

Reconstructing Ecological Ethics from Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī: The Possibilities and Limits of Its Contextualization in Indonesian Ecotheological Policy

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Abstract. Contemporary Islamic environmental discourse increasingly draws on classical theological and exegetical traditions, yet the methodological legitimacy of translating premodern concepts into modern ecological categories remains contested. This study critically examines how selected concepts in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb khalīfah* (Q. 2:30–31), *amānah* (Q. 33:72), *mīzān* (Q. 55:7–9), *fasād* (Q. 30:41), and *isrāf* (Q. 7:31) can be ecologically reconstructed and compared with the ecotheological policies of Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs. Using qualitative library research and policy analysis, the study employs hermeneutic reading, content analysis, and thematic comparison. The findings show that these concepts contain theological, ethical, and cosmological elements that permit ecological reinterpretation, although they were not originally formulated as a systematic environmental theory. Contemporary categories such as theocentrism, anthropocentrism, ecocentrism, and cosmocentrism are therefore treated as analytical lenses rather than as al-Rāzī's own conceptual vocabulary. Comparison with Eco-Friendly Mosques, Forest Waqf, tree-planting initiatives, and the National Ecotheology Policy Document 2025–2029 reveals normative correspondence but not direct historical influence, conceptual identity, policy causation, or institutional effectiveness. The study concludes that the relationship between al-Rāzī's exegesis and contemporary ecotheological policy is interpretively constructed, normatively comparable, and marked by significant historical and conceptual discontinuities.

Keywords: qur'anic ecotheology, fakhr al-dīn al-rāzī, mafātīḥ al-ghayb, islamic environmental ethics, environmental policy

Introduction

The current global ecological crisis demands the active involvement of various sectors, including religion, in making ethical and theological contributions to environmental issues. In the Islamic context, the Quran contains not only teachings on ritual worship but also includes cosmic verses that hint at the transcendental relationship between God, humanity, and the universe.¹ These verses form the basis for the development of the Qur'anic ecotheological discourse, which views humans as *khalīfah* entrusted with maintaining the balance of nature (*mīzān*) and preventing damage (*fasād*). This theological reflection is in line with the view of Ernst Conradie, who defines ecotheology

¹ A Nur, HB Husin, and M Yasir, "Qur'anic Ecotheology and the Ethics of Forest Protection in Indonesia," *Journal of Qur'anic and Hadith Studies* 26, no. 2 (2025): 351–82, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v26i2.6312>.

as a discipline that bridges the relationship between God, humans, and nature to build ecological awareness.²

In practice, several Islamic educational institutions such as *Islamic boarding schools* in Indonesia have succeeded in integrating the teachings of the Qur'an with ecological conservation practices.³ However, in general, interpretive literature, both classical and contemporary, has not fully made ecology its main concern. This is where Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's contribution becomes significant. Through Mafātih al-Ghayb, he presents a rational-philosophical approach to interpretation that not only discusses linguistic and legal aspects, but also cosmology, science, and ethics.⁴ Al-Rāzī's thinking is in line with Sayyid Hossein Nasr's approach to the theology of monotheism, which states that the ecological crisis is a reflection of the spiritual crisis caused by the disruption of the harmony between humanity and the Divine order.⁵ The presence of cosmological and ethical discussions in classical Islamic sources does not, however, automatically establish their equivalence with modern environmental thought. Determining whether and how such concepts may be ecologically reconstructed requires attention to their original intellectual context as well as to the interpretive assumptions introduced by contemporary scholars.⁶

In Indonesia, ecological threats have reached a critical point. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows declining water quality, air pollution, and increasingly massive deforestation.⁷ However, public response to environmental issues remains minimal and has not translated into concrete action. A national survey conducted by the Indonesian Student Empowerment and Student Empowerment Agency (PPIM) of the State Islamic University (UIN) Jakarta showed that although the majority of Indonesian Muslims are aware of the reality of climate change, their level of concern and involvement in environmental activities is very low.⁸ These findings indicate a discrepancy between public recognition of environmental problems and participation in environmental action. The available evidence, however, does not by itself establish whether this discrepancy is primarily theological, institutional, socioeconomic, political, or behavioral in origin. Therefore, an approach that touches on the moral and religious awareness of society is needed, as emphasized by Izzi Dien in Islamic Ecotheology, that the verses of the Quran must be realized as an ecological ethic that shapes human behavior toward nature.⁹

² Ernst M Conradie, *Christianity and Ecological Theology: Resources for Further Research* (Stellenbosch: SUN Press, 2006).

³ R Anwar and L Hakim, "Quranic Learning Based on Islamic Eco-Theology in Islamic Boarding Schools," *Journal of Islamic Education* 9, no. 2 (2023): 169–86, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpi.v9i2.24933>.

⁴ S Kafrawi, "The Concept of Absolute Existence in the Philosophical Theology of Fakhr Al-Dīn Al-Rāzī," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 15, no. 1 (2004): 125–33, <https://doi.org/10.1080/09596410310001631867>.

⁵ SH Nasr, *Religion and the Natural Order* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁶ Abdullah Saeed, *Interpreting the Qur'an: Towards a Contemporary Approach* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006); Quentin Skinner, "Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas," in *Visions of Politics, Volume 1: Regarding Method* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Tariq Jaffer, *Rāzī: Master of Qur'anic Interpretation and Theological Reasoning* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

⁷ Central Bureau of Statistics, "Environmental Statistics of Indonesia 2024," 2024, <https://www.bps.go.id/id/publication/2024/11/29/f24c83748852c605dd2c73cb/environment-statistics-of-indonesia-2024>.

⁸ Center for Islamic and Community Studies (PPIM) UIN Jakarta, "National Survey: Majority of Indonesian Muslims Believe in Climate Change," 2024, <https://www.uinjkt.ac.id/id/survei-ppim-uin-jakarta-mayoritas-muslim-indonesia-percaya-perubahan-iklim>; Sindonews, "PPIM UIN Survey: Majority of Citizens Never Involved in Interfaith Environmental Action," 2024, <https://nasional.sindonews.com/read/1594533/15/survei-ppim-uin-mayoritas-warga-tak-pernah-terlibat-aksi-lingkungan-lintas-agama-1752829629>.

⁹ Mawil Y Izzi Dien, *The Environmental Dimensions of Islam* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2000).

Within contemporary Islamic environmental discourse, such theological and ethical concerns have increasingly been translated into institutional and policy-oriented initiatives. In response to this situation, the Ministry of *Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia* (Kemenag RI) has initiated ecotheology-based programs, such as Eco-Friendly Mosques, *Forest Waqf*, and a national tree planting policy.¹⁰ In fact, the National Ecotheology Policy Document was drafted as a strategic guideline for 2025–2029, which integrates religious values into environmental policies.¹¹ These initiatives indicate an increasing institutional incorporation of ecological terminology and religious values into the Ministry's environmental discourse. Whether this development represents a substantive transformation in governance rather than primarily a discursive or programmatic shift, however, requires empirical assessment beyond policy statements alone. However, as Nasir, NM, has critiqued, the success of faith-based environmental policies requires a progressive reinterpretation of Sharia to remain relevant in addressing the global ecological crisis.¹²

The study of Qur'anic ecotheology has developed as an interdisciplinary field that connects sacred texts to contemporary ecological contexts. Within it, the concepts of *khalifah*, *amanah*, and *mizan* have become key variables in building the theological foundations of environmental ethics.¹³ This perspective places humans not as rulers, but as managers of God's creation. This principle is in line with *maqāsid al-shari'ah*, which demands the protection of life and the sustainability of nature. In this context, hima the concept of traditional Islamic conservation areas also received attention as an instrument for environmental conservation.¹⁴

Globally, Islamic environmental theology has received mixed responses. In Arab countries like Jordan and Egypt, the approach has been reactive to resource crises, while in the West, Muslim scholars have developed progressive narratives through collaboration with local environmental movements.¹⁵ This shows that Islamic ecotheology is very adaptable to regional contexts, but still requires a strong epistemological foundation so that it does not become merely a normative discourse.¹⁶ It is within this framework that the classical interpretation becomes important to revive.

Fakhr al-Din al-Razi's *Mafatih al-Ghayb* presents itself as a monumental exegetical text that offers a rational-philosophical approach to the Koran. In it, al-Rāzī discusses cosmic relationships, the structure of the universe, and the ethical position of humanity through the lenses of a theology of

¹⁰ Antara News, "Kemenag Jadikan Masjid Until KUA Motor National Ecoteological Movement," 2025, <https://www.antaranews.com/news/4767869/kemenag-jadikan-masjid-hingga-kua-motor-motor-national-ecoteological-national>.

¹¹ Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, "Formulation of the National Ecotheology Policy Document 2025–2029," 2025, <https://islami.co/kemenag-rumuskan-dokumen-kebijakan-ekoteologi-nasional>.

¹² NM Nasir, MS Nair, and PK Ahmed, "Environmental Sustainability and Contemporary Islamic Society: a Shariah Perspective," *Asian Academy of Management Journal* 27, no. 2 (2022): 211–31, <https://doi.org/10.21315/aamj2022.27.2.10>.

¹³ TM Quadir, "Islam and Sustainability: Norms and Barriers," in *Routledge Handbook of the History of Sustainability*, 2017, 120–33, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315543017-9>; FKA Kadir et al., "The Role of Humans as Caliphs in Preserving Nature," *Multidisciplinary Science Journal* 5 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.31893/multiscience.2023059>.

¹⁴ SA Ragozina, "Environmentalism in Modern Islamic Philosophy," *RUDN Journal of Philosophy* 27, no. 2 (2023): 233–50, <https://doi.org/10.22363/2313-2302-2023-27-2-233-250>.

¹⁵ AMF Abd-Elsalam and S Binay, "Sustainable Development in Islamic Theology: From an Event-Based Approach to a Comprehensive Understanding of Sustainability Using the Example of Fatwas Regarding Water in Jordan," *Religion* 15, no. 12 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15121487>.

¹⁶ M Latif et al., "Environmental Theology and Its Relevance to Islamic Law: Perceptions of Muslim Scholars in Makassar, Indonesia," *Samarah* 7, no. 3 (2023): 1734–56, <https://doi.org/10.22373/sjhk.v7i3.18905>.

existence (wājib *al-wujūd*), cosmology, and divine justice.¹⁷ This work represents the richness of Islamic hermeneutics, which combines theology, philosophy, and natural science. Therefore, rereading *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* within the framework of Ecotheology has great potential to bridge the gap between classical interpretation and contemporary practical needs.¹⁸

Recent scholarship has increasingly emphasized that al-Rāzī's exegetical project cannot be adequately understood by separating Qur'anic interpretation from his broader engagement with theology, philosophy, and the rational sciences. Jaffer demonstrates that *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* incorporates methods and concepts drawn from multiple intellectual traditions and systematically brings rational inquiry into Qur'anic exegesis. Janos and Attar similarly show that contemporary Rāzī studies increasingly approach his corpus through interconnected fields such as theology, philosophy, epistemology, natural science, and Qur'anic interpretation rather than treating these disciplines as isolated domains. This interdisciplinary character provides an important historical context for examining the possibilities and limits of contemporary ecological reconstruction of his exegesis.¹⁹

Existing studies have extensively employed Qur'anic concepts such as khalīfah, amānah, mīzān, fasād, and isrāf to construct Islamic environmental ethics. Contemporary scholarship has also demonstrated increasing interest in relating Qur'anic interpretation, Islamic environmental ethics, and religious institutions to ecological problems. Nevertheless, two interrelated analytical problems remain insufficiently addressed. First, contemporary ecological readings of classical tafsīr risk retrospectively attributing modern environmental meanings to premodern exegetes whose theological, philosophical, and cosmological categories emerged within intellectual contexts substantially different from those of contemporary environmental thought. The question, therefore, is not merely whether concepts found in classical tafsīr can be associated with ecological concerns, but whether such associations preserve the historical and conceptual specificity of the original exegetical discourse.

Second, existing studies connecting Islamic theology and environmental policy frequently emphasize normative compatibility between religious concepts and contemporary environmental objectives without adequately examining the interpretive processes through which classical theological categories are transformed into ecological and policy language. Concepts such as khalīfah, amānah, mīzān, fasād, and isrāf may appear compatible with contemporary notions of stewardship, environmental responsibility, ecological balance, environmental degradation, and sustainable consumption. However, semantic or normative similarity does not necessarily establish conceptual identity, historical continuity, or direct intellectual influence. The analytical process through which these classical concepts acquire contemporary ecological meanings therefore requires more systematic examination.

This problem becomes particularly important when *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* is placed in dialogue with the ecotheological discourse of Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs. Rather than assuming that al-Rāzī's exegesis provides a ready-made theological foundation for contemporary environmental

¹⁷ Kafrawi, "The Idea of Mandatory Existence in the Philosophical Theology of Fakhr Al-Dīn Al-Rāzī"; Shihadeh, "Fakhr Al-Dīn Al-Rāzī and Ghūrīd Self-Fashioning."

¹⁸ LA Blankinship, S Gillaspie, and BH Aboul-Enein, "Highlighting the Importance of Biodiversity Conservation through the Qur'an," *Conservation Biology* 39, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1111/cobi.14309>; Nur, Husin, and Yasir, "Qur'anic Ecotheology and the Ethics of Forest Protection in Indonesia."

¹⁹ Tariq Jaffer, *Rāzī: Master of Qur'anic Interpretation and Theological Reasoning* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Damien Janos and Muhammad Fariduddin Attar, *A Comprehensive, Annotated, and Indexed Bibliography of the Modern Scholarship on Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (544/1150–606/1210)* (Leiden: Brill, 2023).

policy, this study treats the relationship between classical interpretation and modern policy as an object of critical inquiry. It examines not only areas of correspondence but also conceptual discontinuities, hermeneutical transformations, and the historical distance separating al-Rāzī's exegetical framework from contemporary ecological governance. Consequently, the central research gap addressed in this study concerns how ecological relevance is constructed through the contextualization of classical tafsīr, what conceptual transformations this process entails, and where the epistemological limits of such contextualization should be located.

Based on this research gap, the study critically examines how selected theological, ethical, and cosmological concepts in Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Mafātih al-Ghayb* can be reconstructed within contemporary ecological discourse and investigates the possibilities and limitations of relating these reconstructed meanings to the ecotheological policies of Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs. Another objective is to offer an integrative model between classical interpretation and public policy strategies to build a foundation for moderate, inclusive, and applicable Islamic environmental theology in Indonesia.

More specifically, the study addresses three questions: First, how does al-Rāzī interpret khalīfah, amānah, mīzān, fasād, and isrāf within the theological and cosmological framework of *Mafātih al-Ghayb*? Second, to what extent can these concepts be reconstructed through contemporary ecological categories without obscuring their historical and conceptual specificity? Third, what forms of correspondence, discontinuity, and interpretive distance emerge when these reconstructed concepts are compared with the ecotheological discourse and policies of Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs?

The uniqueness of this research lies in its attempt to revisit the legacy of classical interpretation through the lens of contemporary ecotheology, using the *Mafātih al-Ghayb* as a primary source. Furthermore, this research reinforces the importance of integrating classical Islamic scholarly discourse with national environmental policy, something that is still rarely discussed in exegetical studies. The scope of the research includes a critical reading of the *Mafātih al-Ghayb*, a mapping of the ecotheological variables contained therein, and an analysis of the ecotheological policies of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs. Through this approach, the research is expected to produce scientific and practical contributions to the development of policy-based Qur'anic Ecotheology.

This research uses a qualitative method with a literature review design (library research) combined with policy analysis.²⁰ The choice of this method is based on the focus of the research, which aims to examine the text of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's classical commentary, *Mafātih al-Ghayb*, while connecting it with the contemporary discourse on ecotheology, currently promoted by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia. The study adopts a critical-contextual analytical approach. "Critical" in this study refers to the systematic distinction between the historical meaning of al-Rāzī's exegetical concepts, their contemporary ecological reinterpretation, and their translation into policy discourse. The analysis therefore does not assume that semantic similarity constitutes conceptual identity, nor that normative correspondence constitutes historical influence or policy causation.

²⁰ J. Frain, "Qualitative Research," in *ABC of Evidence-Based Healthcare*, 2025, 39–46, <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781394219346.ch5>; K. Steen-Johnsen and V. Schanke Sundet, "A Theory of the Policy Process," in *Handbook of Media and Communication Governance*, 2024, 100–111, <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781800887206.00016>.

The research data sources consist of primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include the original text of *Mafātih al-Ghayb*, the Beirut edition of *Dār al-Fikr*, as well as official documents from the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs regarding ecotheology policy, including the National Ecotheology Policy Document 2025–2029, official speeches of the Minister of Religious Affairs, and internal regulations such as KMA No. 244 of 2025. Meanwhile, secondary sources include academic literature on classical interpretation and thought of Ar-Razi, studies on the ecotheology of the Quran as presented by Nasr (1996), Izzi Dien (2000), and Foltz (2003), as well as empirical data from official reports such as the Indonesian Environmental Statistics 2024 (BPS, 2024) and the national survey of PPIM UIN Jakarta on the relationship between religion and the environment (2024).

Data collection was conducted using three main techniques. First, a literature study, which involved searching, reading, and examining primary texts of Ar-Razi's interpretations and relevant academic literature. Second, policy documentation, which involved collecting documents, reports, official publications, and news related to the Ministry of Religious Affairs' ecotheology policy. Third, secondary data analysis, integrating statistical data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) and the results of the PPIM survey, strengthened the empirical basis for the theological analysis.

The analysis proceeds through three stages. The first stage reconstructs the meaning of selected concepts within al-Rāzī's own exegetical, theological, and cosmological framework. The second stage examines how contemporary Islamic environmental scholarship reinterprets those concepts through ecological categories. The third stage compares these reconstructed meanings with the Ministry of Religious Affairs' policy discourse by identifying correspondence, discontinuity, and interpretive distance. At each stage, the study distinguishes between what is explicitly stated in the primary text, what is inferred through contextual interpretation, and what is introduced by contemporary ecological discourse.

Accordingly, similarities between *Mafātih al-Ghayb* and contemporary environmental policies are treated as analytical correspondences rather than evidence of direct influence. The study also avoids inferring policy effectiveness from normative or documentary compatibility because the available sources primarily establish policy orientation rather than measurable environmental outcomes.

Discussion

Cosmology of the Koran in *Mafātih al-Ghayb*

Analysis of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's *Mafātih al-Ghayb* shows that Koranic cosmology plays a central role in the theological construction of the relationship between humans and nature. In interpreting Surah Al-Baqarah [2]: 30:

(Remember) when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to place a vicegerent on earth." They said, "Do You intend to place therein one who will cause corruption and shed blood, while we praise You and glorify Your name?" He said, "Indeed, I know what you do not know."

In interpreting the concept of the caliph, al-Rāzī emphasized that the appointment of humans as *caliphs* does not only signify political power, but also includes a cosmic and epistemological dimension, namely the duty of maintaining God's created order based on the knowledge bestowed

upon humanity. ²¹Al-Rāzī explained that the angels' concern regarding *potential* corruption and bloodshed does not negate the wisdom of human creation, because humans are endowed with '*ilm al-asma'*', namely the ability to know the essence, function, and relationship between entities in the cosmic order, which is the basis of the responsibility of the caliphate:

*(Humans are distinguished by knowledge, namely knowledge of the names and true nature of all things, so that they become worthy to be managers, because the order of the world cannot be achieved except through knowledge).*²²

This epistemological dimension can be further understood in light of Tariq Jaffer's analysis of al-Rāzī's exegetical method. Jaffer demonstrates that al-Rāzī did not treat reason and revelation as mutually exclusive authorities; rather, his Qur'anic interpretation systematically incorporated philosophical reasoning into the explanation of revelation. From this perspective, '*ilm al-asma'*' may be understood not merely as a marker of human superiority but as an epistemic qualification that entails responsibility for acting within the divinely ordered world. Ayman Shihadeh's reconstruction of al-Rāzī's ethical thought further strengthens this reading by showing that al-Rāzī developed an ethics concerned with the consequences of human action and the perfection of moral character. Accordingly, the ecological significance of *khalifah* lies less in human domination over creation than in the accountable exercise of knowledge and agency within it.²³

This interpretation does not in itself constitute an environmental concept of stewardship in the modern sense. Al-Rāzī's discussion primarily concerns human epistemological distinction and the theological justification of the caliphate. Its ecological significance arises only when contemporary interpretation extends the implications of knowledge and responsibility toward the human relationship with nonhuman creation. The concept of ecological stewardship should therefore be regarded as a contemporary interpretive development grounded in, but not identical to, al-Rāzī's original discussion of *khalifah*.

In Surah Ar-Rum [30]: 41:

"There are many kinds of houses and many kinds of homes, like Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Gracious, the Most Gracious, the Most Gracious, the Most Gracious (i.e., the place where you live)." (QS. Ar-Rum [30]: 41).

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī emphasized that *al-fasād* in Surah al-Rūm [30]: 41 is not limited to physical damage alone, but includes disruption of the moral order and natural order as a direct result of human actions, because human ethical deviations impact the cosmic and ecological balance.²⁴ This concept is in line with Surah Ar-Rahman [55]: 7–8, where *mīzān* is understood by Ar-Rāzī as a universal principle

²¹Al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn. *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb (al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr)*. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1420 H/1999 AD, vol. 2, p. 201–204.

²²Al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn. *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb (al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr)*. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1420 H/1999 AD, vol. 2, p. 201–204.

²³Tariq Jaffer, *Rāzī: Master of Qur'anic Interpretation and Theological Reasoning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Ayman Shihadeh, *The Teleological Ethics of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī* (Leiden: Brill, 2006)

²⁴al-Rāzī, Fakhr al-Dīn. *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb (al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr)*. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1420 H / 1999 M, jil. 25, hlm. 111–113 (tafsīr QS. al-Rūm [30]: 41).

of balance that governs the order of nature and human life; violation of this principle, whether physically or morally, will cause damage and chaos in nature.²⁵

Next, Ar-Razi interpreted Surah Al-Ahzab [33]: 72:

Indeed, we offered the trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and feared that they would not be able to carry it out. Then man bore the trust. Indeed, man is unjust and foolish.

In Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb, al- Rāzī explicitly rejects the reduction of the meaning of *amānah* solely to formal law or sharia, and asserts that *amānah* includes the ethical, rational, and moral responsibility of humans as conscious beings in the *cosmic* order.²⁶

Al-Rāzī states that *amānah* is:

This is a comprehensive name for all divine obligations, and is not limited to external .rules alone, but includes reason, wisdom, and bearing responsibility

*(Amānah is a comprehensive term that includes all divine burdens; it is not limited to external laws alone, but also includes reason, wisdom, and moral responsibility).*²⁷

In interpreting the prohibition against extravagance, al-Rāzī emphasized that excess is not only a violation of the law, but also an ethical and spiritual deviation that impacts the order of life.²⁸

He emphasized:

Extravagance goes beyond the bounds of decency, and it is reprehensible because it .damages the body, the soul, and the world

*(Israf goes beyond the limits of balance and is a reprehensible act because it endangers the body, soul and nature).*²⁹

This interpretation opens a possible route toward contemporary ecological contextualization. The prohibition of excess may be extended to practices such as overconsumption, waste, and excessive resource use; however, such an extension represents a modern ecological application of al-Rāzī's ethical reasoning rather than an environmental claim explicitly formulated in Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb.

Ar-Razi's interpretation in Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb shows methodological uniqueness due to its distinctive rational-philosophical approach, which is characteristic of the *Ash'ariyyah* and post-Avicenn

²⁵Al-Razi, Fakhr al-Din. *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb (al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr)*. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1420 H / 1999 M, jil. 29, hlm. 101–103 (tafsīr QS. al-Raḥmān [55]: 7–8).

²⁶Al-Razi, Fakhr al-Din. *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb (al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr)*. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1420 H / 1999 M, jil. 25, hlm. 230–233,

²⁷Al-Razi, Fakhr al-Din. *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb (al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr)*. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1420 H / 1999 M, jil. 25, hlm. 230–233,

²⁸Al-Razi, Fakhr al-Din. *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb (al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr)*. Beirut: Dar Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1420 H / 1999 M, vol. 14, pp. 31–33

²⁹Al-Razi, Fakhr al-Din. *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb (al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr)*. Beirut: Dar Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1420 H / 1999 M, vol. 14, pp. 31–33

schools.³⁰ In interpreting cosmological verses, he not only referred to the text but also used logic and philosophy to understand the structure of the universe, as reflected in his theories on order and human moral responsibility. Recent scholarship confirms that al-Rāzī's rationalism should not be understood as a passive adoption of earlier philosophical systems. Jaffer characterizes his exegetical project as a deliberate synthesis in which philosophical reasoning was incorporated into Qur'anic interpretation, while Peter Adamson demonstrates that al-Rāzī could also critically depart from both Aristotelian and Avicennian physics, as illustrated by his distinctive account of place and spatial extension. These findings suggest that the philosophical dimension of *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* is simultaneously appropriative and critical: al-Rāzī employs inherited philosophical concepts but subjects them to theological and rational reconsideration. This intellectual flexibility is particularly significant for the present study because it provides a methodological precedent for placing revealed texts, rational inquiry, and knowledge of the natural world into sustained dialogue. The significance of al-Rāzī's methodology for this study lies not in the existence of a premodern environmental theory, but in an exegetical structure that permits contemporary scholars to relate revelation, rational inquiry, and knowledge of the natural world. Whether such a structure can legitimately support modern ecological interpretation must nevertheless be evaluated concept by concept rather than assumed in advance.³¹

The Qur'anic cosmology offered by Ar-Razi has similarities with the ecotheology of creation approach, which views creation not only as a metaphysical doctrine, but also as an ethical basis for ecological responsibility.³² This view is also supported by Wersal's study, which states that nature, from an Islamic perspective, is sacramental, meaning it is a sign of God's greatness and contains moral significance. This positions nature as a spiritual and ecological entity, not simply a resource.

In the context of cosmology, Al-Razi's thought also represents the legacy of Islamic philosophy, which views nature as a system of order integral to revelation. As Mohammadyani explains, the Islamic philosophical tradition (including Kindi, Suhrawardi, and Mulla Sadra) combines revelation and reason in understanding reality, which in Al-Razi's case applies specifically to the structure of the cosmos.³³ Al-Rāzī's cosmological interpretation therefore provides conceptual materials that contemporary scholars may employ in reconstructing an environmental-theological framework based on theological order, rational inquiry, and moral responsibility. Such reconstruction, however, remains a contemporary interpretive operation rather than a direct reproduction of al-Rāzī's intellectual project.

The findings indicate that Qur'anic cosmology in *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* constitutes one possible premodern intellectual resource for contemporary Islamic environmental thought. Its relevance is not self-evident, however, and depends on interpretive procedures through which medieval theological and cosmological concepts are translated into contemporary ecological categories. By positioning humans as caliphs within the cosmic structure, Ar-Razi offers a paradigm in which ecological responsibility is part of the theological mandate, not merely an ethical choice. This is relevant to the

³⁰ K El-Rouayheb, "Logika of the Arab World and Islam," dalam *Ensiklopedia Filsafat Abad Pertengahan: Filsafat antara 500 and 1500*, 2020, 1074–83, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-94-024-1665-7_3

³¹ Tariq Jaffer, *Rāzī: Master of Qur'anic Interpretation and Theological Reasoning* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Peter Adamson, "Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī on Place," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 27, no. 2 (2017): 205–236, doi:10.1017/S0957423917000029

³² Nasr, *Agama dan Tataan Alam*

³³ D Mohammadyani and S Majid, "The Influence of Qur'anic Teaching on Famous Muslim Philosophers," *Religious Studies and Theology* 34, no. 1 (2015): 5–18, <https://doi.org/10.1558/rsth.v34i1.24545>.

global environmental crisis, which, according to Baharuddin, is rooted in humanity's failure to maintain the balance of nature as part of its spiritual mission.³⁴

Nevertheless, the existence of theological principles does not automatically produce environmentally responsible behavior. Saniotis notes a persistent tension between the richness of Islamic environmental ethics and the limited incorporation of these principles into environmental practices in many Muslim societies. This observation is analytically important for contextualizing al-Rāzī: classical concepts such as *khaliḥah*, *amānah*, and *mizān* can provide normative and epistemological resources, but their contemporary effectiveness depends on processes of interpretation, institutionalization, and translation into concrete ecological practices. Consequently, the relevance of *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* to modern environmental policy should be understood as normative and contextual rather than as evidence of a direct policy prescription contained in the classical commentary.³⁵

Practically, Ar-Razi's interpretation broadens the understanding of cosmic verses into a source of public policy based on transcendent values. In the Indonesian context, this approach can strengthen the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' discourse on integrating ecotheological values into religious education and environmental policy.³⁶ Certain ethical orientations reconstructed from *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* can be compared with the normative language of initiatives such as Eco-Friendly Mosques and Forest Waqf. This comparison demonstrates possible interpretive compatibility, but it does not establish that these programs derive their normative foundations from al-Rāzī or that classical exegesis is necessary for their policy legitimacy.

Al-Rāzī's interpretive legacy can therefore be examined as a historical intellectual resource whose contemporary ecological significance depends upon processes of selection, reinterpretation, and contextualization. Its relationship with public policy should be understood analytically rather than instrumentally: the task is to examine how classical concepts are mobilized in contemporary discourse, not to employ classical authority as a source of policy legitimation. Al-Razi's perspective, which combines revelation and philosophy, text and context, serves as a model for the Qur'anic hermeneutics needed in building a comprehensive, inclusive, and sustainable Qur'anic Ecotheology.³⁷

A Critical Reconstruction of Theocentric, Anthropocentric, Ecocentric, and Cosmic Tendencies in al-Rāzī's Exegesis

The categories of theocentrism, anthropocentrism, ecocentrism, and cosmocentrism do not belong to al-Rāzī's own conceptual vocabulary. They are employed here as heuristic categories for examining possible structures of human–nature relations within his exegesis. Their application

³⁴ A Baharuddin and MN Musa, "Environmental Ethics in Islam," in *Islamic Bioethics: Current Issues and Challenges*, 2017, 161–82, https://doi.org/10.1142/9781783267507_0008.

³⁵ Arthur Saniotis, "Muslims and Ecology: Fostering Islamic Environmental Ethics," *Contemporary Islam* 6 (2012): 155–171, doi:10.1007/s11562-011-0173-8.

³⁶ Islami.co, "Ministry of Religion Formulates National Ecotheology Policy Document," 2025, <https://islami.co/kemenag-rumuskan-dokumen-kebijakan-ekoteologi-nasional>.

³⁷ M Fazlhashemi, "Islamic Ecotheology," in *Intersections of Religion, Education, and a Sustainable World*, 2025, 25–40, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-81809-7_3; B Somma, "The Multispecies Epistemology of Fahr Al-Dīn Al-Rāzī," in *Knowing Life: Ethics of Multispecies Epistemology*, 2025, 248–62, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781032659-1898>.

therefore requires methodological caution because modern environmental categories may introduce conceptual assumptions that were absent from al-Rāzī's historical intellectual context.³⁸

The theocentric approach constitutes the principal foundation of al-Rāzī's thought. Humanity, nature, and the entire cosmos originate from God and remain subject to divine knowledge, will, wisdom, and governance. Consequently, human authority over the earth is neither absolute nor independent. In interpreting Surah al-Baqarah [2]:30, al-Rāzī presents the appointment of humanity as *khalīfah* as a delegated position within God's created order. Human beings do not possess the earth as autonomous owners but administer a creation that ultimately belongs to God. The ecological significance of this interpretation lies in its limitation of human sovereignty: the exploitation and destruction of nature constitute a misuse of the authority entrusted by God. Environmental preservation can therefore be understood as an expression of obedience to God and recognition of divine sovereignty over creation.³⁹

Within this theocentric foundation, al-Rāzī develops a responsibility-oriented anthropocentric approach. His interpretation of '*ilm al-asma'*' in Surah al-Baqarah [2]:31 positions human beings as distinctive creatures because they possess the intellectual capacity to recognize the names, characteristics, functions, and relationships of created beings. However, this epistemological privilege does not legitimate unrestricted domination over nature. Instead, knowledge becomes the basis of accountability. Human beings occupy a central position within creation because they possess the reason and knowledge required to maintain its order.⁴⁰ Similarly, in his interpretation of *al-amānah* in Surah al-Aḥzāb [33]:72, al-Rāzī understands trust as a comprehensive divine mandate encompassing religious obligations, intellectual capacities, and moral responsibility. Accepting this mandate means accepting the moral and spiritual consequences of managing God's creation.⁴¹

Al-Rāzī's anthropocentrism should therefore be distinguished from exploitative anthropocentrism. Humanity is central not because nature exists solely to satisfy human interests, but because human beings have been entrusted with the responsibility to preserve the order of creation. Human superiority is measured by the ability to exercise knowledge, justice, restraint, and accountability rather than by the capacity to dominate or consume natural resources without limits. This interpretation corresponds with contemporary understandings of *khalīfah* as ecological stewardship, according to which human beings are mandated to care for the earth rather than exploit it.⁴² It is also consistent with the view that the caliphate entails a moral obligation to ensure the sustainability of creation.⁴³

³⁸ Helen Kopnina, Haydn Washington, Bron Taylor, and John J. Piccolo, "Anthropocentrism: More than Just a Misunderstood Problem," *Journal of Agricultural and Environmental Ethics* 31 (2018): 109–127, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10806-018-9711-1>

³⁹ Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, *Mafatih Al-Ghayb* (Dar Ihya' al-Turath al-'Arabi, 1999), vol. 2, 168–172. Richard C Foltz, Frederick M Denny, and Azizan Baharuddin, *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

⁴⁰ Al-Razi, Fakhr al-Din. *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol. 2, p 176–179

⁴¹ Al-Razi, Fakhr al-Din. *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol 25, p 206-209

⁴² A Nur, H B Husin, and M Yasir, "Qur'anic Ecotheology and the Ethics of Forest Protection in Indonesia," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 26, no. 2 (2025): 351–82, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v26i2.6312>; F K A Kadir et al., "The Role of Human Beings as Caliphs in Preserving Nature," *Multidisciplinary Science Journal* 5 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.31893/multiscience.2023059>.

⁴³ H Masoumbeigi et al., "An Approach to the Anthropological Theory of the Qur'an and Hadith and Their Roles in Reducing Environmental Degradation," *International Journal of Medical Toxicology and Forensic Medicine* 11, no. 4 (2021),

Certain aspects of al-Rāzī's interpretation may be read through an ecocentric analytical lens, particularly his discussions of *mīzān*, *fasād*, and *isrāf*. This characterization, however, should not be equated with modern philosophical ecocentrism, which typically attributes intrinsic moral significance to ecological wholes or nonhuman entities independently of human interests. Al-Rāzī's cosmology remains fundamentally theocentric, and the significance of nature derives principally from its position within a divinely ordered creation. The analytical value of the ecocentric category therefore lies in identifying constraints on unrestricted human domination, not in claiming that al-Rāzī articulated a modern ecocentric environmental philosophy.

This does not mean that al-Rāzī places nature above God or humanity. Rather, the ecocentric dimension indicates that nonhuman creation possesses an ordered status and theological significance that cannot be reduced to its instrumental usefulness for human beings. In interpreting Surah al-Raḥmān [55]:7–8, al-Rāzī explains *mīzān* both as a concrete instrument of measurement and as a universal principle of justice, proportion, and balance governing the cosmos. Violating *mīzān* therefore represents more than social injustice; it constitutes a disturbance of the order established within creation.⁴⁴

This ecocentric orientation is further reflected in al-Rāzī's interpretation of *fasād* in Surah al-Rūm [30]:41. He does not restrict *fasād* to physical destruction but connects it with the disruption of moral, social, and natural order resulting from human actions. Human misconduct produces consequences that extend beyond interpersonal relations and affect the wider environment. Ecological destruction is therefore not merely the depletion of resources needed by humanity but also a violation of the balanced structure of creation.⁴⁵ This reading corresponds with contemporary Qur'anic ecological ethics, which understands environmental degradation as the consequence of irresponsible human conduct and the violation of ecological balance.⁴⁶

The prohibition of *isrāf* in Surah al-A'raf [7]:31 also reinforces the ecocentric dimension of al-Rāzī's interpretation. Al-Rāzī understands *isrāf* as an act that exceeds the boundaries of proportionality and causes harm to the body, soul, society, and the broader order of life. Read within an ecological framework, this interpretation challenges excessive consumption, uncontrolled extraction, and the wasteful use of natural resources. Restraint is consequently not only an individual moral virtue but also an ecological principle for maintaining the sustainability of creation.⁴⁷ Nature must be protected not only because it supports human survival but also because its balance forms part of the divine order that human beings are obliged to respect.

The cosmic approach integrates the theocentric, anthropocentric, and ecocentric dimensions into a unified conception of existence. Al-Rāzī frequently describes the universe as an interconnected

<https://doi.org/10.32598/ijmtfm.v11i4.36166>; H Mortada, "TRADITIONAL ISLAMIC VALUES FOR PASSIVE ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN," in *Cities of Opportunities: Connecting Culture and Innovation*, 2020, 107–19, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003022299-12>.

⁴⁴ Al-Razi, Fakhr al-Din. *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, vol 29, p 101-103

⁴⁵ Al-Rāzī, *Mafatih Al-Ghayb (Al-Tafsir Al-Kabir)*. vol. 25, p 111–113

⁴⁶ Z Alwi et al., "Socio-Eco-Religio-Cultural Approaches In Addressing Environmental Damage: An Interpretative Analysis Based On The Quran And Hadith," *Revista de Gestao Social e Ambiental* 18, no. 1 (2024), <https://doi.org/10.24857/RGSA.V18N1-127>; M Muhammad et al., "Freedom That Is Not Absolute: Ecological Ethics and Human-Nature Relationship in the Qur'an," *Studia Ecologiae et Bioethicae* 22, no. 4 (2024): 17–27, <https://doi.org/10.21697/seb.5821>.

⁴⁷ al-Razi, *Mafatih Al-Ghayb*. vol. 14, 31–33

niẓām governed by divine wisdom, justice, and proportionality. Within this structure, moral order and natural order cannot be completely separated. Human injustice, negligence, and excess disturb not only social relationships but also the wider harmony of creation. The concepts of *khalīfah*, *al-amānah*, and *mīẓān* consequently represent different dimensions of the same cosmic responsibility: humanity receives a delegated role from God, bears moral accountability for fulfilling that role, and must act according to the balance governing the universe. Conversely, *fasād* and *isrāf* represent forms of conduct that violate this integrated cosmic order.⁴⁸

These four analytical lenses reveal both the possibilities and the limitations of interpreting al-Rāzī through contemporary environmental categories. They do not demonstrate the existence of a fully developed ecotheology in *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*; rather, they identify theological, ethical, and cosmological elements from which contemporary ecological interpretations may be constructed. The resulting framework should therefore be understood as a modern analytical reconstruction of al-Rāzī rather than as a historical description of an ecological theory explicitly formulated by him.

Its theocentric dimension affirms God as the creator, sovereign, and ultimate owner of the universe. Its anthropocentric dimension emphasizes human knowledge, agency, and accountability. Its ecocentric dimension recognizes the integrity, balance, and ordered significance of nonhuman creation. Its cosmic dimension connects God, humanity, and nature within a unified system of divine order. Al-Rāzī's thought therefore cannot be reduced to a purely human-centered environmental ethic. It presents a relational model in which human authority is derived from divine sovereignty and constrained by the balance inherent in creation.

This reconstruction aligns with contemporary Islamic ecotheological theories. Foltz, Denny, and Baharuddin argue that Islamic environmental ethics must be rooted in Qur'anic principles of balance, trust, and human responsibility rather than reduced to political or economic instruments.⁴⁹ Izzi Dien similarly identifies *khalīfah*, *al-amānah*, and *mīẓān* as central ethical foundations for defining the relationship between human beings and the environment.⁵⁰ The notion of *al-amānah* also requires honesty, justice, and responsibility in all human activities, including the management of natural resources.⁵¹ Al-Rāzī's rational-philosophical commentary enriches these contemporary approaches by connecting Qur'anic environmental ethics with a broader cosmological and theological conception of existence.

The integration of these approaches also clarifies the contextual relationship between al-Rāzī's thought and the ecotheological policies of Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs. The theocentric approach provides a religious foundation for understanding environmental protection as obedience to God. The responsibility-oriented anthropocentric approach supports the formation of environmentally accountable individuals and religious communities. The ecocentric approach provides ethical justification for protecting forests, conserving water, reducing waste, and limiting excessive consumption. Meanwhile, the cosmic approach offers an integrative framework connecting theological values, human conduct, ecological balance, and public policy.

⁴⁸ Al-Razi, Fakhr al-Din. *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, vol. 2, 168–179; vol. 14, 31–33; vol. 25, 111–113 and 206–209; vol. 29, 101–103

⁴⁹ Foltz, Denny, and Baharuddin, *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*.

⁵⁰ Mawil Y Izzi Dien, *The Environmental Dimensions of Islam* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2000).

⁵¹ M S Islam and S Samsudin, "Interpretations of Al-Amanah Among Muslim Scholars and Its Role in Establishing Peace in Society," *Social Change* 48, no. 3 (2018): 437–50, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0049085718781689>.

This analytical framework also clarifies the relationship between al-Rāzī's interpretation and the ecotheological programs of Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs. The relationship should be understood as normative correspondence rather than direct historical influence. The Ministry's Eco-Friendly Mosque program can be associated with the principles of stewardship, moderation, and responsible resource use; Forest Waqf reflects collective responsibility for preserving ecological resources; while tree-planting initiatives and the National Ecotheology Policy Document 2025–2029 can be interpreted through the broader principles of *amānah* and *mīzān*. These programs institutionalize environmental responsibility, whereas al-Rāzī's exegesis offers a theological framework through which such responsibility can be conceptually grounded.⁵²

Accordingly, the main contribution of al-Rāzī's thought to this study is not the provision of specific environmental policies, but the construction of an integrated theological logic, connecting divine sovereignty, human accountability, and ecological balance. This distinction is important because it avoids anachronistically attributing modern environmental policy concepts to *Mafāṭih al-Ghayb*. Instead, classical interpretation functions as a normative and epistemological resource that can be critically contextualized within contemporary Islamic ecotheology and environmental governance.

The Possibilities and Limits of Ecological Contextualization in al-Rāzī's Rational-Philosophical Exegesis

Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī is known as a rational interpreter (*tafsīr bil-ra'y*) who combined the text of the Koran with the philosophy, logic and science of his time. In *Mafāṭih al-Ghayb*, he not only presents traditional interpretations but also adds philosophical debates, such as Aristotelian cosmology and medieval Islamic astronomy, to interpret the verses about the creation of the universe.⁵³ Ar-Razi often raised critical questions about the opinions of previous scholars, including his debates with Abu Muslim al-Isfahānī, and tended towards interpretations based on rationality rather than literalness.⁵⁴ This method earned Ar-Razi the title Imām al-Musykikīn (Imam of the Skeptics), because of his courage in questioning established theological and cosmological assumptions.

This rational-philosophical methodology allows for an interpretation of the Qur'an that is open to other disciplines. For example, in interpreting the concept of *al-mīzān*, al-Rāzī does not limit it to the physical scale, but understands it as a universal principle of order and balance that underlies the existence of the cosmos and life:

Balance is the justice and measure that sustains the world, and that regulates the
.conditions of heaven and earth

*(Balance is the justice and measure that determines the order of the universe; through balance, the conditions of heaven and earth become orderly).*⁵⁵

This approach demonstrates how classical interpretation, though born in a medieval context, has the capacity to engage with contemporary environmental issues. By bringing revelation, rational

⁵² Antara News, "Kemenag Jadikan Masjid Hingga KUA Motor Gerakan Ekoteologi Nasional," 2025.

⁵³ Shihadeh, "Fakhr Al-Dīn Al-Rāzī and Ghūrīd Self-Fashioning."

⁵⁴ AMAR Al Balushi and MKAL Janabi, "Mukhālafat Al-Imam Al-Rāzī Li Abī Muslim Al-Aṣṣfahānī Fī Tafsīr Sūrah Maryam Min Khilāl Al-Tafsīr Al-Kabīr," *Quranica* 16, no. 2 Special Issue 12 (2024): 446–85.

⁵⁵ Al-Razi, Fakhr al-Din. *Mafāṭih al-Ghayb (al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr)*. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1420 H / 1999 M, vol. 29, p. 143–145

argumentation, and cosmological inquiry into sustained dialogue, al-Rāzī provides methodological resources that may be appropriated by contemporary ecological interpretation. This does not imply that his hermeneutics was proto-ecological; rather, its contemporary relevance is generated through a new interpretive context.⁵⁶

Ar-Razi's rational interpretive approach is in line with the ideas of Islamic ecological philosophy, which emphasizes that God is both transcendent and immanent in His creation, and that nature is a sign of Divine existence and wisdom.⁵⁷ From this perspective, humans are positioned not as rulers, but as mediators tasked with maintaining cosmic harmony. This aligns with *fiqh al-bi'ah*, Islamic environmental jurisprudence, which classifies verses on the environment into themes of creation, ecosystems, and human responsibility as khalifah.⁵⁸

Compared with modern literature, Ar-Razi's rational method can be seen as a prototype of interdisciplinary discourse. Just like eco-*maqāṣid* which integrates the principles of *maqāṣid al-shari'ah* with ecological awareness. for example, protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) and property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*) for sustainability,⁵⁹ Al-Razi's *tafsir bil-ra'y* emphasizes dialogue between religion, philosophy, and science. This approach offers advantages over literal interpretations, which tend to be exclusive, because it allows the Quranic text to be read using modern analytical tools. This aligns with Nasir, NM's call for progressive Islamic theology to reinterpret Sharia in response to global ecological challenges, as well as Kolářček's ideas about the need for integration between Islamic law and contemporary ecological practices.⁶⁰

Al-Razi's rational-philosophical method plays a crucial role in the context of the modern ecological crisis. By positioning interpretation as a dialogue between text, reason, and science, his approach provides a methodological framework for integrating Quranic teachings with contemporary environmental science. Statistics Indonesia (BPS) data on air pollution, deforestation, and declining water quality demonstrate that the ecological crisis requires a multidisciplinary approach.⁶¹ Al-Rāzī's interpretations may contribute theological language to contemporary Muslim discussions of biodiversity conservation, climate-change mitigation, and natural-resource management. They should not, however, be treated as providing scientific validation for these practices, whose empirical justification derives from contemporary environmental science rather than classical exegesis.

Theologically, this approach reinforces previous findings: the cosmology of the Quran and ethical concepts such as *the caliph*, *Amanah* and *mīẓān* must be understood through reason and cosmic ethics. A contemporary ecological reading may derive an ethic of environmental responsibility from

⁵⁶ Peter Adamson, "Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī on Place," *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 27, no. 2 (2017): 205–236, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0957423917000029>

⁵⁷ S. H. Nasr, "Questions about Cosmogogenesis—Cosmos as a Subject of Scientific Study," in *Studies on the Relationship between Islam and Science: Volume 1*, 2017, 171–87, <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315242187-19>.

⁵⁸ SA Acim, "The Concept of Fiqh Al-Bī'ah in the Qur'an: A Study of the Verses of the Qur'an on the Environment from the Viewpoint of Lombok Ulama," *Ulumuna* 27, no. 1 (2023): 115–40, <https://doi.org/10.20414/ujs.v27i1.694>.

⁵⁹ A Haris et al., "Eco-Maqāṣid in Climate Change Campaigns: From an Ecolinguistics Study to the Philosophy of Islamic Law," *Al-Manahij: Journal of Islamic Law Studies* 18, no. 2 (2024): 219–36, <https://doi.org/10.24090/mnh.v18i2.10652>.

⁶⁰ Nasir, Nair, and Ahmed, "Environmental Sustainability and Contemporary Islamic Society: a Shariah Perspective"; J Kolářček, "The Qur'ān as a Source for Contemporary Islamic Environmental Ethics*," *Archiv Orientalni* 88, no. 2 (2020): 221–48, <https://www.scopus.com/inward/record.uri?eid=s2.0-85101885071&partnerID=40&md5=aaa4608177bfeefab6de0da9415d477>.

⁶¹ Statistics, "Indonesian Environmental Statistics 2024."

al-Rāzī's discussions of moral accountability, order, and restraint. Nevertheless, the conclusion that environmental protection constitutes a distinct religious obligation is a contemporary normative formulation and should not be directly attributed to al-Rāzī without further textual qualification.

Practically, Al-Razi's argumentative method can be adapted in public discourse, for example, to formulate an Islamic-based ecological education curriculum or to strengthen the normative foundation of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs' policy on Environmentally Friendly Mosques and *Forest Waqf*. In other words, Al-Razi's rational interpretation is not only an academic legacy, but also an epistemological resource for addressing the 21st-century ecological crisis, a bridge between classical interpretive traditions, Islamic philosophy, and modern environmental science.

Ecotheology as Policy Discourse in Indonesia: Institutionalization, Evidence, and Implementation Gaps

The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag RI) has positioned ecotheology as one of its key strategic agendas for the 2025–2029 period. Several initiatives launched include the Eco-Friendly Mosque program, Forest Waqf, and the planting of 1 million matoa trees in commemoration of Earth Day 2025.⁶² In addition, the Ministry of Religious Affairs is currently drafting the 2025–2029 National Ecotheology Policy Document, which aims to integrate Islamic values into the public policy framework.⁶³

The Eco-Friendly Mosque program frames places of worship as potential sites for environmental education, resource efficiency, and community mobilization. However, the documentary sources examined in this study primarily describe program objectives and selected practices; they do not provide sufficient evidence to establish the scale, consistency, or long-term environmental impact of the program. The Forest ⁶⁴*Waqf* Program also Forest Waqf represents an attempt to connect the Islamic institution of waqf with ecosystem conservation. Its normative innovation is evident at the discursive level, although assessing its ecological effectiveness would require empirical evidence concerning land coverage, conservation outcomes, governance arrangements, and long-term institutional sustainability.

On the other hand, large-scale tree-planting movements emphasize religious commitment to sustainability. However, a 2024 survey by PPIM UIN Jakarta revealed a gap: although the majority of Indonesian Muslims believe in climate change (70.43%), only 50.4% reported concern about environmental damage.⁶⁵ This shows that the Ministry of Religion's programs still face challenges in transforming awareness towards concrete ecological action.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs' ecotheology policy demonstrates continuity with the tradition of environmental jurisprudence that has developed since the 1990s, including fatwas related

⁶² News, "Ministry of Religion Makes Mosques and Religious Affairs Offices the Driving Forces of the National Ecotheology Movement."

⁶³ Indonesia, "Formulation of the National Ecotheology Policy Document 2025–2029."

⁶⁴ M Bakri, M Meutia, and M Sari, "Sustainable Mosque Concept for Oman Al-Makmur Mosque, Banda Aceh, Indonesia," in *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, vol. 1510, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1510/1/012080>; H Yu et al., "Sustainable Development in Mosque Construction," *Scientific Reports* 15, no. 1 (2025), <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41598-025-96786-x>.

⁶⁵ Jakarta, "National Survey: Majority of Indonesian Muslims Believe in Climate Change."

to environmental damage and calls to maintain the balance of the ecosystem.⁶⁶ Theologically, this step by the Ministry of Religion is in line with Islamic teachings which emphasize the role of humans as *caliphs* and the prohibition of environmental destruction.⁶⁷ In fact, large organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah have developed environmental programs, ranging from reforestation to policy advocacy.⁶⁸

However, the literature shows that the main challenges to ecotheology policy are epistemological and implementational. According to Wahdini, there is a paradigm clash between religious organizations and state policy, particularly regarding the legal and philosophical basis of ecology.⁶⁹ Rusdiyana's study also confirmed that the potential of mosques in village climate programs has not been optimally utilized due to administrative constraints and perceptions about their role.⁷⁰ Thus, although the Ministry of Religion has succeeded in building ecotheological symbols, the aspect of strengthening epistemology, for example, through the integration of classical interpretations such as Mafātih al-Ghayb has not become a primary concern.

The analysis of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' policy shows that Indonesia's ecotheological discourse is moving from a normative stage to institutionalization. The effectiveness of ecotheological policy cannot be inferred from theological coherence alone. Its outcomes may depend on administrative capacity, resource allocation, institutional incentives, monitoring mechanisms, community participation, and the ability to translate normative commitments into measurable environmental practices. This finding aligns with previous results, which suggest that Quranic concepts such as *khalifah* (the caliph), *amnah* (the ruler), and *mizān* (the ruler) should serve as a foundational framework to support policy legitimacy. Classical exegesis may enrich the intellectual vocabulary through which such policies are publicly interpreted, but the evidence analyzed here does not establish that stronger grounding in classical tafsir would by itself improve policy implementation or environmental outcomes.

Eco-Friendly Mosques and Forest Waqf may function as sites through which religious environmental discourse is translated into institutional practice. Whether they operate as substantive mechanisms of ecological transformation rather than primarily symbolic programs, however, must be established through measurable evidence concerning behavioral change, resource conservation,

⁶⁶ AM Gade, "Islamic Law and the Environment in Indonesia: Fatwas and Da'wah," *Worldview: Environment, Culture, Religion* 19, no. 2 (2015): 161–83, <https://doi.org/10.1163/15685357-01902006>; M Sobirin and K Khasanah, "Fatwas of Islamic Boarding School Scholars on Global Warming and Climate Change: An Integrative Analysis of Islamic Law, Theology, and Environmental Science in Multidisciplinary Ijtihad Practices," *Cogent Arts and Humanities* 10, no. 1 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2023.2193023>; A Najemi and M Rapik, "Islamizing Environmental Law in Indonesia: Rethinking Green Fatwas," *Jurnal Hukum Jambé* 7, no. 1 (2024): 253–74, <https://doi.org/10.22437/home.v7i1.290>.

⁶⁷ ML Mustofa, MF Zenrif, and A Barizi, "Towards Islamic Ecotheology: Indonesian Muslim Organizations in Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Efforts," *Problemy Ekorożwoju* 20, no. 2 (2025): 21–31, <https://doi.org/10.35784/preko.7089>.

⁶⁸ M Yakub, O Firmansyah, and A Muhajir, "Exploring the Spiritual Ecology of Islam in Indonesia: The Perspective of Nahdlatul Ulama's Progressive Intellectuals," *Journal of Spirituality Studies* 13, no. 2 (2023): 180–98, <https://doi.org/10.1080/20440243.2023.2238203>; D Efendi, NI Kurniawan, and P Santoso, "From Fiqh to Political Advocacy: Muhammadiyah's Ecological Movement in Post-New Order Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 28, no. 2 (2021): 349–83, <https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v28i2.14444>.

⁶⁹ M Wahdini and H Jubba, "Environmental Governance in Indonesia: The Role of Muhammadiyah, State Intervention, and the Dynamics of Legal Practice," *Sharia: Journal of Law and Thought* 24, no. 1 (2024): 189–205, <https://doi.org/10.18592/sjhp.v24i1.12897>.

⁷⁰ E Rusdiyana et al., "Why Have Mosques Not Been Selected as Climate Village Driving Institutions?," in *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, vol. 1515, 2025, <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/1515/1/012013>.

institutional continuity, and environmental outcomes. This aligns with Mustofa and Baharuddin's view that protecting the environment is a religious obligation with consequences in the afterlife.⁷¹ With the epistemological support of classical interpretations and the participation of mosque-based communities, a national ecotheological policy has the potential to transform environmental issues from mere bureaucratic projects into sustainable spiritual and social movements.

Classical Exegesis and Contemporary Policy: Correspondence, Discontinuity, and Interpretive Distance

A comparison between al-Rāzī's classical interpretation and the ecotheological policies of Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs reveals both normative correspondences and significant historical and conceptual discontinuities. Rather than constituting a continuous intellectual genealogy, the relationship between the two is mediated by contemporary ecological interpretation. From an interpretive perspective, the concepts of *khalīfah* (QS. 2:30), *amanāh* (QS. 33:72), and *mīzān* (QS. 55:7–8) formulated by Ar-Razi provide a normative theological foundation for understanding the relationship between humans and nature.⁷² From a policy perspective, the Eco-Friendly Mosque initiative, Forest Waqf, and the National Ecotheology Policy Document 2025–2029 provide an implementation framework for internalizing Qur'anic values into public life.⁷³

From an interpretive perspective, the concepts of *khalīfah*, *amanah*, and *mīzān* in the Qur'an, as formulated by Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī in *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, provide a normative-theological foundation for the relationship between humans and nature. Rāzī's commentary serves not only as a textual explanation of the verses, but also as a cosmological and ethical framework that positions humans as moral agents within the order of creation.⁷⁴ This position is strengthened by modern studies that place Rāzī as a key figure in the integration of interpretation, theology, and natural philosophy in the post-classical Islamic tradition.⁷⁵

Within this comparison, *amānah* may function as an analytical bridge between classical discussions of moral responsibility and contemporary environmental governance. The notion of trust is employed here heuristically rather than as evidence that al-Rāzī developed a policy-oriented ecological theory. Its analytical usefulness lies in clarifying how a classical theological concept can undergo semantic expansion when incorporated into contemporary ecological discourse. This concept positions *trust* as the spiritual-ecological core that connects interpretive heritage with policy practice. Thus, ecotheology does not stop at moral jargon but becomes an operational spiritual, ethical, and social framework within state policy.

This integration effort aligns with classical and Sufi interpretation traditions that emphasize harmony with nature. Sufi interpretations, for example, emphasize cosmic consciousness and spiritual-

⁷¹ Mustofa, Zenrif, and Barizi, "Towards Islamic Ecotheology: Indonesian Muslim Organizations in Climate Mitigation and Adaptation Efforts"; Baharuddin and Musa, "Environmental Ethics in Islam."

⁷² Al-Razi, Fakhr al-Din. *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*. Beirut: Dār Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1420 AH / 1999 AD, vol. 2, p. 176–178 (commentary on QS. 2:30), vol. 25, p. 230–233 (commentary on QS. 33:72), vol. 29, p. 101–103 (commentary on QS. 55:7–8)

⁷³ News, "Ministry of Religious Affairs Makes Mosques and Religious Affairs Offices the Driving Force of the National Ecotheology Movement"; Indonesia, "Formulation of the 2025–2029 National Ecotheology Policy Document."

⁷⁴ Razi Tariq Jaffer, *Expert in Quranic Interpretation and Theological Reasoning*, ed. Oxford University Press (Oxford, 2015).

⁷⁵ and Muhammad Fariduddin Attar. Janos, Damien, *A Comprehensive, Annotated, and Indexed Bibliography of the Modern Study of Fakhr Al-Din Al-Razi, (544/1150–606/1210)*. (Leiden: Boston: Brill, 2023).

ecological balance, which align with the principles of sustainable development goals.⁷⁶ In Indonesia, *Islamic boarding schools (pesantren)* have implemented a layered curriculum model that combines classical methodology with contemporary thematic interpretations, including environmental issues and public ethics. This context demonstrates that connecting classical interpretations with ecotheological discourse is not unfamiliar but is deeply rooted in traditional Islamic education.

In the realm of policy, the prophetic ethics approach views nature as a sacred entity that must be managed wisely for the safety of humanity.⁷⁷ This emphasis aligns with the idea of ecological Islam, which emphasizes public responsibility in mitigating climate change and conserving resources. However, as Supriyanto and Mauluddin note, local contextualization in Indonesian interpretations demonstrates that ecotheology cannot be separated from socio-cultural realities.⁷⁸ Sufi interpretations and local syncretism are important gateways to the acceptance of ecotheological values in Indonesian Muslim society.

The synthesis of Al-Razi's classical interpretation and the Ministry of Religious Affairs' ecotheological policies yields contributions on three levels. First, in interpretive studies, this research demonstrates the relevance of classical heritage such as the *Mafāṭih al-Ghayb* in addressing global issues, while also complementing Sufi and local interpretive traditions in Indonesia.⁷⁹ Rather than proposing a new theological system, this study identifies *amānah* as a useful analytical category for examining how notions of accountability are translated from classical exegesis into contemporary ecological and institutional discourse. This framework expands the theological horizon from merely normative to sustainable collective practice. Third, within public policy, this research offers epistemological legitimacy for national ecotheology programs, so that Eco-Friendly Mosques, Forest Waqfs, and tree planting are seen not merely as symbols but as manifestations of faith rooted in classical interpretive traditions.

To examine the relationship between al-Rāzī's exegesis and contemporary ecotheological policy without presupposing conceptual continuity, this study employs a critical comparative framework. The comparison distinguishes five analytical levels: the Qur'anic concept under examination, its meaning within al-Rāzī's exegetical framework, its reconstruction in contemporary ecological discourse, its possible correspondence with the policies of Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs, and the conceptual discontinuities or analytical limitations involved in establishing such correspondence. This structure is intended to prevent normative similarity from being treated as evidence of conceptual identity, historical influence, or policy causation.

⁷⁶ S Sa'ad et al., "The Impact of Sufi Thought in Contemporary Qur'anic Interpretation on Sustainable Development in Indonesia," *Pharos Journal of Theology* 106, no. Special Issue-2 (2025): 1–15, <https://doi.org/10.46222/pharosjot.106.2018>.

⁷⁷ L Yustrisia et al., "Mining Corruption, Environmental Damage, and the Increase in Illegal Property Ownership of State Officials," *Edehveiss Applied Science and Technology* 8, no. 4 (2024): 1856–65, <https://doi.org/10.55214/25768484.v8i4.1558>.

⁷⁸ Supriyanto Supriyanto and Akhmad RB Zaman, "Living Quran in the Context of Rural Communities: A Study on the Miracle of the Quran in Gentasari, Kroya, Cilacap," *Al-Bayan – Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies* 21, no. 2 (2023): 199–216, <https://doi.org/10.1163/22321969-20230132>; M Mauluddin et al., "Sufi Hermeneutics and Symbolic Tafsir in the Javanese Manuscript Hakikate Bismillah," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadith* 26, no. 2 (2025): 413–43, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v26i2.6315>.

⁷⁹ Sa'ad et al., "The Repercussions of Sufi Thoughts in the Contemporary Qur'anic Interpretation to Sustainable Development in Indonesia"; Mauluddin et al., "Sufi Hermeneutics and Symbolic Tafsir in the Javanese Manuscript Hakikate Bismillah."

Accordingly, the table does not claim that contemporary ecotheological policies derive directly from *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*. Instead, it identifies the interpretive processes through which selected classical theological concepts can acquire ecological meanings under contemporary conditions, while simultaneously specifying the historical and conceptual distance between their original exegetical contexts and their modern environmental applications.

Table. Critical Comparison between al-Rāzī's Exegesis, Contemporary Ecological Reconstruction, and Indonesian Ecotheological Policy

Qur'anic Concept	Meaning in al-Rāzī's <i>Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb</i>	Contemporary Ecological Reconstruction	Policy Correspondence	Conceptual Discontinuity / Analytical Limitation
Khalīfah (Q. 2:30–31)	Al-Rāzī interprets the appointment of humanity as <i>khalīfah</i> within a theological framework of delegated responsibility and epistemological distinction. His discussion of ' <i>ilm al-asmā</i> ' emphasizes the human capacity to know the names, characteristics, and relations of created things, thereby explaining the distinctive position assigned to humanity within the created order. Human authority is therefore not autonomous but remains subordinate to divine sovereignty and accountability.	Contemporary Islamic environmental scholarship frequently reconstructs <i>khalīfah</i> as ecological stewardship , emphasizing that human beings are entrusted with responsibility for maintaining and protecting creation rather than exercising unrestricted domination over it. Within this reconstruction, knowledge, agency, and moral accountability are translated into obligations toward environmental sustainability and responsible resource management.	This reconstructed notion of stewardship corresponds normatively with the Eco-Friendly Mosque program and the use of mosques and Religious Affairs Offices as sites of environmental education, resource efficiency, and community ecological engagement. It may also be associated with broader policy efforts to encourage religious communities to participate in environmental protection.	Al-Rāzī's discussion primarily concerns human epistemological distinction, theological responsibility, and the justification of humanity's position within creation. Ecological stewardship is a contemporary expansion of this meaning rather than an explicit environmental doctrine in <i>Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb</i>. The semantic movement from <i>khalīfah</i> to modern environmental stewardship therefore involves interpretive transformation and should not be presented as direct conceptual continuity.

Amānah (Q. 33:72)	Al-Rāzī understands <i>al-amānah</i> as a comprehensive divine burden or mandate encompassing religious obligations, rational capacity, moral responsibility, and accountability. Humanity's acceptance of <i>amānah</i> signifies its willingness to bear the consequences of moral agency and responsibility before God. The concept is therefore broader than a particular legal or social duty.	Contemporary ecotheological discourse extends <i>amānah</i> to environmental responsibility by interpreting the natural world as part of the sphere within which human beings exercise accountable moral agency. In this reading, environmental conservation becomes an expression of intergenerational responsibility, ethical resource management, and accountability for the consequences of human action toward creation.	The principle of <i>amānah</i> may be normatively associated with Forest Waqf, national tree-planting initiatives, and other conservation-oriented programs that frame the protection of land, forests, and natural resources as a collective and intergenerational responsibility. These programs institutionalize forms of responsibility that can be interpreted through the ethical language of trust and accountability.	The concept denotes comprehensive moral and religious responsibility, but al-Rāzī does not explicitly identify environmental protection as an independent object of <i>amānah</i>. Its transformation into “ecological trust” therefore constitutes a contemporary contextualization. The policy application should consequently be described as interpretive correspondence rather than evidence that al-Rāzī formulated an environmental theory of trust.
Mīzān (Q. 55:7–9)	Al-Rāzī interprets <i>mīzān</i> both as a concrete measure and as a broader principle of justice, proportion, and order. Within his cosmological and theological interpretation, balance reflects the ordered structure established by God and provides a normative principle against	Contemporary Islamic ecotheology frequently reconstructs <i>mīzān</i> as ecological balance , connecting Qur’anic notions of proportion and order with sustainability, ecosystem integrity, responsible consumption, and the avoidance of environmental disruption. It becomes a	At the policy level, <i>mīzān</i> may correspond with efforts to integrate environmental considerations into religious institutions and programs, particularly energy efficiency, water conservation, waste reduction, and the broader sustainability orientation of the National Ecotheology Policy Document 2025–2029.	The theological and cosmological notion of <i>mīzān</i> should not be treated as conceptually identical to modern ecological equilibrium, ecosystem science, sustainability indicators, or environmental-management metrics. The movement from cosmic and moral balance to ecological balance

	excess and disorder.	conceptual language for relating moral balance to human–nature relations.		represents an analogical reconstruction. Similarity in the language of “balance” does not demonstrate equivalence between medieval cosmology and contemporary environmental science.
Fasād (Q. 30:41)	Al-Rāzī interprets <i>fasād</i> as disorder or corruption associated with human conduct and its consequences within moral, social, and broader created order. The concept is not restricted to one particular form of material destruction but operates within a wider theological and ethical account of disorder resulting from human wrongdoing.	Contemporary ecological interpretation extends <i>fasād</i> to environmental degradation by associating destructive human behavior with pollution, deforestation, ecosystem disturbance, resource depletion, and other forms of ecological harm. Within this reconstruction, environmental destruction becomes one possible contemporary manifestation of a broader Qur’anic category of disorder.	This reconstructed meaning corresponds with environmental campaigns, tree-planting programs, environmental education, religious sermons on ecological responsibility, and collaborative activities aimed at preventing pollution, deforestation, and other forms of environmental harm. Such policies can be interpreted as institutional responses to forms of ecological <i>fasād</i> .	Extending <i>fasād</i> to pollution, deforestation, biodiversity loss, or climate-related degradation constitutes a contemporary ecological specification of a broader moral and social category. The modern environmental meaning should therefore not be retrospectively attributed to al-Rāzī without qualification. Furthermore, correspondence between <i>fasād</i> and environmental policy does not establish that contemporary environmental regulation derives directly from his interpretation.
Isrāf (Q. 7:31)	Al-Rāzī interprets <i>isrāf</i> as exceeding proper limits and	Contemporary ecological discourse extends	The prohibition of <i>isrāf</i> corresponds normatively with	The application of <i>isrāf</i> to modern patterns of

	engaging in forms of excess that produce harm. His discussion is primarily ethical and normative, emphasizing moderation and criticizing conduct that exceeds appropriate measure in human life.	the prohibition of <i>isrāf</i> to excessive consumption, waste generation, inefficient resource use, unsustainable lifestyles, and overexploitation of natural resources. In this reconstruction, moderation becomes an ecological ethic related to sustainable consumption and responsible use of environmental resources.	Eco-Friendly Mosque practices such as efficient water use, reduced electricity consumption, waste management, and environmental education. Such initiatives translate the ethical principle of moderation into institutional practices concerned with reducing unnecessary resource consumption.	consumerism, industrial resource extraction, and sustainability is normatively plausible but historically secondary to al-Rāzī's original ethical discussion of excess. His interpretation does not provide contemporary resource-efficiency standards or environmental metrics. The policy application therefore represents a modern contextualization rather than the implementation of a specific environmental prescription found in <i>Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb</i> .
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The comparison demonstrates that the relationship between al-Rāzī's exegesis and contemporary ecotheological policy is neither one of direct continuity nor complete conceptual discontinuity. At the normative level, concepts such as responsibility, accountability, balance, restraint, and the prevention of harm provide points of correspondence with contemporary environmental discourse. At the historical and conceptual levels, however, substantial differences remain between al-Rāzī's theological-cosmological framework and the categories employed by modern environmental ethics, environmental science, and public policy.

The most significant transformation occurs at the level of ecological reconstruction. Khalīfah becomes ecological stewardship; amānah is extended into environmental and intergenerational responsibility; mīzān is reconstructed as ecological balance; fasād is specified as environmental degradation; and isrāf is applied to unsustainable consumption and resource use. These transformations are interpretively plausible within contemporary Islamic environmental discourse, but they should not be presented as meanings explicitly or systematically formulated by al-Rāzī himself.

The policy correspondence identified in the table must likewise be interpreted cautiously. The fact that Eco-Friendly Mosques, Forest Waqf, tree-planting initiatives, and the National Ecotheology Policy Document 2025–2029 can be interpreted through the concepts of khalīfah, amānah, mīzān, fasād, and isrāf does not demonstrate that these programs were historically derived from al-Rāzī's interpretation. Nor does theological compatibility establish their environmental effectiveness. The

relationship identified here is therefore best characterized as mediated normative correspondence rather than textual dependence, historical influence, or policy causation.

This distinction shifts the analytical question from whether al-Rāzī was “ecological” in the modern sense to how contemporary interpreters construct ecological significance from his premodern theological and cosmological categories. Such a shift also requires consideration of the limits of contextualization, particularly the risks of anachronism, selective appropriation, and the conflation of theological norms with contemporary scientific and policy concepts.

The ecological reconstruction developed in this study must be understood within clear hermeneutical limits. Al-Rāzī wrote within a medieval theological, philosophical, and exegetical context in which contemporary concepts such as biodiversity conservation, climate change, sustainability, ecosystem integrity, and environmental governance did not exist in their present meanings. Consequently, concepts such as *khalīfah*, *amānah*, *mīzān*, *fasād*, and *isrāf* should not be treated as direct equivalents of ecological stewardship, environmental accountability, ecological balance, environmental degradation, or sustainable consumption. These ecological meanings result from contemporary contextualization rather than from a pre-existing environmental theory in *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*. Such reconstruction is methodologically possible, but it becomes problematic when modern environmental categories are retrospectively attributed to al-Rāzī without acknowledging the historical and conceptual distance separating the two intellectual contexts.

The same methodological caution applies to categories such as theocentrism, anthropocentrism, ecocentrism, and cosmocentrism. These categories function in this study as contemporary analytical lenses rather than as al-Rāzī’s own conceptual vocabulary. In particular, identifying an ecocentric tendency in his interpretation should not be confused with claiming that al-Rāzī articulated modern philosophical ecocentrism. His cosmological framework remains fundamentally theocentric, while human beings retain a distinctive epistemological and moral position within creation. The critical significance of his thought therefore lies less in demonstrating that he anticipated modern environmental ethics than in examining how theological concepts concerning responsibility, order, restraint, and accountability can be reinterpreted ecologically while retaining their historical specificity. This distinction prevents ecological contextualization from becoming anachronistic confirmation of contemporary environmental assumptions.

Likewise, the correspondence between al-Rāzī’s exegetical concepts and the ecotheological policies of Indonesia’s Ministry of Religious Affairs should be interpreted as normative and mediated rather than genealogical or causal. The possibility of associating Eco-Friendly Mosques with *khalīfah* and *isrāf*, Forest Waqf with *amānah*, or sustainability discourse with *mīzān* does not demonstrate that these policies derive directly from *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*, nor does theological compatibility establish their institutional or environmental effectiveness. The documentary evidence examined in this study primarily demonstrates policy orientation and programmatic commitment, not measurable ecological outcomes. Accordingly, classical exegesis may contribute to the normative vocabulary of contemporary environmental discourse, but it cannot substitute for empirical evaluation of implementation, institutional capacity, community participation, and environmental impact. The relationship identified here is therefore best understood as a critical contextual correspondence marked simultaneously by interpretive potential and substantial historical, conceptual, and institutional discontinuity.

Conclusion

This study has critically examined the possibilities and limits of reconstructing ecological meanings from Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī’s *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* and relating them to contemporary ecotheological policy in Indonesia. The analysis demonstrates that al-Rāzī did not formulate an

ecothology or environmental theory in the modern sense. Nevertheless, his interpretations of khalīfah, amānah, mīzān, fasād, and isrāf contain theological, ethical, and cosmological elements that contemporary scholars may reinterpret in relation to environmental responsibility.

Such reinterpretation, however, involves a significant hermeneutical transformation. Ecological stewardship, ecosystem balance, environmental degradation, sustainable consumption, and environmental governance belong to conceptual frameworks that differ historically from those of medieval Qur'anic exegesis. The ecological significance attributed to al-Rāzī should therefore be understood as a contemporary contextual reconstruction rather than as the discovery of a pre-existing ecological theory within *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*.

The comparison with the ecotheological policies of Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs reveals a number of normative correspondences, particularly around responsibility, restraint, balance, and the prevention of harm. These correspondences, however, do not demonstrate direct historical influence, conceptual identity, policy causation, or institutional effectiveness. The relationship between classical exegesis and contemporary policy is mediated through modern Islamic environmental discourse and should therefore be characterized as interpretive and normative rather than genealogical.

The study also finds that the available documentary evidence establishes the orientation and institutional ambitions of programs such as Eco-Friendly Mosques, Forest Waqf, tree-planting initiatives, and the National Ecotheology Policy Document 2025–2029, but does not by itself establish their long-term environmental effectiveness. Policy effectiveness cannot be inferred from theological coherence and requires separate empirical evaluation involving institutional capacity, implementation mechanisms, measurable environmental outcomes, and community participation.

Accordingly, the principal contribution of this study is not to use classical tafsīr to legitimize contemporary environmental policy, but to clarify the interpretive processes through which premodern Islamic concepts acquire new ecological meanings in contemporary discourse. Recognizing both their interpretive potential and their historical limits allows classical exegesis to participate in current environmental debates without turning premodern texts into retrospective confirmations of modern ecological agendas.

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