

## Islamic Eco-Theology: Religious Narratives in the Climate Crisis in Indonesia

**Mansur Hidayat**

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kudus, Indonesia

Correspondence: ✉ [mansurhidayat@iainkudus.ac.id](mailto:mansurhidayat@iainkudus.ac.id)

<https://doi.org/10.51214/biis.v2i2.678>

### ABSTRACT

*This article delves into the adaptation of Islamic eco-theology as an analytical lens to dissect religious narratives surrounding the climate crisis in Indonesia. With insights derived from a spectrum of interpretations and diverse affiliations, this eco-theology provides a foundation for varied understandings and reactions to environmental challenges. The study is designed to synthesize theory and hermeneutics within a critical-qualitative framework, exploring the interplay between theology and ecology. Ecological and theological behavioural theories are employed to elucidate the data. The findings reveal two main aspects: Firstly, the representation of eco-theology in Islam has undergone a metamorphosis, expanding from its role as a catalyst for uniform responses to environmental issues to a factor enriching the dynamics of understanding and response. Secondly, although the network of Islamic eco-theology influences the perspectives of the Muslim community, its capacity to reach a broader spectrum is still limited. The study underscores that Islamic eco-theology plays a pivotal role as a subsystem in navigating responses to environmental crises, particularly in responding to the climate crisis increasingly integrated within the framework of religious thought and practice in Indonesia.*

### ABSTRAK

Artikel ini mendalami bagaimana ekoteologi Islam diadaptasi sebagai lensa analitis untuk membedah narasi-narasi agama seputar krisis iklim di Indonesia. Dengan wawasan yang bersumber dari interpretasi yang beragam serta berbagai afiliasi, ekoteologi ini memberikan landasan untuk pemahaman dan reaksi yang berbeda-beda terhadap tantangan lingkungan. Kajian dirancang sebagai sintesis analisis teoritis dan hermeneutika dalam sebuah bingkai kritis-kualitatif, mengeksplorasi interaksi antara teologi dan ekologi. Teori-teori perilaku ekologis dan teologis dipakai untuk menguraikan data. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan dua hal utama: pertama, representasi ekoteologi dalam Islam telah bermetamorfosis dari perannya sebagai katalisator keseragaman tanggapan terhadap isu lingkungan menjadi faktor yang memperkaya dinamika pemahaman dan respons tersebut. Kedua, meskipun jejaring ekoteologi Islam mempengaruhi pandangan komunitas Muslim, kapasitasnya untuk menjangkau lebih luas masih terbatas. Studi menggarisbawahi bahwa ekoteologi Islam memegang peran krusial sebagai sebuah subsistem dalam menavigasi respons terhadap krisis lingkungan, khususnya dalam merespon krisis iklim yang kian menyatu dengan kerangka pemikiran dan praktik keagamaan di Indonesia.

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article History

Received: 05-11-2023

Revised: 16-12-2023

Accepted: 18-12-2023

#### Keywords:

Climate Crisis;  
Ecological Behavior;  
Islamic Eco-Theology;  
Religious Narrative;

#### Histori Artikel

Diterima: 05-11-2023

Direvisi: 16-12-2023

Disetujui: 18-12-2023

#### Kata Kunci:

Krisis Iklim;  
Perilaku Ekologis;  
Ekoteologi Islam;  
Narasi Agama;

## A. INTRODUCTION

Earth, the planet currently inhabited by humans, is facing unprecedented environmental challenges. From the rise of global temperatures to changes in weather patterns, the climate crisis is underway and its impacts are being felt all over the world.<sup>1</sup> This climate crisis not only threatens the sustainability of the environment but also poses significant challenges to human life, including health, security, food, and economic stability.<sup>2</sup>

One of the greatest challenges in addressing the climate crisis is understanding and changing human behaviour.<sup>3</sup> Humans play a crucial role in creating and exacerbating the climate crisis through environmentally damaging activities such as deforestation and greenhouse gas emissions. Therefore, effective solutions to the climate crisis must involve changes in human behavior. This requires a deep understanding of what influences human behavior and how it can be changed.<sup>4</sup>

One of the significant factors influencing human behavior is the beliefs and values within religion. In this context, religion has great potential to shape human attitudes and actions towards the environment.<sup>5</sup>

Islam, as the second-largest religion in the world,<sup>6</sup> plays a crucial role in addressing the climate crisis. The teachings and values of Islam can provide a strong foundation for shaping responsible environmental attitudes and behaviors. Furthermore, the Islamic faith has a long history of supporting balance and harmony with nature. Fundamental ecological principles have been integrated into Islamic teachings, thus providing a solid foundation for a sustainable environmental viewpoint.<sup>7</sup>

However, despite this, the influence of Islam on environmental behavior and the climate crisis has not been fully understood. There is a need for further research in this area, particularly in the context of Islamic eco-theology. Eco-theology is a field of study that combines theology with ecological principles. The goal is to understand the relationship between religion and the environment. Furthermore, it can be used to explore how religion can contribute to addressing environmental challenges.<sup>8</sup>

Islamic eco-theology, in this case, focuses on the understanding and application of ecological principles within the context of the Islamic faith. This involves interpreting religious texts and Islamic traditions while considering environmental issues. Research in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Cyril Caminade, K. Marie McIntyre, and Anne E. Jones, "Impact of Recent and Future Climate Change on Vector-Borne Diseases: Climate Change and Vector-Borne Diseases," *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1436, no. 1 (January 2019): 157, <https://doi.org/10.1111/nyas.13950>.

<sup>2</sup> John P. McCarty, "Ecological Consequences of Recent Climate Change," *Conservation Biology* 15, no. 2 (April 2001): 321, <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1523-1739.2001.015002320.x>.

<sup>3</sup> Pj Posas, "Roles of Religion and Ethics In Addressing Climate Change," *Ethics in Science and Environmental Politics*, 2007, 21, <https://doi.org/10.3354/esep00080>.

<sup>4</sup> David M. Kummer and B. L. Turner, "The Human Causes of Deforestation in Southeast Asia," *BioScience* 44, no. 5 (1994): 323–28, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1312382>.

<sup>5</sup> Paul C. Stern et al., "Values, Beliefs, and Proenvironmental Action: Attitude Formation Toward Emergent Attitude Objects1," *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 25, no. 18 (September 1995): 1611–12, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.1995.tb02636.x>.

<sup>6</sup> "Islam: Worldwide Distribution," *Worlddata.info*, accessed June 25, 2023, <https://www.worlddata.info/religions/islam.php>.

<sup>7</sup> 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 2019): 623, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3518-2>.

<sup>8</sup> Christopher D. Ives and Jeremy Kidwell, "Religion and Social Values for Sustainability," *Sustainability Science* 14, no. 5 (September 2019): 1355, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-019-00657-0>.

field of Islamic eco-theology can provide important insights into how Islam can contribute on a global scale.<sup>9</sup>

Not only that, Islamic eco-theology can provide a valuable framework for responding to the climate crisis. By understanding how Islam views the relationship between humans and the environment, new ways can be identified to guide environmental behavior change. In addition, Islamic eco-theology also offers an opportunity to reform the understanding and practices of Islam in the context of the current evolving environmental landscape. Thus, the Islamic faith can remain relevant and responsive to the environmental challenges faced by humanity.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, an examination of how the climate crisis narrative can be understood within the context of Islam is needed. This involves interpretative analysis of religious narratives and theological discourse within the Islamic tradition. Islamic eco-theology can be developed and applied in practice to respond to the climate crisis and other environmental challenges. This can be utilized to observe how Muslim communities around the world have implemented ecotheological principles in their efforts to protect the environment.<sup>11</sup>

Additionally, an examination of the effects and impact of Islamic eco-theology on efforts to combat the climate crisis involves assessing how Islamic eco-theology plays a part in influencing the attitudes, behaviors, and actions of individuals and Muslim communities towards the environment. This includes evaluating how Islamic eco-theology can contribute to addressing the climate crisis on a global scale. As such, this can be integrated into broader climate mitigation efforts.<sup>12</sup>

Through this study, it is hoped that every individual and Muslim community can better understand how Islamic eco-theology can be used as an effective tool in responding to the climate crisis. Furthermore, this approach can help to build a holistic response to the climate crisis.

By understanding how Islamic teachings and practices can contribute to environmental protection, individuals and Muslim communities may feel more engaged in climate mitigation efforts. Moreover, by comprehending how Islam can respond to and address the climate crisis, Muslim communities can become front-liners in climate crisis mitigation efforts. Consequently, this can involve everything from local environmental actions to advocacy for sustainable environmental policies at national and international levels.<sup>13</sup>

More broadly, this study strives to make a significant contribution to global efforts in addressing the climate crisis. By involving and mobilizing religious communities, the Muslim community can utilize its significant resources and influence to encourage positive change.

---

<sup>9</sup> 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 2021), <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.702>.

<sup>10</sup> Abdelzaher, Kotb, and Helfaya, "Eco-Islam."

<sup>11</sup> Nathalie Seddon et al., "Understanding the Value and Limits of Nature-Based Solutions to Climate Change and Other Global Challenges," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 375, no. 1794 (March 16, 2020): 20190120, <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2019.0120>.

<sup>12</sup> Willis Jenkins, Evan Berry, and Luke Beck Kreider, "Religion and Climate Change," *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 43, no. 1 (2018): 85, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-102017-025855>.

<sup>13</sup> Rahayu Yoseph-Paulus and Richard Hindmarsh, "Addressing Inadequacies of Sectoral Coordination And Local Capacity Building in Indonesia for Effective Climate Change Adaptation," *Climate and Development* 10, no. 1 (January 2, 2018): 35, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17565529.2016.1184609>.

Additionally, there is also the question of how to ensure that Islamic eco-theology is acceptable and applicable across various Muslim communities with diverse values and differing religious practices. Despite such challenges, this research offers an important opportunity to explore and exploit the potential of Islamic eco-theology in addressing the climate crisis.

## B. METHODS

The research employs an interpretative qualitative approach, focusing on understanding religious narratives within the context of Islamic eco-theology and the climate crisis in Indonesia. This approach allows for an in-depth investigation of religious texts and narratives, as well as a broader interpretation of their meanings in an environmental context.<sup>14</sup> The hermeneutic approach is applied to analyze religious texts such as the Quran and Hadith, as well as writings on Islamic eco-theology. This approach aids in understanding how Islamic teachings can be interpreted in the context of environmental sustainability and response to the climate crisis.<sup>15</sup>

The data collection phase encompasses a comprehensive literature review on existing works regarding Islamic eco-theology, climate crisis narratives, and environmental sustainability within Islamic teachings.<sup>16</sup> Document analysis is conducted on religious texts (the Quran and Hadith) and interpretations by scholars, as well as writings on eco-theology.<sup>17</sup>

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Islam and Ecological Balance

Ecology and environmental sustainability are profound concepts manifested in Islamic teachings. This understanding can be traced by referring to various religious sources such as the Quran, Hadith, and scholarly interpretations of these texts. The Quran, as the primary source of Islamic teachings, emphasizes the importance of maintaining the balance of life on Earth<sup>18</sup>. One of the most frequently cited verses is from Surah Ar-Rum in the Quran. (30:41): *"Ẓaharal-fasādu fil-barri wal-baḥri bimā kasabat aidin-nāsi liyuẓīqahum ba'dal-laẓī 'amilū la'allahum yarji'ūn(a)." It means: "Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned so He may let them taste part of [the consequence of] what they have done that perhaps they will return [to righteousness]"*.<sup>19</sup>

This verse emphasizes that environmental damage is the result of human actions and serves as a warning to humanity to return to the right path. As is also narrated in the hadith reported by Imam Muslim, from the companion Jabir, that Prophet Muhammad (peace be

---

<sup>14</sup> Soumaya Pernilla Ouis, "Islamic Ecotheology Based on the Qur'ān," *Islamic Studies* 37, no. 2 (1998): 151–81.

<sup>15</sup> Marita Lindberg Furehaug, "Islam in the Age of the Ecological Apocalypse—A Content Analysis of the Islamic Eco-Theological Discourse" (Master's Thesis, 2020), <https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/84355/Masterthesis.pdf>.

<sup>16</sup> Donatella Vincenti, "'Green' Islam and Social Movements for Sustainability: Socio-Ecological Transitions in the Muslim World," 2017, <https://iris.luiss.it/handle/11385/201123>.

<sup>17</sup> Achmad Dahlan and Asrul Asrul, "Eco-Theology of Water from the Perspective of Hadith: Thematic Study of Al-Mā' Term," *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 30, no. 1 (n.d.): 63–75.

<sup>18</sup> 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, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujs.v23i1.354>.

<sup>19</sup> "Qur'an Kemenag," accessed June 25, 2023, <https://quran.kemenag.go.id/quran/per-ayat/surah/30?from=41&to=60>.

upon him) said: "*Lā yaghriṣu muslimun gharsan wa lā yazra'u zar'an faya'kulu minhu insānun wa lā dābbatun wa lā shai'un illā kāna lahu ṣadaqah.*" It means: "Not a single Muslim plants a tree or a crop, and then a person, an animal, or anything else eats from it, except that it is regarded as a charity for the planter".<sup>20</sup>

This statement underscores the importance of caring for and maintaining nature and the living creatures within it. Additionally, it contains a clear view regarding environmental protection. This understanding is then translated by Muslim scholars and intellectuals into various interpretations and practical guidelines.<sup>21</sup> For instance, the concept of *khalifah fil arḍ* or steward of the Earth, in Islam, refers not only to the role of humans as leaders over other creatures but also bears the responsibility of safeguarding and caring for the Earth.

Similarly, the concept of *iḥsān*, or doing the best one can, implies that in an ecological context, humans are not only responsible for maintaining the environment but are also obliged to strive for improving and ameliorating it to the best of their ability. This includes everything from the management of natural resources to the protection of endangered species.

Another pertinent concept is *tawāzun*, or balance. In Islam, balance is considered a fundamental principle to be applied in all aspects of life, including the relationship between humans and the environment. This means that in utilizing natural resources, humans should always strive to maintain ecological balance.

These concepts demonstrate that Islam has a profound understanding of the importance of maintaining ecological balance. However, it is also crucial to remember that this understanding needs to be translated into concrete actions. This includes everything from personal decision-making to public policy and collective action.

In doing so, the role of scholars and community leaders is paramount. They have a crucial task in facilitating an understanding of Islamic teachings related to ecology and motivating Muslims to take action. This could be through sermons, talks, or educational programs designed to raise awareness about environmental issues.<sup>22</sup>

However, this role is not just for scholars and community leaders. Every individual also has a role and responsibility in maintaining ecological balance. This can start with simple actions such as reducing excessive consumption, using energy efficiently, and supporting sustainable environmental policies.<sup>23</sup>

In a broader context, Islam's understanding of ecological balance also has important implications for various aspects of human life, one of which is the economy. Islamic economic principles, such as the concepts of *zakat* (almsgiving), *infaq* (spending in the way of Allah), and *sadaqah* (voluntary charity), have the potential to be significant instruments in creating a more sustainable economic system. For example, *zakat* and *infaq* can be used to fund

---

<sup>20</sup> "Hadits Seputar Keutamaan Menanam Pohon," [nu.or.id](https://islam.nu.or.id/ilmu-hadits/hadits-seputar-keutamaan-menanam-pohon-YmVMN), accessed June 25, 2023, <https://islam.nu.or.id/ilmu-hadits/hadits-seputar-keutamaan-menanam-pohon-YmVMN>.

<sup>21</sup> Fazlun Khalid and Peter Timmerman, "Islam and the Environment," June 25, 2023, 34.

<sup>22</sup> Fachruddin Majeri Mangunjaya and Jeanne Elizabeth McKay, "Reviving an Islamic Approach for Environmental Conservation in Indonesia," *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* 16, no. 3 (January 1, 2012): 286–305, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685357-01603006>.

<sup>23</sup> Anthea H. M. Jacobs, "Critical Hermeneutics and Higher Education : A Perspective on Texts, Meaning and Institutional Culture," *South African Journal of Philosophy = Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif Vir Wysbegeerte* 33, no. 3 (January 2014): 297–310, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02580136.2014.948327>.

environmental projects and assist communities that are most vulnerable to the impacts of the climate crisis.<sup>24</sup>

Moreover, the principles of Islamic economics also encourage environmentally responsible behavior. For instance, the concept of *gharar*, or uncertainty in Islamic economic transactions, can be interpreted as a prohibition against environmentally damaging practices such as irresponsible mining or the use of hazardous pesticides. This demonstrates how Islamic teachings can provide ethical and practical guidance in the management of natural resources.

Beyond economics, Islam's understanding of ecological balance is also relevant in other fields such as education and law. In education, curricula and teaching methods can be designed to incorporate an understanding of the balance between ecology and human responsibilities toward the environment. This could be through the teaching of Islamic doctrines related to ecology or through environmental education based on Islamic principles.<sup>25</sup>

In the legal sphere, Islamic principles can be employed to formulate laws and policies that support environmental protection and sustainability. For example, the concept of *himā* in Islamic law, which refers to a protected area for conservation, can serve as a foundation for environmental conservation regulations and policies.

At the individual level, Islam's understanding of ecological balance can help shape more responsible behaviors and attitudes towards the environment. For instance, the concept of *taqwā*, or god-consciousness, in Islam can be interpreted as an awareness and sense of responsibility towards the environment. This can motivate individuals to engage in actions that support sustainable environmental protection.

In all these aspects, it is important to remember that Islam's understanding of ecological balance is not an instant solution to the challenges of the climate crisis. However, this understanding can provide a valuable framework for seeking solutions from various approaches that have been established previously. This demonstrates how the Islamic faith can contribute to positive environmental change.<sup>26</sup>

Ultimately, the understanding of ecological balance in Islam is about how humans can live in harmony with nature. This is a profound understanding of the interconnection between humans and the environment and how humans can care for the Earth as part of their duty as both human beings and as Muslims.

While this understanding is universal and can apply in various contexts, its application may differ depending on the social, economic, and environmental context. Therefore, it is crucial to always engage in constructive discussions between religious texts, interpretive traditions, and the environmental realities faced. It is necessary to ensure that the understanding and application of Islamic teachings on ecological balance remain relevant in responding to changes.<sup>27</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Mohammed Obaidullah, "Managing Climate Change: The Role of Islamic Finance," SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY, January 1, 2017), <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3303687>.

<sup>25</sup> Obaidullah.

<sup>26</sup> Ibrahim Özdemir, "Towards An Understanding of Environmental Ethics from a Qur'anic Perspective," 2003, 1–37.

<sup>27</sup> Jacobs, "Critical Hermeneutics and Higher Education."

Therefore, this study endeavors to assist Muslims and the broader global community in responding to the current climate crisis. Through the understanding and application of Islamic teachings on ecology, every Muslim can contribute to global efforts to create a more just world for all.

## 2. Climate Crisis in Religious Narratives

The climate crisis has become a tangible threat and has received special attention from all countries in the world. As defined by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), climate change refers to a change that is caused either directly or indirectly by human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and the natural variability of climate over comparable periods of time.<sup>28</sup>

The UNFCCC studies indicate that 1.5 billion workers worldwide will be affected by the climate crisis. Particularly in Indonesia, as an archipelagic country, the threat of the climate crisis is very real. Reports from the IPCC (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change) show that Indonesia is one of the countries expected to experience significant impacts from climate change, ranging from warming that can result in forest fires to rising sea levels.<sup>29</sup>

Within the framework of Islam, there are numerous traditions that contain commands to care for the environment and prohibit its destruction. One such example is the advice to be frugal in using water. In a hadith, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) asked his followers not to be wasteful with water even when performing ablution, advising that one mud (approximately 1.5 liters according to Hijaz measurements and two liters according to Iraqi measurements, with some scholars estimating it as half a liter) was sufficient. In another tradition, the companion Anas bin Malik reported that the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) performed ablution with one mud of water and bathed with one sa' up to five muds of water. Another narration from Imam Ahmad and Abu Dawood also emphasizes the prohibition of damaging the environment which is needed by many people and other creatures, such as water, air, and soil.<sup>30</sup>

These narratives illustrate how Islam guides its followers to maintain ecological balance and respond to the climate crisis responsibly. They also demonstrate how religion can provide an ethical framework in human behavior towards the environment. Recent studies in the *Journal of Religion and Demography* indicate that there is a correlation between environmental challenges and religion. These studies suggest that countries with less religious populations tend to use more resources and produce more emissions, but they are also more prepared to face environmental challenges, due to their prosperity. Conversely, countries with more religious populations tend to use fewer resources, but at the same time, they have a smaller capacity to cope with the climate crisis. This is exacerbated by high levels of poverty and population growth.<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> "What Is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change? | UNFCCC," accessed June 25, 2023, <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/what-is-the-united-nations-framework-convention-on-climate-change>.

<sup>29</sup> "What Is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change? | UNFCCC."

<sup>30</sup> Dr Muhammad Hafeez ur Rahman, "Hydro-Resource Management and Conservation in the Teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H)," *JSS* 6, no. 6 (2021), <https://ojs.aiou.edu.pk/index.php/jss/article/view/610>.

<sup>31</sup> Vegard Skirbekk et al., "Religious Affiliation and Environmental Challenges in the 21st Century," *Journal of Religion and Demography* 7, no. 2 (October 6, 2020): 238–71, <https://doi.org/10.1163/2589742X-12347110>.

The climate crisis and religion are interconnected in many ways. For example, religion can influence how people perceive and respond to climate change. It can also affect how communities and individuals implement mitigation and adaptation initiatives against the climate crisis. Furthermore, religion can shape human behavior and can influence societal attitudes towards mitigation efforts.

At the global level, research indicates that more religious countries may behave differently as their economies and technologies develop. This suggests that differences based on beliefs, values, and religious views can play a significant role in international debates on mitigation efforts.<sup>32</sup>

For instance, the lowest per capita energy consumption is observed in countries dominated by the Hindu religion.<sup>33</sup> The lowest adaptive capacity to climate change is found in countries with a majority of Muslim and Hindu communities. On the other hand, in countries where the non-religious are the majority, the level of adaptive capacity to climate change is the highest.<sup>34</sup>

As the impacts of the climate crisis grow, the world is also becoming more religious. This can be observed from the projected decrease in the global population with non-religious affiliations, from 16 percent in 2010 to 13 percent by 2050.<sup>35</sup> While at the same time, the global population with religious affiliations is expected to increase, from 84 percent in 2010 to 87 percent by 2050.<sup>36</sup> Thus, it is necessary to identify effective ways to communicate about environmental issues and risks within religious traditions. In addition, it is also necessary to encourage interfaith and non-religious collaboration in addressing future global environmental challenges.

Religion plays an important role in shaping behavior and attitudes toward the environment. Given the importance of religion in the lives of many people, a better understanding of how religion can influence attitudes and actions toward climate change can be key to developing more effective strategies in addressing global environmental challenges.

### **3. Islamic Eco-theology in the Effort to Combat the Mitigate Crisis**

Islamic eco-theology, which integrates theological understanding with environmental considerations, seeks to make a significant contribution to combating the climate crisis. Beginning with the basic understanding of *khalifah fil arḍ*, or stewardship of the earth, this concept provides an ethical and moral foundation for Muslims in responding to the climate crisis.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>32</sup> Karen L. O'Brien and Johanna Wolf, "A Values-Based Approach to Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change," *WIREs Climate Change* 1, no. 2 (2010): 232–42, <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.30>.

<sup>33</sup> "Variations in Energy Use by Indian Households: An Analysis of Micro Level Data," accessed June 25, 2023, <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0360544206000703>.

<sup>34</sup> Taciano L Milfont et al., "Socio-Structural and Psychological Foundations of Climate Change Beliefs" 44, no. 1 (2015): 17–28.

<sup>35</sup> Benjamin Wormald, "The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050," *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project* (blog), April 2, 2015, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/>.

<sup>36</sup> 1615 L. St NW, Suite 800 Washington, and DC 20036 USA 202-419-4300 | Main 202-857-8562 | Fax 202-419-4372 | Media Inquiries, "Religious Composition by Country, 2010-2050," *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project* (blog), accessed June 25, 2023, <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/interactives/religious-composition-by-country-2010-2050/>.

<sup>37</sup> Dina M Abdelzaher and Amir Abdelzaher, "Beyond Environmental Regulations: Exploring The Potential of 'Eco-Islam' in Boosting Environmental Ethics Within SMEs In Arab Markets," *Journal of Business Ethics* 145 (2017): 357–71.



First, Islamic eco-theology emphasizes the importance of appreciation and reverence for nature as a creation of God. This understanding can stimulate the conservation of natural resources and mitigation against actions that potentially damage the ecosystem. Fundamentally, this creates an ethical orientation that encourages sustainable and responsible behavior towards the environment, which ultimately can help reduce greenhouse gas emissions as negative impacts on the environment.

Second, Islamic eco-theology supports the maintenance and preservation of the environment, which is an essential element in tackling the climate crisis. In Islamic tradition, certain hadiths contain important messages about environmental conservation, including water conservation and the prohibition of harming nature. The implementation of these teachings on an individual and community scale can contribute to the reduction of resource consumption and the enhancement of sustainability.

Third, Islamic eco-theology has the potential to be an effective educational tool in raising awareness and understanding of the climate crisis. For instance, NUCARE-LAZIZNU and LAZIZMU, philanthropic institutions from the two largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, have also played a role in environmental stewardship and conveying prophetic messages in environmental care movements. Through education and advocacy,<sup>38</sup> the Muslim community can be empowered to play a more active role in climate crisis mitigation efforts.<sup>39</sup>

Fourth, Islamic eco-theology can aid in empowering communities to take local action in combating the climate crisis. Initiatives such as reforestation, energy-saving programs, and other strategies contributing to climate change adaptation can be reinforced through the framework of Islamic eco-theology.

Fifth, Islamic eco-theology can play a significant role in promoting environmental justice. In the context of the climate crisis, the concept of justice often becomes a crucial consideration. Islamic eco-theology can help to highlight issues of environmental justice and promote a fair distribution of the impacts of climate change.<sup>40</sup>

#### **4. Interpretation and Implementation of Islamic Eco-theology**

The key to the approach of Islamic eco-theology lies in the integration of two realms of knowledge, ecology and theology, which are combined in a single framework of understanding. Ecological knowledge guides the factual interpretation of environmental conditions and changes, while Islamic theology provides moral and ethical direction in responding to those changes.<sup>41</sup>

Islamic eco-theology emphasizes the importance of balance and harmony with nature, which is a theme very consistent in the Islamic religious tradition. This includes principles such as *mīzān* (balance), *khalīfah* (stewardship), and *rahmah* (compassion), all of which

---

<sup>38</sup> Alviyan Badro K, "Jadi Percontohan Program Pesantren Hijau, LAZISNU dan LPBI PBNU Kunjungi Ponpes Darul Muttaqien di Bogor," *nucare-laziznu*, accessed June 24, 2023, [https://nucare.id/news/jadi\\_percontohan\\_program\\_pesantren\\_hijau\\_lazisnu\\_dan\\_lpbi\\_pbnu\\_kunjungi\\_ponpes\\_darul\\_muttaqien\\_di\\_bogor](https://nucare.id/news/jadi_percontohan_program_pesantren_hijau_lazisnu_dan_lpbi_pbnu_kunjungi_ponpes_darul_muttaqien_di_bogor).

<sup>39</sup> "LAZISNU dan LLHPB Aisyiyah Luncurkan Gerakan Penanaman Pohon dan Sayur dengan Sistem Pola Asuh," accessed June 25, 2023, <https://lazismu.org/view/lazismu-dan-llhpb-aisyiyah-luncurkan-gerakan-penanaman-pohon-dan-sayur-dengan-sistem-pola-asuh>.

<sup>40</sup> Abdelzaher, Kotb, and Helfaya, "Eco-Islam."

<sup>41</sup> Abdelzaher, Kotb, and Helfaya.

influence the way individual Muslims and Muslim communities view and interact with the environment.<sup>42</sup>

The process of interpretation in Islamic eco-theology involves understanding religious texts, such as the Quran and Hadith, as well as Sharia laws, in the context of contemporary environmental issues. This requires a deep understanding of Islamic teachings and how they can be applied to respond to challenges such as climate change.

Interpretation also involves an understanding of the ecological and social context within a specific community or region. For example, an understanding of how climate change affects local and regional communities can influence the way religious texts and ethical principles are interpreted in responding to those changes.<sup>43</sup>

After interpretation, the implementation of Islamic eco-theology becomes the next challenge. This involves applying the principles and values understood through interpretation into concrete actions to respond to environmental challenges. This could take the form of individual actions, such as changing lifestyles to reduce carbon footprints, or communal actions, such as environmental conservation campaigns. Implementation also involves advocacy for change at the policy level. For example, advocating for the enactment of laws and policies that reflect the principles of Islamic eco-theology, such as environmental protection and sustainable resource management.<sup>44</sup>

At the same time, the implementation of Islamic eco-theology also involves education and raising awareness about environmental issues and how to respond to them within an Islamic context. This can be done through various channels, including sermons in mosques, educational programs in schools and universities, as well as social media.

Islamic eco-theology also provides a framework for interfaith dialogue and international cooperation in responding to environmental challenges. Through the interpretation and implementation of these principles, Muslims can collaborate with other communities in facing the climate crisis.

Essentially, the interpretation and implementation of Islamic eco-theology are interconnected and continuous processes. These processes are based on a sustained understanding of theology and ecology and demand reflective and proactive actions in responding to environmental challenges.

However, the main challenge in the interpretation and implementation of Islamic eco-theology is the diversity in understanding and practices of Islam. The multitude of schools of thought, sects, and traditions within Islam leads to differences in how the principles of Islamic eco-theology are interpreted and implemented.

In addition, there are also challenges in integrating the ecotheological approach within different religious and cultural contexts. For example, how can the principles of Islamic eco-

---

<sup>42</sup> Katajun Amirpur, "And We Shall Save the Earth: Muslim Environmental Stewards," in *Middle East and North Africa* (Brill, 2021), 39–58, [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004444973\\_003](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004444973_003).

<sup>43</sup> Daniel R Williams and Michael E Patterson, "Environmental Meaning and Ecosystem Management: Perspectives From Environmental Psychology and Human Geography," *Society & Natural Resources* 9, no. 5 (1996): 507–17.

<sup>44</sup> Hannah Reid et al., "Southern Voices on Climate Policy Choices: Analysis of and Lessons Learned from Civil Society Advocacy on Climate Change," 2012.

theology be applied in contexts where the majority are non-Muslims or in societies with different religious and cultural traditions?.<sup>45</sup>

Another challenge lies in practical issues, such as access to the necessary resources, knowledge, and technology for the implementation of Islamic eco-theology. For example, poor or marginalized communities may not have access to the resources required to adopt sustainable practices.

Despite these challenges, the prospects for Islamic eco-theology remain positive. As a paradigm that integrates ecological knowledge and theology, Islamic eco-theology has the potential to shape a comprehensive and sustainable response to environmental challenges. This is highly relevant in the context of the climate crisis, where a holistic and multidisciplinary response is greatly needed.<sup>46</sup> Thus, Islamic eco-theology can play a significant role in formulating effective mitigation and adaptation strategies. Furthermore, by promoting an ethos of environmental care and maintaining balance with nature, Islamic eco-theology can influence changes in behavior and social norms. This is vital to encourage the systemic changes needed to address the climate crisis.

In a global context, Islamic eco-theology also offers an important and unique perspective in international dialogue and cooperation on climate change. By sharing understandings and practices rooted in Islamic tradition and ethics, Muslims can contribute to responding to the climate crisis at a global level.<sup>47</sup>

Next, Islamic eco-theology embraces the potential for socio-ecological transformation through the power of religious narratives. It not only translates religious teachings into pro-environmental action but also shapes a narrative that can influence the public's understanding of their relationship with the environment. Moreover, through this approach, the environment is not just seen as a resource to be exploited, but also as an integral part of human life and well-being. This reflects the Islamic concept of tawhid or the unity of the universe, which encourages handling the environment with respect and consideration for all creatures.

Furthermore, Islamic eco-theology can also make significant contributions in the field of education. School curricula, universities, and other educational institutions can incorporate Islamic eco-theology concepts, thus encouraging the younger generation to think and act ecologically within the framework of their faith. This will also help to realize a more environmentally aware generation.

The ability of Islamic eco-theology to link religious teachings with contemporary and contextual environmental issues makes it potentially an effective tool in raising awareness and action towards the environment. By enhancing the understanding of the relationship between religion and the environment, individuals and communities can gain new insights into how they can contribute to maintaining ecological balance.

Additionally, it can create a framework that facilitates the integration of environmental care into everyday life, at both individual and community levels. Through the interpretation

---

<sup>45</sup> Mohammad Rashidujjaman Rifat, Toha Toriq, and Syed Ishtiaque Ahmed, "Religion and Sustainability: Lessons of Sustainable Computing from Islamic Religious Communities," *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* 4, no. CSCW2 (2020): 1–32.

<sup>46</sup> Berth Danermark, "Applied Interdisciplinary Research: A Critical Realist Perspective," *Journal of Critical Realism* 18, no. 4 (2019): 368–82.

<sup>47</sup> Md Abu Sayem, *Religion and Ecological Crisis: Christian and Muslim Perspectives from John B. Cobb and Seyyed Hossein Nasr* (Taylor & Francis, 2022).

and implementation of ecological and theological principles, individuals and communities can be empowered to actively participate in mitigating and adapting to climate change.<sup>48</sup>

Through the interpretation and implementation of these principles within religious and ecological contexts, this approach allows individuals and communities to respond to these challenges in a sustainable and ethical manner. Furthermore, by providing a framework for understanding and responding to environmental issues within a religious context, Islamic eco-theology contributes to the formation of a holistic and inclusive response to environmental challenges.

In this way, the perspective of Islamic eco-theology can encourage Muslims to look beyond technical solutions and to engage the spiritual and ethical dimensions. Thus, solutions to the climate crisis are expected not only to address environmental issues but also to support a broader transformation towards a more sustainable and equitable life.

#### D. CONCLUSION

Islamic eco-theology can exert a significant influence on both individual and collective understanding of environmental issues, shaping perceptions and responses. Drawing on the ideology of natural balance and the Islamic conception of human beings as custodians of the Earth, Islamic eco-theology has the potential to inspire social behavioral transformation that supports both mitigation and adaptation to the climate crisis. This approach also serves as a foundation for interfaith dialogue and global cooperation in addressing the climate crisis, promoting the adoption of sustainable policy practices grounded in ecological and theological principles.

One of the challenges identified in this study is the interpretation and application of ecological principles in diverse contexts. Therefore, further research is needed to optimize the use of Islamic eco-theology in responding to climate challenges and integrating this approach into broader environmental discourses and practices. In summary, this study offers insights into how Islamic eco-theology can serve as a critical conceptual framework in responding to environmental challenges, particularly the climate crisis. Consequently, Islamic eco-theology has the potential to be an important strategy in combating the climate crisis through the integration of profound religious understanding and practice.

#### References

- Abdelzaher, Dina M, and Amir Abdelzaher. "Beyond Environmental Regulations: Exploring The Potential of 'Eco-Islam' in Boosting Environmental Ethics Within SMEs In Arab Markets." *Journal of Business Ethics* 145 (2017): 357–71.
- Abdelzaher, Dina M., 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 2019): 623–43. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-017-3518-2>.
- Amirpur, Katajun. "And We Shall Save the Earth: Muslim Environmental Stewards." In *Middle East and North Africa*, 39–58. Brill, 2021. [https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004444973\\_003](https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004444973_003).
- Caminade, Cyril, K. Marie McIntyre, and Anne E. Jones. "Impact of Recent and Future Climate Change on Vector-Borne Diseases: Climate Change and Vector-Borne Diseases." *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences* 1436, no. 1 (January 2019): 157–73. <https://doi.org/10.1111/nyas.13950>.

---

<sup>48</sup> Sanjairaj VijayaVenkataRaman, Sanjairaj Iniyan, and Ranko Goic, "A Review of Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation," *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews* 16, no. 1 (2012): 878–97.

- Dahlan, Achmad, and Asrul Asrul. "Eco-Theology of Water from the Perspective of Hadith: Thematic Study of Al-Mā'Term." *Jurnal Ushuluddin* 30, no. 1 (n.d.): 63–75.
- Danermark, Berth. "Applied Interdisciplinary Research: A Critical Realist Perspective." *Journal of Critical Realism* 18, no. 4 (2019): 368–82.
- Furehaug, Marita Lindberg. "Islam in the Age of the Ecological Apocalypse—A Content Analysis of the Islamic Eco-Theological Discourse," 2020. <https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/84355/Masterthesis.pdf>.
- Ives, Christopher D., and Jeremy Kidwell. "Religion and Social Values for Sustainability." *Sustainability Science* 14, no. 5 (September 2019): 1355–62. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-019-00657-0>.
- Jacobs, Anthea H. M. "Critical Hermeneutics and Higher Education : A Perspective on Texts, Meaning and Institutional Culture." *South African Journal of Philosophy = Suid-Afrikaanse Tydskrif Vir Wysbegeerte* 33, no. 3 (January 2014): 297–310. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02580136.2014.948327>.
- Jenkins, Willis, Evan Berry, and Luke Beck Kreider. "Religion and Climate Change." *Annual Review of Environment and Resources* 43, no. 1 (2018): 85–108. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-environ-102017-025855>.
- K, Alviyan Badro. "Jadi Percontohan Program Pesantren Hijau, LAZISNU dan LPBI PBNU Kunjungi Ponpes Darul Muttaqien di Bogor." *nucare-laziznu*. Accessed June 24, 2023. [https://nucare.id/news/jadi\\_percontohan\\_program\\_pesantren\\_hijau\\_lazisnu\\_dan\\_lpbi\\_pbnukunjungi\\_ponpes\\_darul\\_muttaqien\\_di\\_bogor](https://nucare.id/news/jadi_percontohan_program_pesantren_hijau_lazisnu_dan_lpbi_pbnukunjungi_ponpes_darul_muttaqien_di_bogor).
- Khalid, Fazlun, and Peter Timmerman. "Islam and the Environment," June 25, 2023.
- Koehrsen, Jens. "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 2021). <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.702>.
- Kummer, David M., and B. L. Turner. "The Human Causes of Deforestation in Southeast Asia." *BioScience* 44, no. 5 (1994): 323–28. <https://doi.org/10.2307/1312382>.
- "LAZISNU dan LLHPB Aisyiyah Luncurkan Gerakan Penanaman Pohon dan Sayur dengan Sistem Pola Asuh." Accessed June 25, 2023. <https://lazismu.org/view/lazismu-dan-llhpb-aisyiyah-luncurkan-gerakan-penanaman-pohon-dan-sayur-dengan-sistem-pola-asuh>.
- Mangunjaya, Fachruddin Majeri, and Jeanne Elizabeth McKay. "Reviving an Islamic Approach for Environmental Conservation in Indonesia." *Worldviews: Global Religions, Culture, and Ecology* 16, no. 3 (January 1, 2012): 286–305. <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685357-01603006>.
- McCarty, John P. "Ecological Consequences of Recent Climate Change." *Conservation Biology* 15, no. 2 (April 2001): 320–31. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1523-1739.2001.015002320.x>.
- Milfont, Taciano L, Petar Milojev, Lara M Greaves, and Chris G Sibley. "Socio-Structural and Psychological Foundations of Climate Change Beliefs" 44, no. 1 (2015).
- nu.or.id. "Hadits Seputar Keutamaan Menanam Pohon." Accessed June 25, 2023. <https://islam.nu.or.id/ilmu-hadits/hadits-seputar-keutamaan-menanam-pohon-YmVMN>.
- NW, 1615 L. St, Suite 800 Washington, and DC 20036 USA202-419-4300 | Main202-857-8562 | Fax202-419-4372 | Media Inquiries. "Religious Composition by Country, 2010-2050." *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project* (blog). Accessed June 25, 2023. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/interactives/religious-composition-by-country-2010-2050/>.
- Obaidullah, Mohammed. "Managing Climate Change: The Role of Islamic Finance." SSRN Scholarly Paper. Rochester, NY, January 1, 2017. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3303687>.

- O'Brien, Karen L., and Johanna Wolf. "A Values-Based Approach to Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change." *WIREs Climate Change* 1, no. 2 (2010): 232–42. <https://doi.org/10.1002/wcc.30>.
- Ouis, Soumaya Pernilla. "Islamic Eco-theology Based on the Qur'ān." *Islamic Studies* 37, no. 2 (1998): 151–81.
- Özdemir, Ibrahim. "Towards An Understanding of Environmental Ethics from a Qur'anic Perspective," 2003.
- Posas, Pj. "Roles of Religion and Ethics In Addressing Climate Change." *Ethics in Science and Environmental Politics*, 2007. <https://doi.org/10.3354/ese00080>.
- "Qur'an Kemenag." Accessed June 25, 2023. <https://quran.kemenag.go.id/quran/per-ayat/surah/30?from=41&to=60>.
- Rahman, Dr Muhammad Hafeez ur. "Hydro-Resource Management and Conservation in the Teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H)." *JSS* 6, no. 6 (2021). <https://ojs.aiou.edu.pk/index.php/jss/article/view/610>.
- Reid, Hannah, Gifty Ampomah, María Isabel Olazábal Prera, Golam Rabbani, and Shepard Zvigadza. "Southern Voices on Climate Policy Choices: Analysis of and Lessons Learned from Civil Society Advocacy on Climate Change," 2012.
- Rifat, Mohammad Rashidujjaman, Toha Toriq, and Syed Ishtiaque Ahmed. "Religion and Sustainability: Lessons of Sustainable Computing from Islamic Religious Communities." *Proceedings of the ACM on Human-Computer Interaction* 4, no. CSCW2 (2020): 1–32.
- Rozi, Syafwan. "Uderstanding 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>.
- Sayem, Md Abu. *Religion and Ecological Crisis: Christian and Muslim Perspectives from John B. Cobb and Seyyed Hossein Nasr*. Taylor & Francis, 2022.
- Seddon, Nathalie, Alexandre Chausson, Pam Berry, Cécile A. J. Girardin, Alison Smith, and Beth Turner. "Understanding the Value and Limits of Nature-Based Solutions to Climate Change and Other Global Challenges." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 375, no. 1794 (March 16, 2020): 20190120. <https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2019.0120>.
- Skirbekk, Vegard, Alex de Sherbinin, Susana B. Adamo, Jose Navarro, and Tricia Chai-Onn. "Religious Affiliation and Environmental Challenges in the 21st Century." *Journal of Religion and Demography* 7, no. 2 (October 6, 2020): 238–71. <https://doi.org/10.1163/2589742X-12347110>.
- Stern, Paul C., Linda Kalof, Thomas Dietz, and Gregory A. Guagnano. "Values, Beliefs, and Proenvironmental Action: Attitude Formation Toward Emergent Attitude Objects1." *Journal of Applied Social Psychology* 25, no. 18 (September 1995): 1611–36. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1559-1816.1995.tb02636.x>.
- "Variations in Energy Use by Indian Households: An Analysis of Micro Level Data." Accessed June 25, 2023. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0360544206000703>.
- VijayaVenkataRaman, Sanjairaj, Sanjairaj Iniyan, and Ranko Goic. "A Review of Climate Change, Mitigation and Adaptation." *Renewable and Sustainable Energy Reviews* 16, no. 1 (2012): 878–97.
- Vincenti, Donatella. "'Green' Islam and Social Movements for Sustainability: Socio-Ecological Transitions in the Muslim World," 2017. <https://iris.luiss.it/handle/11385/201123>.
- "What Is the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change? | UNFCCC." Accessed June 25, 2023. <https://unfccc.int/process-and-meetings/what-is-the-united-nations-framework-convention-on-climate-change>.

- Williams, Daniel R, and Michael E Patterson. "Environmental Meaning and Ecosystem Management: Perspectives From Environmental Psychology and Human Geography." *Society & Natural Resources* 9, no. 5 (1996): 507–21.
- Worlddata.info. "Islam: Worldwide Distribution." Accessed June 25, 2023. <https://www.worlddata.info/religions/islam.php>.
- Wormald, Benjamin. "The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections, 2010-2050." *Pew Research Center's Religion & Public Life Project* (blog), April 2, 2015. <https://www.pewresearch.org/religion/2015/04/02/religious-projections-2010-2050/>.
- Yoseph-Paulus, Rahayu, and Richard Hindmarsh. "Addressing Inadequacies of Sectoral Coordination And Local Capacity Building in Indonesia for Effective Climate Change Adaptation." *Climate and Development* 10, no. 1 (January 2, 2018): 35–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17565529.2016.1184609>.

