of existence. Philosopher and economist E. F. Schumacher firmly asserted that the failure of modernism – marked by its crises – lies in its neglect of spirituality and the absence of religious values.¹⁷

In light of these arguments, it is not unreasonable to envision religion serving as a wellspring of ethical guidance for the vast majority of people in navigating the various crises spawned by modernization. This perspective resonated with religious leaders from across the globe, culminating in a momentous gathering of the Parliamentary Council of World Religions on August 28, 1993. The summit yielded a landmark declaration, aptly named the Declaration Toward a Global Ethic. The Declaration's core principles advocate for a harmonious convergence of science and wisdom, technology and spiritual empowerment, industry and ecology, and democracy and morality.¹⁸ The declaration's preamble poignantly denounces the destruction of the Earth's delicate ecosystems, the rampant economic injustices that fuel poverty and hunger, the chaotic disintegration of nations, the abuse of justice, the social anarchy that breeds instability, and the aggression and hatred that masquerade under religious banners. The Declaration Toward a Global Ethic eloquently proclaims in its opening sentence, "Each of us depends on the good of all," emphasizing the interconnectedness of all living beings – human, animal, plant – and the paramount importance of safeguarding our

¹⁴ Hans Kung and Karl-Josep Kuschel, *Etika Global*, trans. Ahmad Murtafijb (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2000), 13.

¹⁵ Nevertheless, in general postmodernism can be formulated as a critical attempt to review modernism. As it is known, modernism has now become a very strong and rooted "ideology" throughout the world, including in the Islamic world. So postmodernism was born as a form of claim, that modernism is not the only choice, way of life and system of thought. Especially after the Cold War, the

alternatives to Marxism and communism as part of modernization are felt to be increasingly irrelevant. See Budhy Munawar-Rahman, *Islam Pluralis* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2001), 247.

¹⁶ Alwi Shihab, *Islam Inklusif, Menuju Sikap Terbuka Dalam Beragama* (Jakarta: Penerbit Mizan, 1999), 50–51.

¹⁷ A. Solikhan, *Etika Global Dan Masa Depan Umat Manusia* (Semarang: Jurnal Penelitian Walisongo, 2003), 74.

¹⁸ Kung and Kuschel, *Etika Global*, xvi.





planet's precious resources: air, land, and water.¹⁹

The pervasiveness of capitalism has a direct or indirect impact on the exploitative human perception of nature, transforming it into a mere resource to be plundered to satisfy human economic demands. This perspective is aptly articulated by Quentin M. Duroy;

The literature on the environmental impact of economic development often assumes that the emergence of environmental awareness is correlated with affluence. Environmental quality is perceived as a luxury good that becomes a concern only after basic needs have been met. Thus, wealthy countries are more likely to exhibit a strong demand for environmental quality than developing ones."²⁰

Furthering this discussion, Quentin M. Duroy delves into an analysis of environmental awareness and behavior in 40 countries within his article. Duroy highlights that economic factors exert a direct influence on environmental awareness, shaping the level of public concern for maintaining environmental quality and the extent of community involvement in environmental conservation efforts.²¹ The aforementioned explanation sheds light on the critical role played by the environmental crisis, including global issues, in prompting the inception of the Global Ethic at the Parliamentary Council of World Religions meeting.

Exploring the Eco-Religious Dimensions in Islamic Perspective

The ethical framework of environmental management from an Islamic perspective is deeply embedded in the interconnectedness of God, humanity, and nature, forming a cornerstone of the faith's fundamental structure.

This relationship between nature and God operates within a symbolic realm, where harming nature is tantamount to harming God's creation. As divinely appointed stewards (caliph) in this world, humans stand at the crux of this profound symbolism and are entrusted with comprehending this intricate connection, leading them to a profounder understanding of God's omnipresence and benevolence.²² Recognizing and embracing the dynamics of these three interwoven relationships becomes a crucial imperative for religious leaders. They are responsible for nurturing concepts that inspire and guide Muslims to cultivate a genuine love for nature and to assume their responsibilities towards environmental stewardship.²³ As representatives of God on Earth, Muslims bear the sacred duty of actively contributing to the conservation and protection of the natural world, aligning with the core principles of their religious teachings.

In crafting their relationship with nature, humans are summoned to integrate this connection into all facets of their interactions with God, encompassing theology, jurisprudence, and sufism. The exploration of the relationship between humans, God, and nature unveils the following:

The bedrock principle underlying monotheism in nature stewardship is rooted in the conviction that the human-God connection intrinsically embraces the human-nature relationship. This entails that eco-theology assumes a constructive role, delving into the religious perspective of human existence that recognizes the profound intertwining of faith in God and the stewardship of nature. This unwavering faith manifests as a way of life that perceives the universe as emanating from God, converging upon Him, and revolving around His

¹⁹ Kung and Kushel, 1–4.

²⁰ Quentin M Duroy, "The Determinants of Environmental Awareness and Behavior," *Journal of Environment and Development* 501 (2005): 1–26.

²¹ Duroy.

²² Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 3.

²³ Dina M. Abdelzaher, Amr Kotb, and Akrum Helfaya, "Eco-Islam: Beyond the Principles of Why and What, and Into the Principles of How," *Journal of Business Ethics* 155, no. 3 (March 29, 2019): 623–43, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3518-2>.





divine presence. Within the framework of monotheism, there exist two paramount concepts that govern human interactions with nature: human responsibility for nature's management (*istikhlāf*) and the authority to utilize nature's resources (*taskhīr*).²⁴ These two concepts serve as the foundational pillars that mandate humans to shoulder the responsibility of preserving and safeguarding nature, as ordained by God.²⁵ The bestowed responsibility upon humans in nature stewardship forges an unbreakable connection between the supreme position of God and the horizontal alignment of nature and humanity within this intricate structure.

The concept of stewardship, a cornerstone of monotheism, takes on a unique dimension within the realm of *fiqh*. *Fiqh*, primarily concerned with matters of worship, places the relationship with nature within the domain of means, tools that facilitate the pursuit of spiritual fulfillment. The pursuit of excellence in worship, predicated upon conducive means (nature), deems the maintenance of this balance an imperative obligation (*mā lā yatimmu al-wājib illā bihī fa huwa wājib*).²⁶ Nature's inherent protective qualities do not preclude human intervention aimed at harnessing its bounty. Within this context, management parameters are guided by *manfa'ah* (benefit) and *mafsadah* (harm) principles.²⁷ These considerations are intended to preserve the equilibrium and harmony of nature, rooted in ethical and moral principles.

In the mystical realm of Sufism, the connection between humans and nature is enveloped in an existentialist divine bond. Nature is perceived not as a mere backdrop but as an intrinsic manifestation of God's

magnificence (*al-āyāh*), a conduit for drawing closer to the divine (*al-qurbah*), and a source of sacred wisdom. The intricate equilibrium of creation is akin to a mirror reflecting divine power, embodying divine qualities.²⁸ The entirety of the cosmic reality, including the natural world, mirrors the manifestation (*tajalliyyāt*) of divine attributes and qualities, serving as the fundamental (*al-aṣl*) and dependable (*mustanad*) elements, operating in response to the support (*istinād*) provided by these divine attributes. Every facet of existence within the universe operates in accordance with these divine attributes.²⁹ God's attributes constitute the foundational principles underlying the eternal archetypes (*al-a'yān as-sābitah*), which form the essence of all cosmic manifestations within the divine intellect.³⁰ Therefore, the natural order not only reflects but is deeply rooted in the divine order. The structure inherent in nature reflects the archetypal order, representing the divine order itself.

Within the Islamic tradition, the convergence of theology, jurisprudence, and Sufism offers profound guidance for human interactions with nature, encompassing three distinct approaches: conservation, utilization, and the manifestation of divinity. Nature is revered as a manifestation of God's majesty, instilling an obligation upon humans to safeguard and preserve it as an integral aspect of their monotheistic faith. This underscores the intrinsic value of nature beyond its utilitarian aspects, emphasizing the sacred duty to protect God's creation. Nature is also viewed as a bounty bestowed upon humanity to meet their needs and elevate their spiritual well-being. This

²⁴ Shihab, *Islam Inklusif, Menuju Sikap Terbuka Dalam Beragama*, 50–51.

²⁵ S. Noumanul Haq, "Islam and Ecology: Toward Retrieval and Reconstruction," *Dædalus: Journal of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 130, no. 4 (2015): 141–79, <https://doi.org/10.1039/9781847550347-00121>.

²⁶ Sumanto Al-Qurtuby, K.H. *Sahal Mahfudz, Era Baru Fiqh Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Cermin, 1999), 96.

²⁷ Al-Qurtuby, 97.

²⁸ Frithjof Schuon, "The Five Divine Presences," in *Dimensions of Islam*, ed. Frithjof Schuon, trans. Peter Townsend (London: Allen & Unwin, 1970), 142.

²⁹ William C. Chittick, *The Sufi Path of Knowledge: Ibn Al-'Arabi's Metaphysics of Imagination* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 38.

³⁰ Titus Burckhardt, *Introduction to Sufism: The Mystical Dimension of Islam*, trans. D. M. Matheson (Wellingborough: Aquarian Press, 1990), 62.





approach encourages humans to explore and utilize nature's resources responsibly, guided by the principles of benefit (*al-maṣlahah*) and harmony with the natural order. Finally, nature serves as a conduit for humans to attain deeper understanding of divine attributes, reflecting the magnificence and wisdom of the Creator. This perspective elevates nature beyond mere physical existence, transforming it into a symbolic representation of God's presence in the world. These three interconnected approaches, rooted in the core teachings of Islam, underscore the profound and multifaceted connection between humans and nature. Nature is not merely a resource to be exploited but a sacred realm to be cherished, understood, and revered as a manifestation of God's artistry and benevolence.

The establishment of this profound relationship underscores that the stewardship bestowed upon humans by God (*khalīfah*) extends far beyond merely utilizing nature's functional role. It is a journey towards a deeper and more intimate understanding of God. The pursuit of divine knowledge through interactions with nature transcends mere conquest or exploration. Within God's grand design, the universe stands alongside humans as God's creations, both framed within the context of servitude (QS. 57: 1, 59: 61, 13: 13, and 17: 44). Indeed, God affirms the universe and its inhabitants as a congregation akin to humans (*umamun amṣālukum*) in QS. 6:38. The distinction lies in the assignment of intellectual and ethical missions, whereby humans serve as cosmic bridges, enabling them to fulfill their mission of promoting natural prosperity, upholding truth and justice, and acting as catalysts for goodness. In this context, humans emerge as harmonizers, bringing equilibrium to nature and fellow humans, ultimately realizing the essence of divinity.

The appreciation of Islamic values, often viewed through a traditional lens that primarily emphasizes the multifaceted relationship between humans and God, has historically overlooked the imperative of nature preservation. This oversight has only recently been addressed in the modern era, with a growing awareness of nature's role as an integral aspect of understanding the divine dimension. The degradation of nature bears repercussions on the human capacity to maintain equilibrium in comprehending their relationship with God, often resulting in identity and existential crises. In pursuing materialism, humans employ various means to exploit nature, inadvertently sidelining their spiritual dimension.³¹ Consequently, the stewardship of nature becomes intricately intertwined with the stewardship of one's relationship with God.

The Islamic tradition promotes a harmonious coexistence between humans, God, and the natural world, fostering a system of ethics that embraces beauty and aesthetics. These dual dimensions – the ethical and aesthetic systems – serve as guiding principles for personal and societal interactions with the natural world. In the pursuit of comprehending nature (*ma'rifat al-kawn*), individuals are entrusted with the responsibility to manage it according to divine laws. However, when humans adopt an exclusively exploratory mindset, neglecting their role as stewards (caliph), this reflects an anthropocentric perspective. To effect a profound transformation, religious narratives must evolve beyond theocentrism and anthropocentrism to embrace ecocentrism as well.³² By unifying these three perspectives, a fresh consciousness can emerge within the Muslim community, guiding actions that not only enhance their well-being but also contribute to God's worship through the preservation of nature's delicate balance.

³¹ Nasr, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man*, 3.

³² Andrew J. Hoffman and Lloyd E. Sandelands, "Getting Right with Nature: Anthropocentrism,

Ecocentrism, and Theocentrism," *Organization & Environment* 18, no. 2 (2005): 141–62, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1086026605276197>.





Nature's Role in Divine Manifestation and Religious Obligation

The emphasis on preserving nature as the conduit through which humans can perceive the divine through monotheism and worship underscores the critical need to incorporate ecocentrism into religious narratives. An understanding of divinity that centers around theocentric relationships contains values that drive the imperative of nature preservation as a sacred duty of stewardship. Human responsibility for nurturing nature is a testament to the embodiment of faith and belief. This is further accentuated in the concept of worship, which places significance on the obligation to safeguard nature as an integral aspect of fulfilling religious duties. Nature serves as the central element that acts as the vessel for the continuity of every religious ritual. The equilibrium of nature is an indispensable facet of maintaining a harmonious relationship with God, reflecting the manifestation of the divine (*tajalliyyāt*) that guides one toward comprehending the singular essence of all creation. The stress on the role of nature as a medium for connecting with God forms the foundation for cultivating an eco-centric religious perspective.

The interplay between the theocentric, anthropocentric, and ecocentric perspectives within the realm of religion concerning nature management exemplifies the ethical principles of Islam in addressing environmental concerns. This delicate balance revives past concepts that shed light on the mechanisms of nature management, essentially centering on two facets: the relationship between nature and humans. This bilateral association yields a multifaceted

understanding, wherein the focal point varies based on values.³³ When the human element is positioned at the heart of the relationship between humans and nature, it fosters an instrumentalist approach. Humans perceive nature as a mere tool to serve their interests, leading to an exploitative mindset. The emphasis on human utility in anthropocentrism invites an ecocentric perspective as a counterbalance.

In response to the anthropocentric perspective that fostered exploitative and superficial environmental ethics in nature management, a new paradigm emerged, placing nature at the heart of this relationship. This concept, known as ecocentrism, is introduced through both biotic and abiotic paradigms.³⁴ It represents an attempt to construct a fresh narrative involving humans in managing nature, departing from traditional practices and promoting a synergistic coexistence. Ecocentrism has also given rise to various related trends, including the notion of natural rights, which emphasizes the equal standing of nature alongside humans, and biocentrism, which stresses the equal value of humans and nature.³⁵ Furthermore, the accentuation of the sanctity of religion, presenting nature as being on par with religion, as discussed by Taylor in the context of "dark green religions", plays a significant role in this movement.³⁶ Reinforcing the concept of religion in nature management while maintaining a harmonious relationship with God forms the foundation for environmental values and ethics that do not exploit the natural world.

By placing God at the heart of ethical stewardship of nature, this approach firmly establishes nature's central role within the religious framework. This aligns with Rahman's perspective, which emphasizes the Quran's

³³ Bartłomiej A. Lenart, "A Wholesome Anthropocentrism: Reconceptualizing the Value of Nature Within the Framework of An Enlightened Self-Interest," *Ethics and the Environment* 25, no. 2 (2020): 97–117, <https://doi.org/10.2979/ethicsenviro.25.2.05>.

³⁴ Aaron S. Allen and Jeff Todd Titon, "Anthropocentric and Ecocentric Perspectives on Music and Environment," *MUSICultures* 46, no. 2 (2020): 1–6.

³⁵ James W. Waters, "Toward an Ecocentric Christian Ecology: An Interreligious Case Study in Indigenous and Christian Eco-Activism," *Journal of Religious Ethics* 49, no. 4 (December 2021): 768–92, <https://doi.org/10.1111/jore.12376>.

³⁶ Bron Taylor, *Dark Green Religion: Nature Spirituality and the Planetary Future* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).





overarching focus on God, humans, and nature.³⁷ The Quranic teachings, highlighting the interconnectedness of these elements, create an ethical paradigm where God serves as the fundamental reason for humanity to manage nature in a balanced manner. The management of nature transcends mere adherence to religious regulations, as suggested by Watson.³⁸ Instead, it is intricately interwoven with the manifestation of God. This connection compels humans to care for and nurture nature, enabling them to achieve self-perfection as servants of God. This entails total devotion, unwavering obedience, and harmonious unification with the essence of divinity. The findings of this study support the concept of green religions introduced by Xie, which integrates nature management as an indispensable aspect of religious obligations. However, Xie's framework may overlook the aspect of divinity's manifestation,³⁹ which allows humans to gain a profounder understanding of God through their interactions with nature.

Conclusion

The bedrock of environmental conservation, as illuminated by various studies of Islamic narratives, rests upon the unwavering principle of placing the divine entity at the apex of the relationship between humans and nature. In this context, God, as the supreme and guiding force in the journey of servitude, entrusts humans with the noble responsibility of serving as His representatives (caliph) on Earth. This representation encompasses the nurturing and stewardship attributes that establish the fundamental framework for human interaction with nature, which is perceived as a tangible manifestation of God's presence (*tajalliyyāt*). Actions that guide humans toward unification with God through contemplation of nature are shaped within the principles of Islamic law,

taking the form of responsible utilization without causing harm. The central theme of these actions revolves around gaining a deeper insight into the essence of divinity, establishing it as the core rationale behind human stewardship.

Identifying ethical values that form the fundamental framework for revitalizing spiritual dimensions is achieved through comprehensive content analysis, effectively linking key concepts in eco-theology, eco-fiqh, and eco-sufism. This central concept suggests the fulfillment of spiritual needs by managing nature in a responsible and harmonious manner. Nevertheless, the practical implications of this spiritual rejuvenation in action should be further explored within this research. This aspect warrants further investigation by future researchers to either substantiate or scrutinize the idea that the spiritual crisis is the primary underpinning for environmental degradation.

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Author's Contributions

All listed authors contribute to this article.

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³⁷ Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'an* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

³⁸ Paul Watson, "A Call for Biocentric Religion," in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Nature*, ed. Bron Taylor (London: Continuum International, 2005).

³⁹ Shaobo Xie, "Green Religion as a Way of Life: Thoreau and His Ecocentric Esthetics of Existence," *ANQ: A Quarterly Journal of Short Articles, Notes and Reviews* 33, no. 4 (November 2, 2020): 252–62, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0895769X.2019.1687278>.





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Data Availability

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were generated or analysed in this study.

Disclaimer

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