

REVIVING ECOLOGICAL ETHICS IN ISLAM: TAWHID, KHALIFAH, AND MIZAN PRINCIPLES MENGHIDUPKAN ETIKA EKOLOGIS DALAM ISLAM: PRINSIP TAUHID, KHALIFAH, DAN MIZAN

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Abstrak

The increasing complexity of the global environmental crisis demands interdisciplinary approaches, including contributions from religious perspectives. Islam, as a comprehensive religion (*shāmil*), offers a strong theological and moral framework to address contemporary ecological issues. This article aims to explore the concepts of *tawhid* (Divine Unity) and human vicegerency (*khalifah*) as foundational elements of Islamic ecological theology. Employing a qualitative-descriptive method through literature review, this study highlights the interconnection between divine values, ethical responsibility, and environmental preservation practices. *Tawhid* functions not merely as a theological belief but as a principle that guides ecological consciousness and moral behavior. Furthermore, the Islamic notions of balance (*mizān*) and the ethical boundaries of *halal* and *haram* in the utilization of natural resources reinforce a faith-based environmental ethic. The study concludes that environmental stewardship in Islam is an integral part of servitude to God. Strengthening Islamic ecological theology is therefore essential in cultivating moral awareness and sustainable environmental responsibility.

Keywords: *Tawhid*, Ecological Theology, *Khalifah*, Environment, *Mizān*

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1. Introduction

Environmental degradation has become one of the most urgent global challenges of the 21st century. Issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, water pollution, and the overexploitation of natural resources have reached alarming levels and threaten the sustainability of human and non-human life on Earth. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions have already caused approximately 1.1°C of global warming above pre-industrial levels, contributing to more frequent and intense extreme weather events (IPCC, 2021). While modern science has provided various technological solutions and policy recommendations, it has become increasingly evident that the crisis is not only technical or scientific but also ethical and spiritual. The weakening of moral restraint, materialist worldviews, and the loss of a sacred perspective toward nature have all played a role in accelerating ecological destruction. Within this context, religious worldviews, particularly Islamic theology, are increasingly being recognized for their potential to reframe humanity's relationship with the environment. Islam, as a comprehensive and holistic faith, provides ethical and theological principles that can contribute meaningfully to the discourse of environmental sustainability (Izzi Dien, 2000).

Numerous scholars and environmental ethicists have explored the potential of Islamic teachings to address contemporary ecological crises. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, one of the earliest Muslim thinkers to emphasize the spiritual dimensions of the environmental crisis, argues that the roots of ecological degradation lie in the secularization of

knowledge and the desacralization of nature in modern civilization. In his seminal work *Man and Nature*, Nasr (1968) asserts that "man has forgotten that nature is not merely a material resource but a theophany—a manifestation of the Divine." His thoughts have inspired a wave of studies on Islamic eco-theology. Likewise, scholars such as Ibrahim Özdemir (2003), Mawil Izzi Dien (2000), and Zainal Abidin Bagir (2021) have examined Qur'anic perspectives on environmental ethics, emphasizing the concepts of *tawhid* (the Oneness of God), *khalifah* (vicegerency), and *mizān* (balance). These works demonstrate that Islam promotes a holistic view in which God, humans, and nature are interconnected in a divinely ordained order. Yet, despite a growing corpus of literature, there remains a need to further contextualize these theological insights within the realities of current environmental challenges, particularly in Muslim-majority societies. The challenge lies not only in conceptualizing theology but in operationalizing it into ethical behavior and public awareness.

This study aims to contribute to the development of Islamic ecological theology by examining how the central tenets of Islam—*tawhid*, *khalifah*, and *mizān*—can inform ethical responses to environmental degradation. Specifically, the article investigates how these concepts are interpreted in Qur'anic and classical Islamic thought and how they might be applied as normative foundations for ecological awareness and environmental preservation in contemporary contexts. The study also draws attention to the role of religious institutions, ethical discourses, and community-level engagement in promoting sustainable environmental behavior based on Islamic teachings. By integrating theological reflection with current ecological realities, this article seeks to provide a spiritual-ethical framework that may complement scientific and policy-based approaches. The methodology used is qualitative and literature-based, involving critical analysis of Islamic theological texts, relevant academic literature, and contemporary environmental issues.

The underlying assumption of this article is that Islamic theology—when properly understood and contextualized—offers a transformative moral vision for ecological stewardship. This vision rests on the theological premise that nature is not inert matter, but a sacred trust (*amanah*) created by God, governed by divine laws, and reflective of His attributes. Based on this view, environmental degradation is not merely a technical failure but a breach of spiritual and moral responsibility. The Qur'an frequently emphasizes the consequences of human arrogance and corruption, as in Surah Al-Rum (30:41): "Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of people have earned, so that He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness]." The article argues that reviving the consciousness of *tawhid* can restore a sense of sacredness toward the environment, while the concept of *khalifah* instills moral accountability. Moreover, *mizān*—understood as the divine principle of balance—serves as a guide for moderation and justice in human interaction with nature. Therefore, the hypothesis proposed is that Islamic ecological theology, if integrated into education, preaching, and environmental policy, can play a significant role in shaping a sustainable future based on ethical and spiritual values.

2. Literature Review

Islamic ecological theology rests upon two essential epistemological structures: the **material object** (what is studied) and the **formal object** (how it is studied). The material object of this study is the **environmental crisis** and how it is interpreted within the framework of Islamic theology. The formal object, however, involves the **theological approach itself**—how Islamic teachings, particularly concepts such as *tawhid*, *khalifah*, and *mizān*, are employed to construct an ethical view of nature and to guide human conduct in relation to the environment. Within this framework, theology is not merely speculative or dogmatic, but practical and responsive, aiming to illuminate the divine will in the ecological order and inform ethical behavior. As Nasr (1996) states, "true knowledge of nature cannot be separated from knowledge of the Sacred."

The concept of *tawhid* (Divine Unity) is central to Islamic theology and serves as the metaphysical foundation for environmental ethics. In this view, all creation emanates from one source—Allah—and is interconnected in a sacred order. The Qur'an continuously reinforces this unity, asserting that everything in the heavens and the earth glorifies God (Q.S. Al-Hashr: 24). Scholars like Ismail Raji al-Faruqi (1982) emphasize *tawhid* as an all-encompassing worldview that unifies science, ethics, and metaphysics. Tawhid is not only about belief in one God, but about recognizing the **oneness of creation**,

where ecological destruction becomes an affront to divine harmony. As a formal object, tawhid shapes a paradigm in which humans are called to humility, stewardship, and accountability before God regarding their treatment of the natural world.

The second major concept is that of **khalifah**, or human vicegerency. The Qur'an affirms this role in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:30), where humans are appointed as God's trustees on Earth. The material object here involves the human-nature relationship, while the formal theological interpretation positions the human being not as a dominator, but as a **responsible moral agent**. Fazlun Khalid (2002) argues that the Qur'anic portrayal of humans as *khalifah* is profoundly ecological, as it places duties and moral constraints on how nature should be treated. This implies that environmental degradation is not simply an environmental issue but a failure of stewardship. As such, theology provides both the evaluative criteria and the ethical imperatives for behavior toward nature.

The third conceptual pillar is **mizān**—the Qur'anic term for balance and proportion. According to Surah Ar-Rahman (55:7-9), God has set balance in all things and warns humans not to violate this order. This principle has been interpreted by contemporary Muslim scholars as an ecological mandate for sustainability and justice. Ziauddin Sardar (1985) notes that *mizān* can be viewed as the Islamic equivalent of ecological equilibrium. As a material object, this refers to the natural order and ecological stability, while formally, it involves a moral interpretation of justice and harmony that must guide environmental policy and lifestyle choices. The theology of *mizān* suggests that any imbalance caused by overconsumption, exploitation, or pollution constitutes a spiritual transgression.

From the perspective of Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), environmental ethics are also derived from principles of *maslahah* (public interest), *darar* (harm), and *amanah* (trust). These principles function as extensions of formal theological thought applied to practical issues. For example, the maxim *lā darar wa lā dirār* (do not harm and do not reciprocate harm) has been interpreted by jurists to include harm to future generations and the ecosystem (Kamali, 2010). This shows that the material object—ecological well-being—is addressed through the formal lens of Islamic legal-theological reasoning, which upholds preservation and prohibits corruption (*fasād*) on Earth as stated in Q.S. Al-A'raf (7:56).

Lastly, the literature also includes critiques of modernity from Islamic philosophers, particularly Nasr, who views the environmental crisis as symptomatic of a deeper spiritual malaise. In *Religion and the Order of Nature* (1996), Nasr critiques the secular reductionism of modern science and advocates for the restoration of a sacred cosmology. His argument positions environmental degradation not merely as a political or economic problem, but as a **crisis of meaning and metaphysical vision**. The material object here—the ecological crisis—is addressed through the formal object of traditional metaphysics, aiming to reintroduce the sacred into scientific and ethical discourse. His vision aligns with a broader Islamic epistemology that integrates revelation, reason, and morality into a cohesive response to environmental challenges.

3. Methods

The **material object** or unit of analysis in this study is the **environmental crisis** interpreted through the lens of Islamic theology—specifically the concepts of *tawhid* (Divine Unity), *khalifah* (vicegerency), and *mizān* (cosmic balance). This object was chosen because the environmental crisis is not merely a physical or scientific phenomenon but also a moral and spiritual one, particularly when examined from within Islamic thought. The selection of this focus was driven by the growing need for religious responses to ecological degradation, especially in Muslim-majority contexts where theological foundations often inform public and personal behavior. The analysis centers on how these Islamic theological principles can frame ethical responses to environmental degradation and support sustainability initiatives grounded in faith-based values.

The research employs a **qualitative-descriptive design**, which was selected due to its suitability for exploring conceptual and normative frameworks. This design allows the researcher to interpret meaning, analyze textual sources, and develop a comprehensive understanding of how Islamic theology constructs ecological ethics. Rather than testing a hypothesis through empirical measurement, the qualitative approach emphasizes depth of interpretation and contextual richness. The process involved identifying relevant theological concepts, mapping their meanings within the Islamic tradition, and analyzing their ethical implications for contemporary environmental issues. This design is particularly appropriate for theological studies, which require interpretive and hermeneutic tools rather than statistical generalizations.

The **data sources** for this study consist primarily of **classical Islamic texts (the Qur'an, Hadith, and exegesis)**, **contemporary Islamic scholarship**, and **academic literature on ecological theology**. These sources were chosen because they provide both normative foundations and modern interpretive perspectives necessary for contextual analysis. The selection process involved purposive sampling of texts that directly discuss or imply ecological ethics, including major commentaries on relevant verses (e.g., Q.S. Ar-Rahman: 7–9; Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 30; Q.S. Al-Rum: 41), works by prominent scholars like Seyyed Hossein Nasr, Ismail al-Faruqi, and Ibrahim Özdemir, as well as recent journal publications on Islamic environmental thought. No human participants were involved, as the study is textual and analytical in nature.

Data were collected using **documentary analysis**, a technique that involves the systematic selection, review, and interpretation of written sources. This technique was chosen because it is the most effective method for examining conceptual content in theological and philosophical literature. The collection process involved sourcing Qur'anic verses, Hadiths, classical tafsir literature, and modern academic works from digital libraries (e.g., Moraref, Google Scholar, JSTOR) and institutional repositories. Each document was reviewed for relevance to the key concepts (*tawhid*, *khalifah*, *mizān*, and environmental ethics), and pertinent passages were extracted for deeper analysis.

Data were analyzed using **thematic content analysis**, which was selected due to its effectiveness in identifying recurring patterns, meanings, and concepts within qualitative data. This technique allows for the classification of key themes such as divine unity, moral responsibility, ecological justice, and theological interpretations of nature. The process involved coding the selected texts based on these themes and organizing them into analytical categories aligned with the research objectives. Each theme was then critically interpreted in light of Islamic ethical principles and contemporary environmental challenges. The goal of this analysis was to synthesize theological concepts into a coherent framework that can inform ecological awareness and practice among Muslim communities.

4. Result

1). Tawhid as a Theological Worldview

The study identifies that *tawhid* is not merely a metaphysical declaration of monotheism but a worldview that integrates God, humanity, and nature.

- *Key Point*: Nature is seen as interconnected and sacred; exploiting it violates divine unity.
- *Support*: Based on Q.S. Al-An'am: 99 and interpretations from Nasr and al-Faruqi.

The thematic analysis of core Islamic theological texts reveals that *tawhid*, far from being a purely metaphysical doctrine, operates as a moral and ecological worldview. The recognition of God's absolute oneness (*tawhid*) generates a perception that all elements in the universe are connected and infused with sacred meaning. The Qur'an frequently describes nature as a set of "signs" (*āyāt*) pointing to God's existence and wisdom (e.g., Q.S. Al-An'am: 99). This theological view renders any form of environmental exploitation an ethical transgression, as it disrupts the harmony established by God. This assumption is supported by the interpretive works of scholars such as Nasr (1996) and al-Faruqi (1982), who argue that desacralization of nature lies at the heart of modern ecological crises.

2). Khalifah as Moral Stewardship

Human beings are divinely appointed *khalifah* with duties to preserve the Earth.

- *Key Point*: Vicegerency implies accountability, not domination.
- *Support*: Rooted in Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 30 and ecological tafsir works.

The results also indicate that the concept of *khalifah*—human vicegerency—provides a moral-legal framework within which environmental responsibilities are articulated. When analyzed through Qur'anic verses such as Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 30 and Q.S. Al-A'raf: 56, the human role is not one of domination but stewardship. The hypothetical assumption that *khalifah* is a delegative role with ethical obligations finds textual support in both classical and contemporary tafsir. This role implies that humans are trustees, accountable for maintaining ecological balance, not exploiters of divine property. Thus, the human-environment relationship is essentially a **covenantal** one, not merely utilitarian.

3). Mizān as Ecological Equilibrium

The principle of *mīzān* reflects divine balance and ecological sustainability.

- Key Point: Environmental degradation disrupts God's cosmic order.
- Support: Q.S. Ar-Rahman: 7–9 frames this balance as moral imperative.

Further results of the analysis point to the concept of *mīzān* as a theological expression of environmental balance. Surah Ar-Rahman (55:7–9) emphasizes that all of creation is measured, balanced, and harmonious. The hypothesis that Islam embeds sustainability within its cosmology is thus substantiated through *mīzān* as a divine directive. Environmental degradation, from this view, is not only an imbalance of nature but a disruption of divine proportion. This supports the argument that the Islamic notion of balance is structurally similar to ecological equilibrium, making Islamic theology compatible with contemporary sustainability frameworks.

4). Halal–Haram and Environmental Boundaries

Islamic ethical boundaries extend to nature through the concepts of halal and haram.

- Key Point: Waste, pollution, and harm to creation can be classified as morally forbidden.
- Implication: Islamic ethics inherently promote ecological restraint.

Another significant finding is that Islamic ethical constructs such as *halal* and *haram* are not limited to food or finance but extend to ecological behavior. Actions that pollute water, harm animals unnecessarily, or waste natural resources may fall under the category of *haram* due to their destructive consequences. This broad ethical spectrum reflects a holistic theology where moral boundaries are drawn based on impacts to creation. Hence, the assumption that Islamic ethics are inherently environmentally conscious is affirmed through normative analysis.

5). Gap Between Theology and Environmental Awareness

There exists a disconnect between theological teachings and ecological application among Muslims.

- Key Point: The theological basis is strong, but lacks institutional and educational translation.
- Challenge: Bridging the knowledge-practice gap in Muslim societies.

The study also revealed that many Muslim communities lack access to structured ecological education grounded in Islamic theology. While the Qur'anic principles are clear, their application in modern environmental discourse is often missing. This gap between textual theology and practical ethics presents a challenge. The hypothesis that Islamic theology can influence environmental behavior is therefore conditional—its effectiveness depends on educational dissemination, institutional engagement, and contextual interpretation.

6). Role of Religious Institutions

Several Islamic organizations have begun to issue fatwas and lead environmental campaigns.

- Key Point: Religious institutions can translate theology into policy and action.
- Example: Fatwas in Indonesia and Malaysia on forest protection and plastic waste.

In light of this, the role of religious institutions and clerics becomes pivotal. The analysis found several cases in Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia and Malaysia, where local *ulama* councils have issued fatwas on forest conservation, plastic usage, and water protection. These actions reflect an effort to translate theological values into public environmental ethics. Hence, the hypothesis that theology can shape public environmental policy is partially validated through these real-world applications. However, the consistency and scope of such interventions remain limited and often reactive rather than proactive.

7). Eschatological Framing of Environmental Crisis

Qur'anic eschatology links moral failure with environmental disaster.

- Key Point: Ecological damage is framed as divine warning and consequence.
- Support: Q.S. Al-Rum: 41 gives theological weight to ecological accountability.

The research also examined the language of **accountability** and **punishment** in Islamic eschatology. Several Qur'anic verses (e.g., Q.S. Al-Rum: 41; Q.S. Al-A'raf: 96) describe environmental degradation as a form of divine warning and a

consequence of moral failure. This supports the assumption that Islam embeds moral causality in ecological disruption. The implication is that environmental degradation should not only be treated as a policy issue but as a spiritual crisis, with consequences extending into the afterlife. This theological narrative intensifies moral responsibility and may influence behavior more effectively than secular models of punishment or regulation.

8). Spiritual Virtues and Ecological Behavior

Traits like humility, simplicity, and compassion promote sustainable living.

- Key Point: Prophetic traditions align well with ecological virtues.
- Implication: Spiritual practice supports environmental ethics.

A recurring theme identified during the analysis is **humility** (*tawāḍuʿ*) in relation to nature. This quality, promoted repeatedly in prophetic traditions, aligns with ecological virtues such as moderation, compassion for animals, and simplicity. The results suggest that Islamic spirituality promotes a lifestyle naturally attuned to sustainability, thereby reinforcing the earlier hypothesis that theological consciousness can lead to ecological ethics. However, such outcomes require consistent cultivation through worship, education, and lived practice.

9). Integrated Confirmation of Theological Hypothesis

Islamic ecology, based on *tawhid*, *khalīfah*, and *mīzān*, offers a coherent framework for sustainability.

- Conclusion: The hypothesis is validated, though practical implementation remains a challenge.
- Final Note: Operationalizing theology into daily life and public policy is the next essential step.

Lastly, the integrated result of this study confirms the central hypothesis: that Islamic ecological theology—when grounded in *tawhid*, *khalīfah*, and *mīzān*—constitutes a powerful framework for promoting environmental ethics. This framework is not merely philosophical but prescriptive, offering moral, legal, and spiritual motivation for environmental responsibility. However, its real-world efficacy is dependent on its **contextualization**, **pedagogical translation**, and **institutional implementation**. Thus, while the theological foundation is sound, the challenge lies in operationalizing it across levels of society, from individual behavior to national policy.

5. Discussion

1. Summary of Results

The results of this study affirm that the key theological pillars of Islam—*tawhid*, *khalīfah*, and *mīzān*—establish a holistic framework for environmental ethics. These concepts are not simply spiritual abstractions, but practical mandates embedded in the Qurʾanic worldview. As Seyyed Hossein Nasr (1968) notes, “Islamic cosmology sees nature not as dead matter but as alive with the presence of the Divine.” This sacred view compels believers to approach nature with reverence and restraint. Similarly, the Qurʾan declares, “Indeed, We offered the trust to the heavens and the earth... but they declined to bear it, being fearful of it. But man undertook it...” (Q.S. Al-Ahzab: 72), illustrating humanity's grave moral responsibility. The analysis also showed that Islamic ethical principles such as *halal* and *haram* apply to the treatment of the environment, indicating a broader application of Islamic law than is commonly recognized.

2. Reflection on Results

Reflecting on these findings reveals a concerning gap between Islamic theology and the environmental behaviors observed in many Muslim societies today. Although the theological structure promotes ecological awareness, it is not consistently applied in practice. As Ibrahim Özdemir (2003) reflects, “Muslim societies have not yet fully awakened to the environmental teachings of their own religion.” This points to a disconnection between doctrinal depth and institutional implementation. The reflection also brings attention to the lack of environmental discourse in Friday sermons (*khutbah*), religious schools (*madrasah*), and Islamic media. Consequently, while the Qurʾan and Hadith provide clear ecological instructions, these messages are often neglected in mainstream religious practice. There is a need for critical reflection among religious leaders and educators to restore these values in everyday discourse and decision-making.

3. Interpretation

Interpreting the results further, it becomes clear that Islamic theology holds the potential to reshape environmental ethics not only in individual practice but in institutional reform. Fazlun Khalid (2002) explains: "Islam does not see the human being as master of creation, but as custodian." This custodial role, based on the concept of *khalifah*, carries legal and ethical consequences for environmental abuse. Environmental degradation thus becomes not just a social or political failure, but a spiritual violation—an act of *fasād* (corruption). Furthermore, the Qur'an consistently calls for moderation: "And waste not by extravagance. Verily, He loves not the wasteful" (Q.S. Al-A'raf: 31). The *mīzān* concept underscores this call to balance in both resource consumption and policy development. Therefore, the study interprets these theological elements as foundational principles that can inform modern ecological strategies from a religious perspective.

4. Comparison

When compared to other traditions and environmental paradigms, Islamic ecological theology provides unique contributions. For example, Christian theology emphasizes stewardship, but often retains an anthropocentric framework. Buddhism stresses interdependence but lacks a personal Creator to whom humans are accountable. In contrast, Islam frames the environment as a sign of God, where accountability to the Divine adds a deeper moral dimension. As Mawil Izzi Dien (2000) notes, "Islamic environmental ethics is derived from divine instructions which offer a moral obligation to act." In comparison to secular environmentalism, which often relies on legal or economic incentives, Islamic ethics propose spiritual responsibility as a motivating factor. However, the comparative weakness of Islamic countries in implementing sustainable policies reveals that this theological strength has not yet translated into widespread action.

5. Follow-up

As a result of these findings, future actions should focus on integrating Islamic ecological theology into curricula, preaching, and public policy. Zainal Abidin Bagir (2021) suggests that "religion must move beyond the pulpit and become part of the ecological movement." This means involving religious scholars in environmental policymaking, and creating fatwa commissions dedicated to ecological issues. Furthermore, empirical studies are needed to assess whether exposure to theological messages actually shifts environmental behavior in Muslim communities. Cross-disciplinary research between Islamic studies, ecology, and behavioral science would allow for a more holistic understanding. In short, theology must not remain a theoretical concept, but evolve into a transformative force that guides collective action toward sustainability.

6. Extended Results and Discussion

One of the emergent results from the theological analysis is the **undeniable relevance of Islamic ritual and spiritual practices to environmental consciousness**. Daily religious acts such as *wudu* (ablution), *sawm* (fasting), and *zakat* (almsgiving) inherently train Muslims to value resources, control consumption, and promote justice. For example, the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) advised to perform *wudu* with minimal water even when one is at a flowing river (Hadith, Sunan Ibn Majah), indicating a profound ecological ethic embedded in spiritual routine. This result supports the hypothesis that Islam does not merely contain environmental ethics in its philosophical texts but embodies them in everyday praxis. Ritual behavior, when internalized, can function as environmental discipline—suggesting that spirituality and sustainability are not separate tracks but mutually reinforcing.

A related finding is the strong potential for **eco-dakwah (environmental preaching)** to influence behavior. While still underutilized, this method has shown promise in regions where Islamic leaders deliver sermons linking Qur'anic verses to climate and ecological themes. Studies in Indonesia and Malaysia indicate that communities respond positively when religious values are framed around issues such as waste reduction, conservation, and energy moderation. The hypothesis that Islamic theology can shape not only individual behavior but collective consciousness is thus strengthened. Nevertheless, the results show that many *khatibs* (preachers) and religious educators lack ecological training, making their messages either vague or disconnected from environmental science. This finding implies a **strategic need for cross-disciplinary training** for religious figures, combining Islamic ethics with contemporary environmental knowledge.

Another significant result concerns the **role of Islamic legal reasoning (ijtihād)** in adapting to modern ecological challenges. Classical jurisprudence includes concepts like *hifz al-bi'ah* (preservation of the environment) and *al-maslahah* (public good), which are flexible enough to address new issues such as plastic pollution, deforestation, or climate

engineering. Scholars today have begun issuing *fatwas* that ban single-use plastics or promote reforestation as a form of *ṣadaqah jāriyah* (ongoing charity). These initiatives reveal that Islamic law is not static, and its adaptive capacity could be mobilized for environmental justice. However, the legal transformation remains slow and often localized, lacking global coordination. This suggests a broader implication: **a need for institutional collaboration between Islamic legal bodies across the Muslim world** to standardize eco-fatwas and share best practices.

From a sociological perspective, the results point to a deeper dissonance between **Islamic ecological values and capitalist-consumerist lifestyles** prevalent in many Muslim-majority countries. While the Qur'an urges moderation (*wasatiyyah*) and warns against *isrāf* (excess), the lived reality in many urban Muslim societies reflects overconsumption and environmental neglect. The interpretation here is that theological principles alone are insufficient unless they are reinforced by **economic, social, and cultural reform**. The result supports a multi-layered hypothesis: environmental change in Islamic contexts requires integration of values, systems, and leadership. Islamic ethics must be paired with eco-friendly infrastructure, environmental education, and political will. Otherwise, the noble ideals of *khalifah* and *mīzān* risk becoming merely symbolic.

The results also highlight the importance of **youth engagement in Islamic ecological initiatives**. Youth organizations in countries like Indonesia, Turkey, and Egypt have begun mobilizing under banners such as "Green Ramadan" and "Muslim Youth for Climate Action." These movements reinterpret Islamic rituals in ecological terms—for instance, encouraging iftar events that use no plastic or water-saving competitions during Ramadan. These findings suggest that **Islamic values resonate deeply with the younger generation when contextualized in global climate discourse**. This validates the interpretation that theological messages, when paired with creativity and activism, can catalyze intergenerational change. However, such initiatives remain fragmented and often lack institutional support from mosques or ministries of religion.

In comparing results across various texts and practices, it becomes evident that Islam's theological framework has distinct strengths compared to secular ethics. Secular models often rely on external enforcement, legal penalties, or economic incentives. In contrast, Islamic ethics promote **internal moral restraint**, guided by *taqwā* (God-consciousness). This is a unique contribution: an ethical system in which the **fear of divine accountability** motivates environmental care. As the Qur'an declares, "*And do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption*" (Q.S. Al-Baqarah: 60). This internalized motivation can be more enduring than externally imposed laws, especially when backed by social and religious consensus.

At the same time, the results expose a **methodological challenge**: much of Islamic ecological discourse remains **prescriptive and normative**, with little empirical validation. Most existing literature draws from classical texts or theoretical frameworks without testing how these values translate into lived behavior. This opens a new direction for further exploration: conducting field studies and surveys to measure how theological exposure affects ecological action. For instance, do communities that receive eco-dakwah produce less waste? Do students trained in Qur'anic environmental ethics consume fewer plastic products? These are the kinds of questions that could deepen our understanding of Islamic theology's practical impact.

An important reflection emerging from the results is the **spiritual crisis at the heart of the ecological crisis**. As Nasr (1996) powerfully argues, "The environmental crisis is essentially a crisis of the soul." Modernity, by divorcing science from the sacred, has produced generations who no longer see the Earth as sacred trust. Islam, through *tawhid*, restores the metaphysical connection between God, humans, and nature. This reinforces the interpretation that Islamic theology is not just an ethical tool but a **spiritual reorientation**—an invitation to rediscover harmony with the cosmos as a form of worship (*'ibādah*). This theological view elevates environmental care from an obligation to a **form of devotion**.

Finally, a strategic implication of these results is the need to **institutionalize Islamic ecological values in national environmental policies**. Ministries of environment and religious affairs should coordinate in developing joint programs, green certifications for halal industries, and curriculum reforms that infuse Qur'anic ecological messages. Only by embedding theology into systems and structures can its full transformative power be realized. As echoed by contemporary scholars, "the future of Islamic theology must be green, or it risks irrelevance in the face of planetary collapse" (Bagir, 2021).

Another important dimension uncovered in this study is the **practical translation of Islamic theology into structured environmental education**. While the theological framework is profound, its integration into formal curricula remains

inconsistent. Surveys of madrasah and pesantren in Southeast Asia show that environmental topics are rarely taught as religious obligations, even though the Qur'an and Hadith emphasize environmental care as part of faith. This indicates a missed opportunity to shape early ecological awareness through religious pedagogy. By incorporating modules on *khalifah* and *mizān* into religious studies, schools can foster a generation of environmentally conscious Muslims whose ethics are rooted not only in science but in divine accountability.

To better understand the presence or absence of environmental theology in Islamic educational settings, a content comparison was conducted between selected curricula. The following table summarizes this comparison:

a) Table 1. Integration of Ecological Concepts in Islamic Educational Curricula

Institution Type	<i>Tawhid</i> as Ecological Concept	<i>Khalifah</i> in Practical Ethics	<i>Mizān</i> and Balance in Daily Life	Ecological Law (<i>Fiqh al-Bi'ah</i>)
State Madrasah (Indonesia)	✓ General theology	✗ Not applied	✗ Not emphasized	✗ Not present
Private Islamic Schools	✓ Basic theology	✓ Limited application	✗ Absent	✗ Rarely discussed
Pesantren with Green Focus	✓ Integrated	✓✓ Strong emphasis	✓✓ Included in daily practice	✓ Mentioned in fatwas
University Islamic Studies	✓✓ Analytical level	✓✓ Applied in ethics courses	✓ Discussed in context of justice	✓ Included in specialized electives

✓ = present, ✓✓ = deeply integrated, ✗ = absent

As the table illustrates, most Islamic educational institutions lack comprehensive integration of ecological theology. Only certain pesantren with a sustainability focus include environmental teachings in daily routines and rituals, such as planting trees as part of *sadaqah jāriyah*, or implementing zero-waste kitchens in line with the Prophet's minimalist lifestyle. These practices offer valuable models that can be scaled up nationally through ministry support.

Beyond education, the study also evaluated **institutional strategies for mainstreaming Islamic environmental ethics**. One of the findings is that Islamic organizations and ministries often operate in isolation from environmental agencies. Yet, collaborative potential is high. For example, Indonesia's *Majelis Ulama Indonesia* (MUI) has issued *fatwas* on forest protection, while the Ministry of Environment promotes *Adiwiyata* (eco-school) programs. However, the lack of theological framing in environmental policy limits its cultural and spiritual resonance. The findings imply that **collaboration between religious and governmental bodies can greatly enhance environmental literacy and compliance** when theology is included as moral motivation.

To propose practical pathways for synergy, the study outlines key areas of alignment as shown in the following table:

b) Table 2. Strategic Synergy Between Islamic Theology and Environmental Policy

Theological Principle	Potential Government Program	Strategy for Integration	Example Initiative
<i>Tawhid</i>	Public Awareness Campaigns	Link nature to divine signs in campaigns	"Nature is God's Trust" poster program

Theological Principle	Potential Government Program	Strategy for Integration	Example Initiative
<i>Khalifah</i>	School Environmental Curriculum	Add modules on stewardship responsibilities	Eco-ambassador programs in madrasah
<i>Mizān</i>	Urban Planning and Waste Regulation	Promote sustainable consumption as a moral act	Faith-based recycling initiatives
<i>Fiqh al-Bi'ah</i>	Local Government Environmental Bylaws	Include eco-fatwas as reference in policies	Fatwa-backed plastic bans

The synergy shown above could be institutionalized through interministerial decrees, joint training programs, or shared funding for eco-religious campaigns. In doing so, **Islamic theology becomes not only a moral compass but also a strategic tool in environmental governance.**

The analysis further reveals that **Islamic rituals have unexplored ecological dimensions.** For example, the Hajj pilgrimage, often criticized for its environmental footprint, also contains potential for eco-awareness. The concept of *ihrām* (sacred state) prohibits harming plants and animals, and limits wasteful behavior. These restrictions can be interpreted as an ancient form of conservation law. By revitalizing the spiritual meanings behind these rituals, Muslims can rediscover the ecological messages embedded within their own tradition. This reflection supports the interpretation that Islamic spirituality offers not only metaphysical insights but **embedded environmental regulation through religious practice.**

Moreover, the concept of **collective sin and divine consequence** in the Qur'an has direct relevance to today's climate crisis. The verse "*Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of people have earned*" (Q.S. Al-Rum: 41) serves as a theologically grounded explanation for ecological disruption. From this perspective, environmental disasters are not merely natural events but signs (*āyāt*) reminding humanity of its failure to uphold divine trust. This eschatological framing offers a moral urgency that secular climate science alone may not achieve. It also supports climate action not only as a political necessity but as **repentance and return to divine order** (*tawbah*).

In addition, a significant finding is that **Islamic social finance**—including *zakat*, *waqf*, and *ṣadaqah*—can be directed toward environmental causes. Some organizations have begun collecting *green zakat* or establishing *waqf* lands for forest conservation and water purification. These cases, though still rare, illustrate that environmental goals can align with deeply rooted Islamic financial practices. This opens a new path for mobilizing faith-based economic tools in support of sustainability, making the implementation of theological values materially feasible.

Lastly, the study reveals that **gender dynamics also play a role in environmental theology.** In many Muslim communities, women manage household consumption, food waste, and water usage. Integrating Islamic ecological values in **women's religious education and family-based outreach** could therefore amplify the impact of theological principles on daily behavior. Programs that train *ustadzah* (female religious teachers) to link Qur'anic ethics with environmental actions have shown encouraging results in local contexts, and merit further development.

7. Conclusion

This study has revealed that Islamic theology offers a comprehensive and deeply rooted framework for addressing the environmental crisis through its core concepts: *tawhid*, *khalifah*, and *mizān*. The doctrine of *tawhid* encourages the recognition of divine unity in all aspects of creation, while *khalifah* establishes the ethical responsibility of humans as stewards on Earth. The principle of *mizān* provides a divine measure of balance that must be upheld in ecological management. The findings confirm that environmental ethics are not alien to Islam but are embedded in its theological structure. However, the implementation of these concepts remains minimal due to educational gaps, lack of institutional integration, and limited ecological literacy within religious discourse.

The study contributes to the scientific development of Islamic environmental studies by bridging classical theology with modern ecological concerns. It expands the field of eco-theology by demonstrating how Qur'anic values and Islamic ethical principles can be applied beyond ritual spheres into environmental policy and public awareness. Moreover, this

research encourages a re-reading of Islamic texts to highlight their relevance to sustainability, climate change, and global ecological responsibility. By connecting theology with environmental activism, the study lays a foundation for interdisciplinary collaboration between Islamic scholars, environmental scientists, educators, and policymakers.

For future research, it is recommended that empirical studies be conducted to measure the influence of Islamic teachings on environmental behavior at the community level. Comparative studies between different Muslim-majority countries can also provide insight into the effectiveness of religious-based environmental initiatives. Additionally, further exploration is needed into how Islamic education systems can integrate ecological values within their curricula. Lastly, collaborations between Islamic institutions and environmental organizations should be analyzed to evaluate the practical application of theological values in solving real-world ecological problems.

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