

The Concept of Ecotheology in Tafsir *Al-Baḥr al-Madīd*: Ibn 'Ajibah's Sufistic Interpretation of Environmental Verses in the Qur'an

Abdul Rohman¹, Ach. Khoiri Nabil², Aqib Zuhri Adi Kusuma³,
Muhammad Nasiruddin⁴, Idri⁵

¹²³⁴⁵Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Ampel Surabaya, Indonesian

Correspondence: ilmanhaq9@gmail.com

DOI : 10.29240/alquds.v9i1.11818

Abstract. The world has recently been hit by an environmental crisis caused by human exploitation of nature. This attitude of humans stems from their denial of the sacredness of nature, which is rooted in the loss of spiritual and moral values. In addressing the issue of the environmental crisis, the researcher is interested in examining Ibn 'Ajibah's interpretation of ecological verses and exploring them within the discourse of ecotheology, which has been widely developed recently. This research is purely a literature study, using a multidisciplinary approach that includes thematic interpretation, theological-sufistic, and ecological approaches. The results of this research are twofold: first, based on the issue underlying this research, Ibn 'Ajibah's interpretation of environmental verses is classified into two themes, namely the relationship between Allah and nature, and the relationship between nature and humans. Second, the concept of ecotheology in the *Tafsir al-Baḥr al-Madīd* includes two main concepts, namely: the concept of nature as a divine theophany; and the concept of humans as *ḵbalīfatullāh* fī al-arḍ. In conclusion, in Ibn 'Ajibah's interpretation, nature is a manifestation of Allah, just like humans. Therefore, humans must repair the damage to nature, preserve it, and protect it from further damage. This is an application of their role as Allah's delegates on Earth.

Keywords: Ecotheology; Tafsir al-Baḥr al-Madīd; Environmental Verses

Introduction

The environmental crisis is an important topic to be discussed because it is considered one of the urgent and complex problems.¹ Several reports show that the Earth's capacity to support life is decreasing. Seven of the eight parameters that determine the sustainability of natural ecosystems have exceeded their safe limits. As a result, environmental damage damages the habitats of various living things on this earth due to the failure of the global ecological system.² Ecological damage is a form of environmental degradation that is difficult to avoid. The reason is that this ecological damage is closely related to global temperature warming, which causes global climate crises.³ Thus, climate and weather anomalies that encourage changes in various natural cycles emerge. In addition to disrupting the balance of life, the climate crisis has also triggered an increase in the intensity of disaster events in

¹ Yohanes Candra Sekar Bayu Putra Amuna, "Ecocentrism and Efforts to Respond to the Environmental Crisis," *MINISTRY OF STATE SECRETARIAT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA*, 2024, https://www.setneg.go.id/baca/index/ekosentrisme_dan_upaya_menanggapi_krisis_lingkungan_hidup.

² Johan Rockström et al., "Safe and Just Earth System Boundaries," *Nature* 619 (2023): 102–111.

³ Rukaesih Achmad, Professor of Chemistry at the Open University, said that there are at least three things that are suspected to be the main factors in the increase in the environmental crisis. *First* Global warming (*global warming*) triggered by greenhouses is the main factor in climate change which is quite extreme. *Second* acid rain (*acid rain*) that cause environmental damage, such as acidification (*acidification*) on water bodies, including lakes and rivers, so that "lakes die" because there is no more aquatic life. *Third* depletion of the ozone layer, this has a negative impact on human health, a decrease in the quality of agriculture and plants, and damage to marine ecosystems due to increased ultraviolet radiation. See: Rukaesih Achmad, *Environmental Chemistry: Global Environmental Issues* (Jakarta: Open University, 2011), 1–34.

multiple locations.⁴ Inevitably, studying the environmental crisis has become a hot issue, and solutions continue to be sought.

The leading cause of the current environmental crisis is human arrogance towards nature. Acts of human exploitation tend to focus only on biophysical and economic aspects, without considering non-physical (spiritual) aspects.⁵ As a result, modern humans have caused ecocide and environmental crises.⁶ Nature is no longer valued as something sacred or a symbol of a higher spiritual reality,⁷ but is only seen as a dwelling place and an object to be mastered for the interests, comforts, and even luxuries of modern human life.⁸ In other words, anthropocentric understanding is very much in this regard.⁹ That is, the root of the problem of the environmental crisis is the crisis of spirituality and the degradation of modern human morality itself.

One of the solutions to dealing with the environmental crisis is to revive Sufism's thinking about the relationship between Allah, humans, and nature. Because of the virtues of Sufism, a person is considered clean in heart, mind, and behaviour.¹⁰ So that he views his fellow man and all creation as equal and lives in harmony with them, one of the most prominent Sufi figures is Ibn 'Ajibah. Ibn 'Ajibah in his commentary on QS. Fuṣṣilat verses 53 and 54 affirm that the universe and all its contents are the theophany of Allah. Man can know the signs of God's existence through nature and man himself. Nature becomes existent because Allah makes it exist, but when Allah reveals His *Aḥadiyyah*, the existence of nature and all its contents disappears.¹¹ As expressed by Hossein Nasr, seeing nature as theophany means seeing nature as a reflection of God's Presence in all its forms and contents.¹²

⁴ Quoting from kompas.id, based on the record *World Meteorological Organization* (WMO) the occurrence of catastrophic disasters stems from hundreds of climatic anomalous phenomena. For example, the extreme temperature event in 2010 in Russia caused the deaths of up to 55.7 thousand people. Two years earlier, Hurricane Nargis in Myanmar killed 138.4 thousand people. The disaster caused relatively large economic losses. The global climate crisis is caused by many factors. However, the most crucial factor is environmental degradation due to the escalation of deforestation on the earth's surface. Based on data *Global Forest Watch*, during the period 2002-2022 at least 16 percent of the natural forest cover has been cleared. As a result, the ecological carrying capacity for the survival of a species has decreased by 69 percent compared to 1970. This fact is demonstrated by *Living Planet Index*. See: Yoesep Budianto, "The Deterioration of the Earth's Carrying Capacity, Threatening Human Life," *Kompas.Id*, 2023, <https://www.kompas.id/baca/riset/2023/07/06/memburuknya-daya-dukung-bumi-mengancam-kehidupan-manusia>.

⁵ Salamuddin, "Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Concept of The Relationship Between Man, Nature, and God," *Karsa: Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 25, no. 1 (2017): 33; Your Excellency the Governor, *Diving into the Depths of Sufism* (Jakarta: Erlangga, 2006), 265.

⁶ Aulia Rakhmat, "Islamic Ecotheology: Understanding the Concept of Khalifah and the Ethical Responsibility of the Environment," *Academic Journal of Islamic Principles and Philosophy* 3, no. 1 (2022): 2.

⁷ Paul Taylor, *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics* (Princeton University Press, 1986), 13; Seyyed Hossein Nasr and William C. Chittick, *The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr* (Bloomington: World Wisdom Book, 2007), 32; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man* (London: George Allan and Udwin, 1968), 25; Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Knowledge and The Sacred* (New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998), 121.

⁸ Ikhsan Setiawan et al., "Ecological Ethics by Ibnu Arabi and Its Urgency in Islamic Education," in *3rd ICIE: International Conference on Islamic Education: Islamic Education, Sciences and Technology for Sustainable Development on Islamic Education* (Kudus: Faculty of Tarbiyah IAIN Kudus, 2023), 50.

⁹ Junaidi Abdillah, "Deconstruction of Anthropocentric Interpretation: An Analysis of Environmentally Sound Verses," *Kalam: Journal of the Study of Religion and Islamic Thought* 8, no. 1 (2014): 66.

¹⁰ Piet Hizbullah Khaidir et al., "RATIONAL SUFISM: The Influence of Harun Nasution's Thought in the Academic World in Indonesia," *ULUL ALBAB: Journal of Islamic Studies* 24, no. 1 (2023): 147.

¹¹ This understanding can be achieved through the method of direct witness with the eyes of the heart (*al-mushāhadah bi 'ayn al-baṣīrah*) and *mukāshafah* (the revelation of the secret curtains of all reality), not just a method *istidlāl* which is commonly used by Muslim theologians. The process is by achieving the spiritual ecstasy of a servant starting from *maqām fanā'* (The Loss of Consciousness During the Process) *mushāhadah* until it rises to *maqām baqā'* (the existence of servants is covered by the existence of Allah). See: Ibn 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Majīd*, Vol. 5 (Kairo: Ḥasan 'Abbas Zakī, 1999), 190–91.

¹² Nasr, *Knowledge and The Sacred*, 201.

This means that God is the source of all things, while nature and all its contents are manifestations of God's Names and Attributes. Through this view, Nasr invites us to reflect that man is an inseparable part of nature, and nature itself reflects Divine power. In this context, the best way is to make peace and live in harmony with nature. Therefore, preserving nature is essential, considering the inseparable relationship between God, nature (macrocosm), and man (microcosm) that form a whole unit.

Researchers found several scientific articles that examined similar themes. Among them is an article by Ahmad Sururi et al, entitled "Ecological Sufism Concept in the Thought of Seyyed Hossein Nasr". Through a philosophical approach, this study found that the leading cause of ecological crises is the result of spiritual crises. Therefore, ecosufism is considered an alternative idea to answer the problems of environmental turmoil and spiritual crisis of modern humans, as emphasised by Nasr.¹³ Then, an article written by Eko Zulfikar entitled "Insight of the Qur'an on Ecology: A Thematic Study of Environmental Conservation Verses". This article uses a thematic interpretation approach by examining several Qur'an verses related to environmental conservation. It reveals 13 key terms about ecology and at least five ecological conservation efforts. So this article is purely a study of thematic interpretation without relating it to other disciplines.¹⁴ Furthermore, an article written by Riddo Andini et al entitled "The Qur'an and Its Implications for Modern Man: Ecologically-Based Environmental Conservation Integral Perspective". The research uses a philosophical approach and thematic interpretation to uncover the ideas and concepts contained in the concept of environmental conservation based on integral ecology from the perspective of the Qur'an. This article explains that an environmental conservation framework should combine four essential elements, namely the behavioural field (objective), the experience field (subjective), the cultural field (intersubjective), and the system field (inter-objective).¹⁵ From the perspective of researchers, the three articles still seem to be lacking in the approach used because studies related to environmental crisis issues and conservation efforts are very complex. However, it contributes significantly to future research that needs to be reviewed again using a more holistic approach.

This article aims to examine Ibn' Ajibah's interpretation of the verses of the Qur'an in depth from an environmental perspective and elaborate on them within the framework of *the discourse of ecotheology* (environmental theology). This research uses the library *research method* by collecting and analysing primary sources from Ibn' Ajibah's tafsir works and secondary sources related to ecotheology and Sufistic thought discourse. In analysing the data, this study adopts a *thematic interpretation approach (maudlu'i)* to trace the Qur'an verses with ecological content. Furthermore, this approach is enriched with a philosophical approach to explore the ontological and epistemological aspects of Ibn' Ajibah's view of man's relationship with nature. In addition, a theological-sufistic approach is also used, which integrates the dimension of Islamic spirituality in understanding environmental verses. Through this multidisciplinary approach, this article seeks to explore and reconstruct the understanding of nature from the perspective of Sufi interpretation, mainly as reflected in Ibn' Ajibah's interpretation. Thus, this article is expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of Islamic *ecotheology* and offer an alternative perspective to re-realise spiritual values and environmental ethics in response to contemporary ecological crises.

¹³ Ahmad Sururi, Arqom Kuswanjono, and Agus Himmawan Utomo, "Ecological Sufism Concepts in the Thought of Seyyed Hossein Nasr," *Research, Society and Development* 9, no. 10 (2020): 1.

¹⁴ Eko Zulfikar, "The Qur'an's Insight on Ecology: A Thematic Study of the Verses of Environmental Conservation," *QOF: Journal of Qur'an Studies and Tafsir* 2, no. 2 (2018): 113.

¹⁵ Riddo Andini et al., "The Qur'an and Its Implications for Modern Man: Ecologically-Based Environmental Conservation Integral Perspective," *Al Quds: Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 8, no. 1 (2024): 155.

Discussion

Definition of *Ecotheology*

The concept of *ecotheology* is the integration of theology and ecology. Reiter, who first introduced the term ecology in 1865, explained the meaning of ecology etymologically as a combination of two Greek words: “oikos,” meaning house or dwelling place, and “logos,” meaning science. Terminologically, ecology is the science that studies the habitat of living things and the relationships between living things in an ecosystem.¹⁶ Meanwhile, Mujiyono Abdillah expanded the definition of ecology, not limited only to the environment, but also includes terms such as the universe, earth, and sky.¹⁷

Along with the development of science, the definition of ecology has become broader. In *the Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language*, ecology is described as a science that examines the mutual relationship between living things and the surrounding environment.¹⁸ The three key words in ecology are the reciprocal relationship between organisms, as well as the relationship between organisms and the environment. Therefore, ecology can be understood as the study of ecosystems, environmental conditions, and the relationship of living things to their environment.

On the other hand, theology is the science that discusses religious principles, especially those related to belief systems (faith), to defend religious beliefs using rational arguments.¹⁹ With the emergence of various contemporary problems, especially related to environmental damage, the term *ecotheology* (environmental theology) *was born*. *Ecotheology* can be understood as a concept of religious understanding that focuses on environmental problems by linking religious teachings to the ongoing ecological crisis.²⁰ Ecotheology discusses the relationship between religion and nature in the context of the environment.

Nelson Bock argued that ecology and theology are closely related. Theology begins with the idea of God, while ecology starts with observing nature. These two disciplines complement each other and lead to an understanding of the relationship between God and nature. *Ecotheology*, in this sense, is a form of articulation of the relationship between theological and ecological perspectives.²¹ Meanwhile, Troster sees *ecotheology* as an integration between environmental science and theological concepts that results in a new theological paradigm, which has the potential to provide a more effective ethical response to ecological crises.²² From Troster’s argument, it is understood that *ecotheology* is a science that examines religious concerns related to environmental ethical responses that are more effective in overcoming ecological crises.

From the various definitions above, it can be concluded that *ecotheology* is rooted in theological concepts related to environmental damage. From the perspective of the Qur’an, which reviews the relationship between God (religion) and the environment, *ecotheology* places ecological issues as an

¹⁶ Anton Bakker, *Cosmology & Ecology: A Philosophy About the Cosmos as a Human Household* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1995), 34.

¹⁷ "Your Excellency, Abdillah, *Environmentally Friendly Religion Perspective of the Qur'an* (Jakarta: Paramadina, 2001), 21–22.

¹⁸ Department of National Education, *Great Dictionary of Indonesian Language* (Jakarta: Pustaka Bahasa, 2008), 376.

¹⁹ Your Excellency the Governor, *Reactualization of Islamic Scientific Tradition* (Jakarta: Baitul Ihsan, 2006), 131–132.

²⁰ Eko Zulfikar et al., "Eco-Theology in Tafsir Al-Azhar: Hamka's Efforts in Building a Paradigm and Environmental Awareness," in *ICQS Proceeding Conference* (Kudus: The Science of the Quran and Tafsir, IAIN Kudus, 2023), 39.

²¹ Bock Nelson, "An Ecotheology: Toward a Spirituality of Creation and Eco-Justice," *Cross Curreant, Association for Religion and Intellectual Life* 63, no. 4 (2013): 433.

²² Lawrence Troster, "What Is Eco-Theology?," *Cross Currents, Association for Religion and Intellectual Life* 63, no. 4 (2013): 382–383.

integral part of religion. It is hoped that this concept can foster ecological awareness that aligns with the principles set forth by the Qur'an.

Ibn' Ajibah's Interpretation of the Environmentally Sound Verses in the Qur'an

Many verses in the Qur'an mention the concept of nature/the environment. However, in the context of an ecological crisis where the main problem is due to the desacralisation of nature by modern humans due to the loss of spiritual value and moral degradation, the researcher maps this discussion on two main themes, which include: (1) verses that discuss God's relationship with nature; (2) verses about the relationship between nature and humans.

First, the verses that allude to God's relationship with nature. The belief in Islamic ecological treasures states that Allah and nature have a harmonious, close, and continuous relationship in infinite space and time. According to Ozdemir, this relationship is reflected in how God manifests and expresses Himself through His creation.²³ The verses of the Qur'an that support this conclusion include: QS. Al-Fātiḥah [2]: 2; QS. Ali 'Imrān [3]: 190; QS. Yūnus [10]: 3; QS. Al-Isrā' [17]: 44; QS. Al-Rūm [30]: 22; QS. Ṣād [38]: 27-28; QS. Al-A'rāf [7]: 57-58.

The first is QS—Al-Fātiḥah verse 2. Ibn' Ajibah, in his commentary, said that the universe is meant by all creations, including all their different types. As for the form of the universe, it is *mumkin al-wujūd*, which means that it does not have to exist, or its existence is not independent, in the sense that it still needs the "existence" of Allah as *wājib al-wujūd*. According to Ibn' Ajibah, the form of Allah's *rubūbiyyah* to nature is to manifest it from nothingness (*'adam*) to existence (*wujūd*) perfectly and to maintain its continuity and balance. Therefore, every creature in the universe praises Allah for the *rubūbiyyah*.²⁴ He reaffirms this opinion in the tafsir of QS. Āli 'Imrān verse 190. Ibn' Ajibah explained that the creation of the seven heavens, the earth, the change of night to day, and day to night are clear proofs of the existence of God the Creator, the perfection of His power and knowledge for the *Ūlu al-Albāb* or those who have a perfect mind and are clean from all forms of illusion and illusion. According to him, this verse also states that creatures are creations and embody the Divine. The existence of these four things is a manifestation (*tajallī*) of Allah in the sensory realm through the symbolism of identity dualism; darkness (*zulmah*) and light (*nūr*), power (*qudrah*) and wisdom (*hikmah*), matter (*hiss*) and immaterial (*ma'nawī*). But when a servant has reached *maqām fanā'*, he will realise that there is only Allah.²⁵ The theological-sufistic concept shows the unity of the essence of all reality, although it is symbolised using the dualism of identity. This understanding also serves as a means of knowing and experiencing God perfectly for those who open their eyes.

Ibn' Ajibah explains nature's creation process in his interpretation of QS. Yūnus verse 3. Based on this verse, the process of creating the universe is from nothing (*'adam*) to existence (*wujūd*). This process lasted six days based on world time, which still did not have day and night. Ibn' Ajibah argues that after the creation of the universe was completed, Allah dwelt on 'Arsy and perfected the seven heavens and spread out the earth, then regulated all creatures' affairs. The implicit meaning of the redaction of this verse, according to Ibn' Ajibah, is that Allah made 'Arsy a mirror of the manifestation of His holiness and the origin as well as the place of return of all the souls of those who love Him after death. All souls pray to Allah. Ibn' Ajibah also emphasised that the souls that can return to their place of origin are only those who have succeeded in conquering their passions during their life in the world, negating their animal qualities, their souls are always in mortal ecstasy, and purifying Allah

²³ İbrahim Özdemir, "Toward an Understanding of Environmental Ethics from a Qur'anic Perspective," in *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*, ed. R. C. Foltz, F. M. Denny, and A. Baharuddin (USA: The President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2003), 11–12.

²⁴ Ibn 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Majīd*, vol. 1. (Kairo: Ḥasan 'Abbas Zakī, 1999), 54.

²⁵ 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Majīd*, vol. 1, 449.

wherever and whenever they are.²⁶ This is the duty of man, precisely to be able to return the soul to the place of origin of its creation, namely by the side of God, by perpetuating itself in the spiritual-metaphysical dimension during life in the world.

The creation of the universe and all its contents, according to Ibn' Ajibah, had a specific purpose. This idea is stated in QS—Al-Isrā' verse 44. Explicitly, according to Ibn' Ajibah, the verse explains the purpose of the creation of the universe and its contents, which is always to praise Allah and purify Him from all allies and things attributed to creatures. It is clear here that Ibn' Ajibah stated that nature is alive, even though it looks like an inanimate object. As explained earlier, nature and all other beings have two entities, namely *ḥisrī* (physical) on the physical side and *ma'nawī* (metaphysical) on the mental side. Based on these two natural substances, when we say that Allah blesses nature, it is meant to negate its material entity and animate its immaterial entity. When Allah reveals His Oneness (*tajallī Aḥadiyyah dhātibi*) to the universe and all creatures, the existence of all reality is erased.²⁷ The idea of nature as a Divine theophany is enshrined in Ibn' Ajibah's interpretation of QS—al—Rūm verse 22.²⁸ Two things that can be observed from Ibn' Ajibah's explanation are that, like humans, nature has a soul that is directly connected to the *nature of Allah's ḥayāb*. Another critical point is the obligation of humans to maintain and preserve nature as a consequence of praying and praising Allah, because, like humans, nature is also a Divine theophany.

QS also supports the view of nature as a Divine theophany. Ṣād verses 27-28. There is great wisdom and amazing secrets behind the creation of the universe, which is a *kauniyyah* verse that shows the Presence of God in the world. Ibn' Ajibah in his tafsir urges people to see nature not only on the material side, but also to see the essence of nature as a manifestation of Allah. Through a perfect and clean mind, with the universe's existence and its contents, man can know Allah through *tafakkur* and *tadabbur*.²⁹ The researcher in this case underlines the meaning of reason that Ibn' Ajibah refers to is what Muslim philosophers call the illuminating knowledge of *'aql fa'al*.³⁰ In addition to having a spiritual-metaphysical function, Ibn' Ajibah justified the opinion that the function of nature is to supply human needs. Still, humans must maintain the preservation of nature and are prohibited from doing damage to nature.³¹

Ibn' Ajibah's interpretation of the relationship between Allah and nature in the above descriptions shows the essence of nature as *tajallī* Allah in the sensory realm. The process of Allah's

²⁶ Ibn 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Majīd*, vol. 2. (Kairo: Ḥasan 'Abbas Zakī, 1999), 450–451.

²⁷ Ibn 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Majīd*, Vol. 3. (Kairo: Ḥasan 'Abbas Zakī, 1999), 202–204.

²⁸ Ibn 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Majīd*, vol. 4. (Kairo: Ḥasan 'Abbas Zakī, 1999), 335.

²⁹ 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Majīd*, Vol. 5, 20–22.

³⁰ Ibn Sīnā and al-Fārābī believed that sensory perception is merely an initial stage that prepares the intellect (*'AQL*) for rational knowledge, which is not acquired through the senses but through the path of revelation and emanation from the Active Intellect (*al-'Aql al-Fa'al*), which is separate from matter. Sensory knowledge only reveals the outward appearance of things, while the true essence can only be obtained through the intellect. Ibn Sīnā and al-Fārābī concluded that the senses are the gateway to knowledge, which, after being processed through the intellect and assisted by emanation from the Active Intellect, produces more perfect knowledge. The ultimate goal of the intellect is to achieve unity with the Active Intellect, and true knowledge (*yaqīniyyah*) can only be attained through this emanation, known as *ma'rīfah isbrāqī* (illuminative knowledge). This means that acquired knowledge (*ḥuṣūl*) is only preparation for achieving knowledge and truth (*ḥudūm*), which is the final goal of the entire process of knowledge. Thus, according to Ibn Sīnā and al-Fārābī, knowledge begins with the senses and ends with illuminative knowledge. See: Ibnu Sīnā, *Al-Ishārāt Wa Al-Tanbīhāt*, Juz 2 (Kairo: Maṭba'ah al-Khayriyyah, n.d.), 116; Jamīl Ṣalībā, *Tārīkh Al-Falsafah Al-'Arabīyyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1973), 163; Abdul Rohman, Amir Reza Kusuma, and Muhammad Ari Firdausi, "The Essence of 'Aql as Kamāl Al-Awwal in the View of Ibnu Sīnā and Its Relation to Education," *Dialogia: Journal of Islamic and Social Studies* 20, no. 1 (2022): 192–93, <https://doi.org/10.21154/dialogia.v20i1.3533>.

³¹ 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Majīd*, Vol. 5, 20–21; Also review its interpretation in QS. Al-A'rāf verses 57-58, See: 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Majīd*, vol. 1, 226–227.

tajallī-an in the sensory sphere begins from nature as non-existent to exist. Therefore, when humans see nature, it is necessary to see the physical side and the inner side as theophany of Allah. Because when I witness *the Aḥadiyyah Dhāt* of Allah, then the existence of all realities other than Allah is melted. Of course, this kind of knowledge can only be achieved through the revelation of the eyes of the heart (*mukāshafah*) and is felt when experiencing a typical Sufi spiritual awareness called *fanā'*. A servant who acquires this cosmology-sufistic knowledge is called *al-'arīf billāh*.

Second, verses that mention the relationship between nature and humans. Nature and humans have an interdependent and connected relationship, which cannot be separated. Both nature and humans are God's creations that are part of a unified ecosystem.³² This is explained in QS, among others. Luqmān [31]: 20; QS. Al-Jāthiyah [45]: 12-13; QS. Al-Baqarah [2]: 30; QS. Fāṭir [35]: 39.

Ibn' Ajibah said that Allah submitted everything in the heavens and on earth for the benefit of man. As stated in QS. Luqmān verse 20. Everything in the sky, such as the sun, moon, stars, rain, and so on, and everything on earth, such as the sea, rivers, trees, fruits, and others, was created to supply human needs. Allah perfects the blessings of man, both physical and mental. Zahir's blessings are in the form of health, welfare, and sufficiency. Meanwhile, the inner blessings are the blessings of faith, confidence, and knowledge. The goal is to meet human needs while living in the world, because humans have a more important obligation than just seeking worldly affairs, namely the obligation to ta'arruf (know) their God as the nature of their creation. According to Ibn' Ajibah, this is the essence of being grateful for Allah's blessings, which is to be thankful not only by seeing the blessing (*lā ru'yah al-ni'mah*), but also by seeing/witnessing Allah, the giver of blessings (*shubūd al-Mun'im*).³³ In the treasures of Sufism, what is meant by testimony here is direct testimony using the holy sense (*al-dhawq al-salīm*) and the sight of the eyes of the heart (*al-ru'yah bi al-baṣīrah*). This is included in Irfani's epistemology, not Burhani's or Bayani's.

Nature was created not only to meet the needs of humans in the world, but also to create a mutual relationship. Allah assigns man as His caliph (delegate/representative) on earth, where his main task is maintaining, prospering, and preserving nature. This idea is enshrined in QS—Al-Baqarah verse 30. In Ibn' Ajibah's view, this verse explains that after Allah created the heavens and angels, He made Prophet Adam and his descendants caliphs on earth, as Allah's delegates to carry out His laws. According to Ibn' Ajibah, Allah has equipped Prophet Adam with extensive knowledge, especially of *the Asmā'* of Allah and the names of all things.³⁴ This means that Prophet Adam was made a caliph by Allah, not without being equipped with the ability to take care of the world and carry out the laws of Allah. Prophet Adam had sufficient knowledge about Allah and the ability to create a civilisation.

In his commentary, Ibn' Ajibah emphasised that a caliph must repair the damage in the world (*al-iṣlah*) caused by irresponsible parties.³⁵ This idea aligns with humans' need to conduct environmental conservation in the modern era, as an ecological crisis has hit. He stated this again in the interpretation of QS—Fāṭir verse 39. According to Ibn' Ajibah, another duty of man as a caliph is *taṣarruf*, that is, to do all his affairs on earth, including those that intersect with nature, based on

³² Abdillah, *Environmentally Friendly Religion Perspective of the Qur'an*, 145.

³³ 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qurān Al-Majīd*, Vol. 4, 374–375; A similar explanation is also found in the interpretation of QS. Al-Jāthiyah verses 12 and 13. However, Ibn 'Ajibah here more explicitly elaborates on the symbolic meanings of the words *Al-Baḥr* and *al-fulk*. *Al-Baḥr* in this context refers to the ocean of tawhid (*baḥr al-taḥīd*), which is the manifestation of the Majesty of Allah's Essence, becoming the domain where the boat of the servant's contemplation (*fulk al-afkār*) sails in the current of Allah's Essence and the light of Allah's Attributes. This grace is granted to those who have perfected the light of their witness to Allah and whose veils of their creatureliness have vanished. See: 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Majīd*, vol. 5, 304–305.

³⁴ 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Majīd*, vol. 1, 93.

³⁵ Ibid.

Allah's laws. On the one hand, humans are empowered to do anything on earth, such as utilising the results of natural resources, but on the other hand, they are limited by the laws that Allah has set. The goal is for humans always to be grateful and obedient to Allah,³⁶ so that the sustainability of nature will continue to be well-maintained. These two things are the principles of environmental ethics that are reflected in the tafsir of *al-Baḥr al-Madīd*.

From the descriptions above, it is understood that the benefits of nature for humans are the provider of human needs and a medium of reflection/*tadabbur*. Humans also have a role as caliphs on Earth. In a sense, a creature delegated by Allah as the executor of His laws on earth is in charge of repairing the damage to nature, prospering it, and maintaining it so that there is no continuous damage. Therefore, the principles of environmental ethics suggested by Ibn' Ajibah are the principles of *iṣlāḥ* and *taṣarruf*, so that humans cannot arbitrarily exploit nature, because there is a law of Allah that governs all of them.

The Concept of Ecotheology in Tafsir *al-Baḥr al-Madīd*

Ibn' Ajibah's interpretation of environmental verses in the previous discussion indicates two main concepts, if explored in the study of *ecotheology*, which are as follows: **First is the concept of nature as a divine theophany**. This concept contributes to restoring the spiritual consciousness of modern humans. In Islamic cosmology, the universe or cosmos (*al-'ālam*) is generally understood as everything other than Allah. This definition is a standard view in the Islamic tradition. Nature is also understood as the entire order of creation (*al-ḵalq*) realised because of Allah's command (*ḵun/be*). Based on this concept, Muslim cosmologists use the term *al-ḵawn* to refer to the entire cosmos.³⁷ In line with this view, al-Juwaynī translates the term *al-'ālam* as "*Kullu manjūd sinwā Allāh Ta'ālā*" (everything that exists besides Allah).³⁸ Therefore, nature is divided into two categories: the macrocosm, i.e. *the falaq* and everything in it, in the form of *jawhar* and *'arad*, and the microcosm, i.e. the human being as a concrete representation of the macro realm.³⁹ Thus, in the Muslim theological perspective, nature includes everything other than Allah, including the universe as a macrocosm and man as a microcosm.

In his commentary, Ibn' Ajibah views nature as the theophany of Allah. The macro and micro realms were created by Allah so that humans can know God through his creation. The evidence of God's existence can be seen from the existence of nature itself. Likewise, nature is a manifestation of Allah's knowledge. Ibn' Ajibah urged everyone to look at nature from two perspectives, namely the perspective of nature as a form of matter that is visible to the naked eye and touched by the body, and the perspective of nature as an immaterial form that is its essence.⁴⁰ The consequence of Ibn' Ajibah's idea is that *what ḵalq (creation) means* is everything that is manifested and seen in the sensory realm through the process of *tajallī*. In other words, God manifests Himself to the physical world through nature.

Although the form of nature has two different perspectives, it has one essence, namely *the tajallī* of Allah. Ibn' Ajibah argues that a person who has come to the knowledge of the secrets of divinity (*wuṣūl*) will discover that nature is only a relative form, non-existent, because what is seen and witnessed is only Allah. This happens because of the spiritual witness that God is the axis of all reality.

³⁶ 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qurān Al-Majīd*, vol. 4, 549.

³⁷ John L. Esposito, *Oxford Encyclopedia of Modern Islamic World* (Bandung: Mizan, 2001), 80.

³⁸ 'Abd Mālik Al-Juwaynī, *Lam 'Al-Adillab Fī Qawā'id A'qā'id Abl Al-Sunnab Wa Al-Jamā'ab* (Cairo: Dār al-Miṣriyyah, 1965), 76.

³⁹ Muḥammad 'Abd Raūf Al-Mināwī, *Tawfiq 'Allah Mubimmāt Al-Ta'Rif* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'āṣir, 1998), 496.

⁴⁰ 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qurān Al-Majīd*, 1999, vol. 1, 449.

So, when he sees nature (*al-kawn*), what he sees is the Creator of nature (*al-Mukawwin*).⁴¹ In a long phrase, Ibn' Ajibah said:

*"The whole creation was not revealed for you to see, but for you to see God in it. All these sentient creations are only the manifestations of all the manifestations of al-Haqq, the manifestations of all His appearances, the lights of all His Light, which flow from the ocean of His Jabarut. (Therefore) Allah has been there (since time), and nothing is with Him. His existence is still the same as it was long ago. However, other than those who know God, do not know this. People other than themselves are only satisfied by istidlāl to the majesty of the Creator of all creation..."*⁴²

Ibn' Ajibah's above expression shows that the concept of natural theophany is in the realm of irfanic epistemology. The tools used to achieve this kind of knowledge are no longer limited to rational reason and are not only sourced from religious texts but are the result of further exploration through spiritual experience and direct witness with the eyes of the heart. The condition of diving into the essence of the meaning of monotheism as expressed by Ibn' Ajibah above is commonly known as *al-fanā fi al-tawḥīd* (the melting of everything other than Allah when exploring the essence of the oneness of Allah).

According to the researcher, the meaning of nature as God's theophany comes from the understanding that the term *al-'alam* comes from two root words: *'alāmah* (sign) and *'ilm* (knowledge). According to Qurash Shihab, this idea has a reason: nature is a means of knowledge about the form and knowledge of the Creator.⁴³ This opinion is further confirmed in Ibn' Arabi's thought, where nature has another intrinsic value that lies in its role as a sign.⁴⁴ This word derivation suggests that nature is the source of knowledge and signs that refer to something other than itself.⁴⁵ Nature as the knowledge and sign of Allah contains the meaning of the manifestation of Allah.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, in the concept of Hossein Nasr, it is called *tawḥīd*.⁴⁷ Thus, the scope of nature goes far beyond the material dimension. This is where nature can be considered sacred, and the view of nature is related to the spiritual dimension of man.

From the explanation above, the researcher found that Ibn' Ajibah, in his commentary, considered nature as a symbol of a higher reality, namely Allah. The concept of nature as a symbolic reality can be further explored in Maurice Bucke's *theory of cosmic consciousness*. Cosmic consciousness for Bucke is a spiritual acuity of the actual universe life and order, in which one feels close to God and oneness with the universe's energy. This consciousness is achieved through three stages: simple *consciousness*, *self-consciousness*, and *cosmic consciousness*, which are the highest levels of consciousness in

⁴¹ 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'an Al-Majīd*, 1999, Vol. 5, 301; Ibn 'Ajibah, *Iqāz Al-Himām Fī Sharḥ Al-Ḥikām* (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2016), 281–82; Compare this with Ibn 'Athāillah's thoughts on the concept of *Shubūd al-Aḥādīyyah*, which he expressed in the book *to the-Ḥikām*: "The universe is actualized through the actualization of itself, and it is erased by the Oneness of the Essence of Allah". See: Ibn 'Athā'illāh Al-Sakandārī, *To the-Ḥikām Al-'Aḥādīyyah Wa Al-Munājāh Al-Ilāhīyyah*, ed. Hasan al-Samahī Suwaidan (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, n.d.), 32; Ibn 'Athā'illāh Al-Sakandārī, *Al-Tanwīr Fī Isqāṭ Al-Tadbīr* (Kairo: Dār al-Salām al-Hadīshah, 2007), 160; Moh. Isom Mudin, "Shuhūd Al-Aḥādīyyah "Where is Ibn 'Aṭā'illāh: Mafhūmuhā Wa Lawāḥiquhā Wa Dawruhā Fī Ta'In this mythical al-'Ulūm Al-Kawniyyah," *TSAQAFAH: Journal of Islamic Actors* 14, no. 2 (2018): 393, <https://doi.org/https://dx.doi.org/10.21111/tsaqafah.v14i2.2643>.

⁴² 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Quran Al-Majīd*, vol. 4, 335.

⁴³ Mr. Quraish Shihab, *Grounding the Qur'an*, Volume 2. (Jakarta: Lentera Paramadina, 2005), 252.

⁴⁴ Bambang Irawan, Ismail Fahmi Arrauf Nasution, and Hywel Coleman, "Applying Ibn 'Arabi's Concept of Tajalli: A Sufi Approach to Environmental Ethics," *Teosofia: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Mysticism* 10, no. 1 (2021).

⁴⁵ Muḥy al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, "Fuṣūṣ Al-Ḥikām" (Kairo: Dār al-Iḥyā al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, 1946), 91.

⁴⁶ Muḥy al-Dīn Ibn 'Arabī, *Tafsīr Ibnu 'Arabī*, Vol. 2. (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2011), 237.

⁴⁷ Suwito, "Environmental Ethics in Sufistic Cosmology According to Seyyed Hossein Nasr," *Madania* 21, no. 2 (2017): 221.

humans.⁴⁸ Therefore, the awareness that nature is God's theophany is considered cosmic consciousness.

Thus, nature as a symbolic reality is a vertical relationship in spiritual consciousness. This proves that nature is not an inanimate object but a physical reality that refers to a supra-physical entity. This is because symbols are physical expressions of Reality, so the universe is an immanent expression of God. Thus, the universe has a spiritual essence and is not solely material. Cosmic consciousness, as a form of metaphysical consciousness, is a profound intellectual enlightenment of internal life, in which religion plays a vital role in the development of cosmic consciousness and morality, while also contributing to the enhancement of that consciousness. When this cosmic consciousness is applied, there will be respect for nature. This leads to the realisation in man as the caliph of Allah on earth, who has the task of repairing, caring for, and preserving nature.

Second, the concept of human beings as *khalīfatullāh fī al-ard*. This concept is an effort to reconstruct the ethics of the modern human environment, which is plagued by moral degradation. Al-Ṭabarī in his commentary *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'wīl Ay al-Qur'ān*, argues that the caliph comes from the verb (خلف) which means "one who replaces another". Therefore, a king (*al-sultān al-a'zam*) is called a caliph because he replaces the one who preceded him.⁴⁹ It means that Allah made a caliph on earth, that is, as a replacement, which in this case is called a caliph who will judge justly among creatures according to His commands and rules.⁵⁰ Thus, al-Ṭabarī explained that the caliph has an ethical dimension and is responsible for acting justly towards God's creatures on earth, especially towards nature/the environment. The role of humans as the caliph of Allah is very relevant in responding to the management of natural resources so that they can be channelled correctly and adequately, and their balance and sustainability are still considered.

As caliphs, humans are given more privileges compared to other creatures. In Ibn' Ajibah's view, the main advantage of human beings over other creatures is the ability to think through perfect reason. In the case of Prophet Adam, Allah has taught him knowledge that the angels did not know. Allah also teaches what his descendants need in the world, such as the knowledge of language, letters, the substance of everything and its benefits. Therefore, the angels were commanded by Allah to prostrate themselves to the Prophet Adam (i.e. humans), except for the devil, who rejected His command.⁵¹ So, knowledge is a condition for humans to be called caliphs on earth. Because with knowledge and the use of perfect reason, humans can carry out their moral responsibilities as preservers and maintainers of the balance of the environment.

The science that is the leading cause of human beings is called the caliph, according to Ibn' Ajibah, namely the science of the origin of human creation. Ibn' Ajibah explained in his commentary that the human soul is a part of the Great Spirit (*al-Rūḥ al-A'zam*), the Holy Spirit, which is the essence of every creation.⁵² *Al-Rūḥ al-A'zam* is delegated by Allah into the physical body of man as its guide and mover, based on the will and guidance of Allah. Therefore, in the eyes of Ibn' Ajibah, what the Angels criticise regarding the caliphate of man is not directed at his soul, but at his animal side, namely lust. Angels are concerned about human tendencies that always follow the desires of the passions.⁵³ So, lust is an obstacle to the man playing his role as a caliph on earth. This opinion is probably relevant

⁴⁸ Maurice Bucke, *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind* (Bedford, Virginia: Apple Woods Books, 2001), 1–4.

⁴⁹ Ibn Jarīr Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'It's a big deal' Wil Ay Al-Qur'ān*, Vol. 2 (Cairo: Dār al-Hadith, 2010).

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Majīd*, 1999, vol. 1, 94.

⁵² This idea, like nature, is something sacred and living because its essence comes from *the father* of God.

⁵³ 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Majīd*, 1999, vol. 1, 95.

to the current condition where humans greedily exploit natural resources for economic interests and excessive living needs without paying attention to their sustainability.

As for the consequence if a man does not carry out his duties as *kehalīfatullāh* correctly, there will be damage to nature. Ibn' Ajibah states this in the interpretation of QS. al-Rūm verse 41 is about the destruction on earth caused by human actions. This damage is not only environmental damage on land, but also reaches marine ecosystems. When humans dredge the natural resources on land excessively, it will result in global environmental crises, such as climate change, environmental degradation, drought, and erratic rainfall, ultimately impacting economic stagnation due to crop crises and outbreaks. Meanwhile, damage at sea is also the impact of climate change, which results in erratic weather, and eventually, many ships are shipwrecked due to the size of the waves. The sea damage also negatively impacts the community's economy, including small fish catch and other ecological damage. Therefore, Allah obliges humans not to commit immorality and always to obey Allah to avoid these disasters.⁵⁴ In the researcher's view, in the context of the current environmental crisis, what is meant is not immorality, namely not only doing acts that are forbidden by Allah, such as adultery, gambling, eating and drinking something that is forbidden, but also not damaging the environment and overexploiting natural resources. Likewise, obedience here is more precise in managing natural resources in a balanced manner and considering sustainable environmental conservation. From here, Ibn' Ajibah's interpretation of this verse is very relevant to the phenomenon of the global ecological crisis that has occurred recently.

Climate change caused by global warming is causing an imbalance on planet Earth, leading to seasonal uncertainty.⁵⁵ In some areas, extremely high rainfall causes flooding and erosion, while in others, prolonged droughts occur. Damage to natural resources such as soil, water, and air, deforestation, forest degradation, and forest fires are becoming more frequent.⁵⁶ In addition, rising global temperatures are expected to trigger other changes, such as rising sea levels, increased frequency of extreme weather, and changes in precipitation. Other impacts of global warming include disruption of agricultural yields, loss of glaciers, and extinction of various animal species.⁵⁷

Climate change is a long process triggered by excessive and unsustainable energy consumption in industrialised countries. Since the start of the Industrial Revolution, the global environment has been polluted with air that has significantly impacted the Earth's conditions. The use of technology to exploit nature plays a vital role in influencing this situation. One of the impacts is the increase in excessive greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions in the Earth's atmosphere,⁵⁸ Leading to a warming temperature that harms most of the world's population and ecosystems.⁵⁹ The issue of climate change

⁵⁴ 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qurān Al-Majīd*, vol. 4, 346.

⁵⁵ Zulfikar, "The Qur'an's Insight on Ecology: A Thematic Study of the Verses of Environmental Conservation," 120.

⁵⁶ Abdul Quddus, "Islamic Ecotheology: Constructive Theology to Overcome the Environmental Crisis," *Ulumuna* 16, no. 2 (2012): 312.

⁵⁷ Andini et al., "The Qur'an and Its Implications for Modern Man: Ecological-Based Environmental Conservation Integral Perspective," 156.

⁵⁸ and P. Sari, *Indonesia and Climate Change: An Assessment of the Environmental Impacts of Climate Change Across a Range of Sectors Including Health, Food Security and Employment*, 2007.

⁵⁹ A report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) titled "Climate Change and Land," 2019, emphasizes climate change and its impact on land degradation, food security, and greenhouse gas emissions. The report highlights the dark phase that humanity will face. The continued destruction of forests and high emissions from livestock and farming practices will only worsen the climate crisis, further increasing the impact of climate change on Earth. The report recommends that governments and businesses take "strong action" to address climate change. For example, halting deforestation and planting new forests, reforming livestock subsidies, supporting small farmers, and cultivating crops that are more resilient to climate change. See: M. Jarraud and A. Steiner, "Summary for Policymakers: Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation," *Special Report of the*

is closely related to the problems of development, human rights, and justice in the face of the global community's environmental crisis. From the perspective of researchers, these negative impacts, if traced from the historical side, are not solely due to natural activities but are primarily driven by exploitative and consumptive human behaviour with an anthropocentric view that places humans at the centre of everything. Therefore, it is essential to recultivate man's awareness of his role as the caliph of Allah on Earth.

Ibn' Ajibah had a solution so humans could optimise their caliphate duties on earth. He suggested that humans should be committed to purifying themselves from lust and always be in the spiritual dimension, because this spiritual dimension is the connection between humans and the will and guidance of Allah, the Creator and Guardian of the universe. Moreover, if they can tread the spiritual-metaphysical degrees (*maqāmāt*) to attain the knowledge of *the Ulūhiyyah* of Allah through direct mental witnessing. When people are in this phase, their credibility as *khalīfatullāh* on earth⁶⁰ is perfect. Knowledge of the divine essence at the spiritual-metaphysical level by the Sufis is often called *ma'rīfatullāh*, i.e. knowledge of something related to the self and the nature corresponding to its substance,⁶¹ which in this context is *Asmā', Ṣifāt, Af'āl*, and *Dhāt* Allah. Which al-Ghazālī states to be a convincing science, and there is no doubt or mistake because something is revealed.⁶² The way of obtaining this knowledge, according to Abū al-Ḥasan al-Syāzīlī, is through the *view of the baṣīrah* of the faith of the servant, so that there is no longer a need for evidence (*dalīl*) or argument (*burhān*) as Muslim theologians do.⁶³ Thus, a person who acquires this spiritual-metaphysical knowledge will very easily play the role of a caliph because Allah directly guides him in preserving nature through his inner view.

Thus, the advantage humans have is Allah's mandate to protect and manage existing natural resources. This includes responsibility for the continuity, order, beauty, and preservation of nature and the environment. However, along with the development of science and technology, abundant natural resources are exploited in various ways that often go beyond limits, ignore many aspects, and cause environmental damage. Advances in science and technology should be used for things that positively impact humans and nature.

Ibn' Ajibah's thoughts on the sacredness of nature and humans as preservers of the environment are also in line with the views of other Muslim scholars. Quraish Shihab argues that implementing the concept of *khalīfatullāh* is the principle of harmony between nature and man. The interaction between man and nature should occur in harmony, with a relationship based on togetherness in submission and obedience to Allah, not in the pattern of relations between the ruler and the dominated, or between master and slave.⁶⁴ In line with Shihab's view, two modern Muslim thinkers, Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Yusuf al-Qaradhawi, affirmed that the concept of human beings as *khalīfatullāh* gave birth to the principle of *iḥsān* as one of the foundations of environmental conservation. For Qaradhawi, *iḥsān* has two meanings: first, to protect and care perfectly, and second, to mean attention, affection, care, and respect.⁶⁵ Meanwhile, according to Hossein Nasr, the concept

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 9781107025 (2012), <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139177245.003>.

⁶⁰ 'Ajibah, *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Majīd*, 1999, vol. 1, 95.

⁶¹ Abdul Rohman, Nur Hadi Ihsan, and Moh. Isom Mudin, "MA'RIFATULLAH OF IBN 'ATA'ILLAH IN THE FACE OF 'THE PEAK EXPERIENCE' OF ABRAHAM MASLOW," *AFKAR: Journal of Islamic Faith and Thought* 26, no. 1 (2024): 63–64.

⁶² Abū Ḥamīd Al-Ghazālī, *Al-Munqiz Min Al-Dalāl* (Turkey: Ḥaḳīqah Kitābavī, 1981), 4.

⁶³ E. Ova Siti Sofwatul Ummah, "Tarekat, Ritual, Spiritual, and Social Piousness: The Practice of the Experience of the Syadzilyah Order in Banten," *Al-A'raf* 15, no. 2 (2018): 321.

⁶⁴ Shihab, *Grounding the Qur'an*, 295.

⁶⁵ Abdillah, "Deconstruction of Anthropocentric Interpretation: An Analysis of Environmentally Sound Verse,"

of *ihsān* in Islam reflects the beauty of the human soul, which means that a person who is aware of *ihsān* will fully understand the importance of the qualities of compassion, love, peace, and beauty in the spiritual universe of Islam, and will be able to see with his inner eyes the verses contained in nature.⁶⁶ The principle of *ihsān* in the view of Qardhaqi and Nasr corresponds to the principle of *iṣlah* and *taṣarruf* promoted by Ibn' Ajibah. This fact also shows that Ibn' Ajibah's thoughts on the duties of the caliph can still be further developed in today's social and cultural conditions.

Similarly, from an ecological point of view, Ibn' Ajibah's thoughts on the creation of nature show suitability. Roger E. Timm put forward two ecological consequences of creation. First, regarding principles, the consequences of creating the environment are directly related to human attitudes that must respect nature. This consequence stems from two main thoughts, namely the belief that nature provides signs of God's existence, grace, and power, and the view that nature was created to praise and serve God along with man. Second, from a practical perspective, humans' responsibility towards nature must be carried out daily. This consequence is based on the fundamental values found in humans, nature, and the relationship between the two, because nature has an essential meaning in the lives of living beings on Earth.⁶⁷

From the explanation that has been given, it can be concluded that the consequence of the concept of human beings as *khālifātullāh fī al-ard* is a commitment to the spiritual and moral dimensions. In the pursuit of spiritual purification, humans learn to realise that their actions and intentions directly influence the environment. With a good mindset and feelings, humans can contribute positively to what appears in their minds and hearts. Positive thoughts and emotions have a lasting and beneficial impact on everything around them, both living things and inanimate objects. Positive spiritual energy, which flows through thoughts, feelings, and actions, will influence the results to be achieved. These positive thoughts and feelings can change the direction of human goals, which will protect nature and all life in it. This power of love is channelled through spiritual power, which involves a sense of responsibility to preserve the environment. Nature is a home for humans, and there should be harmony and security between humans and nature.

Conclusion

Ibn' Ajibah's thought is still very relevant to today's context. The concept of *ecothology* in tafsir *al-Baḥr al-Madīd* focuses on the relationship between physical and metaphysical aspects and offers a unique perspective, combining spiritual theology with ecology in a single vision of nature as theophany. Ibn' Ajibah viewed nature as a creation of Allah that was centred on Him and would return to Him. God created and preserved nature according to His Will, with a specific purpose and design. In essence, God is the centre of all things.

Humans take a big step towards goodness by changing how we look at the environment. When humans begin to see nature as theophany, a paradigm shift will occur, followed by the emergence of new movements. Understanding the concept of nature as theophany in the tafsir *al-Baḥr al-Madīd* encourages people to feel closer to Allah and respect nature. This view can be an alternative approach to increasing environmental awareness in environmental conservation. This is because humans in the modern era have failed to protect the environment and have forgotten the sacred nature and purpose

⁶⁶ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity* (New York: Harper Collins Publisher, Inc., 2002), 236.

⁶⁷ Roger E. Timm, "The Ecological Impact of Islamic Creation Theology," in *Religion, Philosophy and Environment*, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John A Grim. (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2003), 110.

of nature, using it for personal gain. Researchers unequivocally state that Ibn' Ajjibah's *idea of ecotheology* can be a powerful tool to protect nature from various damages and crises.

It is a common fact that religion plays a vital role in determining morality. To build a wise environmental ethics, humans need "religious experience". Researchers found that Ibn' Ajjibah's concept of *ecotheology* in his commentary on nature as a divine theophany and man as *kebalifatullah* on earth offers a strong theological basis for achieving monotheism of Allah through understanding, devotion, and hard work, which together form a progressive theory for environmental ethics. Therefore, Ibn' Ajjibah's interpretation of ecological verses deserves further research by researchers who delve into *ecotheology*.

Bibliography

- 'Ajjibah, Ibn. *Iqāz Al-Himām Fī Sharḥ Al-Ḥikam*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2016.
- 'Ajjibah, Ibnu. *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Majīd*. Vol. 1. Kairo: Ḥasan 'Abbās Zakī, 1999.
- . *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Majīd*. Vol. 5. Kairo: Ḥasan 'Abbās Zakī, 1999.
- . *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Majīd*. Vol. 2. Kairo: Ḥasan 'Abbās Zakī, 1999.
- . *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Majīd*. Vol. 3. Kairo: Ḥasan 'Abbās Zakī, 1999.
- . *Al-Baḥr Al-Madīd Fī Tafsīr Al-Qur'ān Al-Majīd*. Vol. 4. Kairo: Ḥasan 'Abbās Zakī, 1999.
- 'Arabī, Muḥy al-Dīn Ibn. "Fuṣūṣ Al-Ḥikam." Kairo: Dār al-Iḥyā al-Kutub al-'Arabiyyah, 1946.
- 'Arabī, Muḥy al-Dīn Ibnu. *Tafsīr Ibn' Arabī*. Vol. 2. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 2011.
- Abdillah, Junaidi. "Deconstruction of Anthropocentrist Interpretations: An Environmentally Sound Review." *Kalam: Journal of Religious Studies and Islamic Thought* 8, no. 1 (2014).
- Abdillah, Mujiyono. *Religion From the Perspective of the Qur'an*. Jakarta: Paramadina, 2001.
- Achmad, Rukaesih. *Environmental Chemistry: Global Environmental Issues*. Jakarta: Open University, 2011.
- Al-Ghazālī, Abū Ḥamīd. *Al-Munqiz Min Al-Ḍalāl*. Turki: Ḥaqqīqah Kitābavi, 1981.
- Al-Juwaynī, 'Abd Mālik. *Lam 'Al-Adillah Fī Qawā'id A'qaid Ahl Al-Sunnah Wa Al-Jamā'ah*. Kairo: Dār al-Miṣriyyah, 1965.
- Al-Mināwī, Muḥammad 'Abd Raūf. *Tawfiq 'Alā Muḥimmāt Al-Ta'Rjif*. Beirut: Dār al-Fikr al-Mu'aṣir, 1998.
- Al-Sakandārī, Ibn 'Athā'llāh. *Al-Ḥikam Al-'Aṭā'iyyah Wa Al-Munājah Al-Ilāhiyyah*. Edited by Hasan al-Samahī Suwaidan. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, n.d.
- . *Al-Tamwir Fī Isqāṭ Al-Tadbir*. Kairo: Dār al-Salām al-Hadīṣah, 2007.
- Al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Jarīr. *Jāmi' Al-Bayān 'an Ta'wil Ay Al-Qur'ān*. Vol. 2. Kairo: Dār al-Hadith, 2010.
- Amuna, John Candra Sekar Bayu Putra. "Ecocentrism and Responding to the Environmental Crisis." *MINISTRY OF STATE SECRETARIAT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA*, 2024. https://www.setneg.go.id/baca/index/ekosentrisme_dan_upaya_menangapi_krisis_lingku_ngan_hidup.
- Andini, Riddo, Mohamad Zaenal Arifin, Muhammad Amin, and Ahmad Bahrul Hikam. "The Qur'an and Its Implications for Modern Man: Ecologically Based Environmental Conservation,

- Integral Perspective.” *Al Quds: Jurnal Studi Alquran dan Hadis* 8, no. 1 (2024).
- Aulia Rakhmat. “Islamic Ecotheology: Understanding the Concept of Khalifah and the Ethical Responsibility of the Environment.” *Academic Journal of Islamic Principles and Philosophy* 3, no. 1 (2022).
- Baker, Anton. *Cosmology & Ecology: A philosophy about the cosmos as a human household*. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 1995.
- Bucke, Maurice. *Cosmic Consciousness: A Study in the Evolution of the Human Mind*. Bedford, Virginia: Apple Woods Books, 2001.
- Budianto, Yoesep. “The deterioration of the Earth’s carrying capacity threatens human life.” *Kompas.Id*, 2023. <https://www.kompas.id/baca/riset/2023/07/06/memburuknya-dayadukung-bumi-mengancam-kehidupan-manusia>.
- Department of National Education. *Great Dictionary of Indonesian*. Jakarta: Pustaka Bahasa, 2008.
- Esposito, John L. *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*. Bandung: Mizan, 2001.
- Irawan, Bambang, Ismail Fahmi Arrauf Nasution, and Hywel Coleman. “Applying Ibn ‘Arabi’s Concept of Tajalli: A Sufi Approach to Environmental Ethics.” *Teosofia: Indonesian Journal of Islamic Mysticism* 10, no. 1 (2021).
- Jarraud, M., and A. Steiner. “Summary for Policymakers: Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation.” *Special Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* 9781107025 (2012).
- Kartanegara, Mulyadi. *Reactualization of Islamic Scientific Tradition*. Jakarta: Baitul Ihsan, 2006.
- Khaidir, Piet Hizbullah, Abdul Kadir Riyadi, Idri, Azhar Ibrahim, and Fathurrofiq. “RATIONAL SUFISM: The Influence of Harun Nasution’s Thought in the Academic World in Indonesia.” *ULUL ALBAB: Jurnal Studi Islam* 24, no. 1 (2023).
- Mudin, Moh. Isom. “Shuhūd Al-Aḥadiyyah ‘Inda Ibn ‘Aṭā’illāh: Mafhūmuhā Wa Lawāḥiquhā Wa Dawruhā Fī Ta’Sīs Mitāfīziqā Al-‘Ulūm Al-Kawniyyah.” *TSAQAFAH: Jurnal Perabadian Islam* 14, no. 2 (2018).
- Mulyadi Kartanegara. *Diving into the Depths of Sufism*. Jakarta: Erlangga, 2006.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein. *Knowledge and The Sacred*. New York: Crossroad Publishing Company, 1998.
- . *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man*. London: George Allan and Udwin, 1968.
- . *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity*. New York: Harper Collins Publisher, Inc., 2002.
- Nasr, Seyyed Hossein, and William C. Chittick. *The Essential Seyyed Hossein Nasr*. Bloomington: World Wisdom Book, 2007.
- Nelson, Bock. “An Ecotheology: Toward a Spirituality of Creation and Eco-Justice.” *Cross Current, Association for Religion and Intellectual Life* 63, no. 4 (2013).
- Özdemir, İbrahim. “Toward an Understanding of Environmental Ethics from a Qur’anic Perspective.” In *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*, edited by R. C. Foltz, F. M. Denny, and A. Baharuddin. USA: The President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2003.
- Paul Taylor. *Respect for Nature: A Theory of Environmental Ethics*. Princeton University Press, 1986.
- Quddus, Abdul. “Islamic Ecotheology: Constructive Theology to Overcome the Environmental

- Crisis.” *Ulumuna* 16, no. 2 (2012).
- Rockström, Johan, Joyeeta Gupta, Dahe Qin, Steven J. Lade, Jesse F. Abrams, Lauren S. Andersen, David I. Armstrong McKay, et al. “Safe and Just Earth System Boundaries.” *Nature* 619 (2023): 102–111.
- Rohman, Abdul, Nur Hadi Ihsan, and Moh. Isom Mudin. “MA’RIFATULLAH OF IBN ‘ATA’ILLAH IN THE FACE OF ‘THE PEAK EXPERIENCE’ OF ABRAHAM MASLOW.” *AFKAR: Jurnal Akidah & Pemikiran Islam* 26, no. 1 (2024).
- Rohman, Abdul, Amir Reza Kusuma, and Muhammad Ari Firdausi. “The Essence of ‘Aql as Kamāl Al-Awwal in the View of Ibnu Sīnā and Its Relation to Education.” *Dialogia: Jurnal Studi Islam dan Sosial* 20, no. 1 (2022).
- Salamuddin. “Seyyed Hossein Nasr’s Concept of The Relationship Between Man, Nature, and God.” *Karsa: Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 25, no. 1 (2017).
- Şalībā, Jamīl. *Tārīkh Al-Falsafah Al-‘Arabīyyah*. Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1973.
- Sari, Agus P. *Indonesia and Climate Change: An Assessment of the Environmental Impacts of Climate Change Across a Range of Sectors Including Health, Food Security and Employment*, 2007.
- Setiawan, Ikhsan, Fadloli, Abdul Chalim, and Rizka Isnawati Fajrin. “Ecological Ethics by Ibnu Arabi and Its Urgency in Islamic Education.” In *3rd ICIE: International Conference on Islamic Education: Islamic Education, Sciences and Technology for Sustainable Development on Islamic Education*. Kudus: Fakultas Tarbiyah IAIN Kudus, 2023.
- Shihab, M. Quraish. *Grounding the Qur’an*. Volume 2. Jakarta: Lentera Paramadina, 2005.
- Sīnā, Ibnu. *Al-Ishārāt Wa Al-Tanbīhāt*. Juz 2. Kairo: Maṭba’ah al-Khayriyyah, n.d.
- Sururi, Ahmad, Arqom Kuswanjono, and Agus Himmawan Utomo. “Ecological Sufism Concepts in the Thought of Seyyed Hossein Nasr.” *Research, Society and Development* 9, no. 10 (2020).
- Suwito. “Environmental Ethics in Sufistic Cosmology According to Seyyed Hossein Nasr.” *Madania* 21, no. 2 (2017).
- Timm, Roger E. “The Ecological Impact of Creation Theology According to Islam.” In *Religion, Philosophy and the Environment*, edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker and John A Grim. Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2003.
- Troster, Lawrence. “What Is Eco-Theology?” *Cross Currents, Association for Religion and Intellectual Life* 63, no. 4 (2013).
- Ummah, E. Ova Siti Sofwatul. “Tarekat, Ritual, Spiritual, and Social Piousness: The Practice of the Experience of the Syadziliyah Tarekat in Banten.” *Al-A’raf* 15, no. 2 (2018).
- Zulfikar, Eko. “The Qur’an’s Insights on Ecology: A Thematic Study of the Verses of Environmental Conservation.” *QOF: Journal of Qur’an Studies and Tafsir* 2, no. 2 (2018).
- Zulfikar, Eko, Kusnadi, Halimatussa'diyah, and Nadia Azkiya. “Eco-Theology in Tafsir Al-Azhar: Hamka’s Efforts in Building a Paradigm and Being Environmentally Conscious.” In the *ICQS Proceeding Conference*. Kudus: The Science of the Quran and Tafsir, IAIN Kudus, 2023.