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# *Nyalasé* and Ecological Awareness: Qur'anic Values and Local Wisdom in Madura, Indonesia

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**Abstract**

*Nyalasé* is a grave pilgrimage tradition that has long been an integral part of the religious life of the Madurese community. Although previous studies have examined this tradition from anthropological and religious ritual perspectives, its ecological dimension and its relationship with Qur'anic values have received little scholarly attention. This study aims to analyze the relationship between Qur'anic values and local wisdom embedded in the *Nyalasé* tradition and to explore its contribution to the development of ecological awareness among the Madurese people. The study employs a phenomenological approach and a descriptive qualitative method. Data were collected through field observations, in-depth interviews with religious and community leaders, and a review of Qur'anic tafsir literature and Islamic ecotheology. The findings reveal that the *Nyalasé* tradition reflects Qur'anic values that emphasize respect for all of Allah's creation, human responsibility as khalifah in preserving the environment, and the harmonization of relationships between humans and nature. These values are internalized through the community's socio-religious practices, fostering an ecological awareness rooted in local culture. This study contributes to the development of Living Qur'an studies and Islamic ecotheology by demonstrating that grave pilgrimage traditions can function as a medium for internalizing Qur'anic values that support environmental conservation. The findings affirm that *Nyalasé* represents a manifestation of ecological spirituality grounded in local wisdom within the Madurese community.

**Keywords:** *Nyalasé*, Qur'anic Values, Ecological Spirituality, Ecological Awareness, Local Wisdom.

***Abstrak***

*Tradisi Nyalasé merupakan praktik ziarah kubur yang telah lama menjadi bagian dari kehidupan keagamaan masyarakat Madura. Meskipun berbagai penelitian telah mengkaji tradisi ini dari perspektif antropologi dan ritual keagamaan, dimensi ekologisnya serta keterkaitannya dengan nilai-nilai Qur'ani masih belum banyak mendapat perhatian. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis hubungan antara nilai-nilai Qur'ani dan kearifan lokal dalam tradisi Nyalasé serta kontribusinya terhadap pembentukan kesadaran ekologis masyarakat Madura. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan fenomenologis dengan metode kualitatif deskriptif. Data diperoleh melalui observasi lapangan, wawancara mendalam dengan tokoh agama dan masyarakat, serta kajian terhadap literatur tafsir Al-Qur'an dan ekoteologi Islam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tradisi Nyalasé merefleksikan nilai-nilai Qur'ani yang menekankan penghormatan terhadap seluruh ciptaan Allah, tanggung jawab manusia sebagai khalifah dalam menjaga lingkungan, dan harmonisasi hubungan antara manusia dan alam. Nilai-nilai tersebut terinternalisasi dalam praktik sosial-keagamaan masyarakat sehingga membentuk kesadaran ekologis yang berakar pada budaya lokal. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pengembangan kajian Living Qur'an dan ekoteologi Islam dengan menunjukkan bahwa tradisi ziarah kubur dapat berfungsi sebagai medium internalisasi nilai-nilai Qur'ani yang mendukung pelestarian*

*lingkungan. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa Nyalasé merupakan manifestasi spiritualitas ekologis berbasis kearifan lokal dalam masyarakat Madura.*

***Kata Kunci:*** *Nyalasé, Nilai-Nilai Qur'ani, Spiritualitas Ekologis, Kesadaran Ekologis, Kearifan Lokal.*

## A. Introduction

Environmental issues have become one of the most pressing global challenges of the twenty-first century. Rapid population growth, uncontrolled urbanization, excessive exploitation of natural resources, and increasing environmental pollution have exacerbated ecological crises that threaten the sustainability of human life. The environment plays a vital role in determining the quality and continuity of human existence; however, various forms of environmental degradation continue to occur without adequate conservation efforts.[1] Data from the Global Footprint Network (2020) indicate that Indonesia experienced an ecological deficit of 42%,[2] reflecting an imbalance between environmental carrying capacity and the rate of natural resource consumption. This condition demonstrates that ecological problems are not merely technical and economic issues but also involve ethical, cultural, and religious dimensions that shape human perspectives toward nature.[3]

In international literature, ecological awareness is understood as the relationship between humans and their natural environment, encompassing systems of knowledge, values, and behavioral norms that influence human interaction with nature.[4] Ecological awareness does not merely refer to a theoretical understanding of environmental issues; it also includes a spiritual consciousness that enables humans to live harmoniously with nature through attitudes of respect and care for all forms of life.[5] Therefore, ecological awareness represents a form of concern that encourages individuals to understand, protect, and preserve the environment as part of their moral responsibility for the sustainability of life.

One of the scholars who highlighted the relationship between religion and environmental crises was Lynn White, who argued that the roots of ecological problems are profoundly influenced by the way humans perceive themselves in relation to nature.[6] This perspective is highly relevant to Islamic teachings, which position humans as khalifah (stewards) on earth with the responsibility to maintain environmental balance and sustainability. In Islam, ecological awareness is constructed through fundamental concepts such as *tawḥīd*, which emphasizes the unity between the Creator and creation; khalifah, which highlights human responsibility toward nature; *mīzān*, which stresses the importance of maintaining balance; and *amānah*, which obliges humans to avoid all forms of

[1] Pedro Jaureguiberry et al., "The Direct Drivers of Recent Global Anthropogenic Biodiversity Loss," *Science Advances* 8, no. 45 (2022), doi:https://doi.org/10.1126.

[2] Global Footprint Network, *National Footprint and Biocapacity Accounts 2025 Edition* (Oakland, CA: Global Footprint Network, 2025), https://data.footprintnetwork.org.

[3] M. Richardson et al., "Applying the Pathways to Nature Connectedness at a Societal Scale: A Leverage Points Perspective," *Ecosystems and People* 16, no. 1 (2020), pp. 387–401, doi:https://doi.org/10.1080/26395916.2020.1844296.

[4] Małgorzata Kociszewska, "Ecological Awareness and Education of the Society in the Light of Sustainability Idea: Selected Aspects," *Pedagogika Rodziny* 4, no. 1 (2014), pp. 31–41.

[5] Małgorzata Kociszewska, "Ecological Awareness and Education of the Society in the Light of Sustainability Idea – Selected Aspects," *Pedagogika Rodziny* 4, no. 1 (2014), pp. 31–41, doi:https://doi.org/10.2478.

[6] Yohanes Hasiholan Tampubolon, "Telaah Kritis Etika Lingkungan Lynn White," *TE DEUM (Jurnal Teologi dan Pengembangan Pelayanan)* 9, no. 2 (2020): 249–65, https://doi.org/10.51828.

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environmental destruction.[7] Together, these concepts constitute the foundation of Islamic environmental ethics and promote harmonious relationships between humans and the natural world.

Nevertheless, ecological values in religion are not always manifested solely through normative doctrines. In many societies, these values are internalized through cultural practices and local wisdom that have been transmitted across generations.[8] Local wisdom represents a system of knowledge and worldview that develops through a long process of interaction between humans and their environment. As a product of collective experience, local wisdom functions not only as a mechanism of environmental adaptation but also as a medium through which religious values are internalized in everyday life. Consequently, examining the relationship between religion, ecology, and local wisdom is essential for understanding how ecological awareness is constructed and sustained within specific social contexts.

Within the Madurese community, one form of local wisdom that remains well preserved is the *Nyalasé* tradition. This tradition is a grave pilgrimage practice performed as an expression of respect for parents, teachers, and other revered figures.[9] The Madurese are widely recognized as a religious society that upholds the philosophy of *bupa', babu, guru, rato*, which emphasizes respect for parents, teachers, and leaders as central figures in social and religious life. Such respect does not cease upon their death but continues to be expressed through the practice of *Nyalasé*.

Etymologically, *Nyalasé* in the Madurese language refers to visiting graves. The tradition is commonly observed on Thursday nights (the eve of Friday), during Eid al-Fitr celebrations, and during *toron* (homecoming), an important cultural practice among the Madurese. As a community characterized by extensive migration to various regions of Indonesia, particularly Java, the Madurese maintain a strong attachment to their homeland. The tradition of *toron* serves as an opportunity to return home while performing *Nyalasé* at the graves of deceased parents, teachers, and relatives. Through this tradition, community members not only preserve their spiritual connection with their ancestors but also strengthen social solidarity and familial bonds that transcend spatial and temporal boundaries.

In practice, *Nyalasé* involves more than ritual activities such as reciting Surah al-Fātiḥah, Surah Yāsīn, *tahlīl*, and prayers for deceased relatives. The tradition also includes cleaning cemetery areas, removing weeds, collecting waste, repairing gravestones, and maintaining the overall condition of the burial grounds before pilgrimage activities take place.[10] These practices suggest that *Nyalasé* contains an ecological dimension that has received limited attention in academic scholarship. The maintenance and cleanliness of cemetery environments are not merely expressions of respect for the deceased but also reflect environmental concern that may function as a form of ecological education within the community.

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[7] Fadhli et al.,"Upaya Meningkatkan Kesadaran Ekologis dalam Perspektif Ali Jum'ah." *Jurnal Al-Hikmah* 19.01 (2021): 77-95.

[8] Andi Rusnali et al., "Integrating Islamic Values into Ecological Communication: A Perspective from the Bone Community," *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 20 (September 2025): 116–40, https://doi.org/10.15642/islamica.2025.20.1.116-140.

[9] Abd Munib, Imamuddin, dan Mohammad Ali Al Humaidy, "Nyalase as a Socio-Cultural Interface Between the Sacred and the Profane in Madura, East Java, Indonesia," *Al-Basirah Journal* 15, no. 2 (2025), pp. 89–97, doi:10.22452.

[10] Abd. Aziz, "Ziarah Kubur, Nilai Didaktis Dan Rekonstruksi Teori Pendidikan Humanistik," *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman* 13, no. 1 (2018): 33–61, https://doi.org/10.21274/epis.2018.13.1.33-61.

Studies on the *Nyalasé* tradition have thus far been dominated by anthropological, sociological, and theological approaches focusing on ritual practices, social solidarity, and spiritual values. Suhartatik et al. (2022) examined the meanings of verbal and non-verbal expressions within the *Nyalasé* tradition as representations of Madurese local wisdom.[11] Kamarudin (2022) analyzed grave pilgrimage through a hadith-based approach and explored scholarly debates concerning the permissibility of grave visitation for women.[12] Meanwhile, Rohwati and Hamdani (2025) investigated the dynamics of power and prosperity within saint pilgrimage traditions in Indonesia, highlighting their transformation from religious rituals into social and economic activities. Although these studies have significantly contributed to understanding the ritual, social, and religious dimensions of pilgrimage traditions,[13] they have not specifically examined the ecological values embedded within *Nyalasé* nor their relationship with Qur'anic values and environmental awareness.

This limitation reveals an important research gap. To date, only a limited number of studies have connected grave pilgrimage traditions with the discourse of Islamic ecology, particularly from the perspective of Living Qur'an studies, which examine how Qur'anic values are embodied and practiced within social life. Yet, the ecological activities accompanying *Nyalasé* demonstrate a process of internalizing Qur'anic values related to cleanliness, human responsibility as khalifah, and the obligation to maintain environmental balance. Therefore, this study offers a new perspective by positioning *Nyalasé* not merely as a religious and cultural ritual but also as a medium for cultivating ecological awareness grounded in Qur'anic values and Madurese local wisdom.[14]

Based on this background, the present study aims to analyze the relationship between Qur'anic values and local wisdom within the *Nyalasé* tradition and to explain their contribution to the formation of ecological awareness among the Madurese community. This research employs a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach to understand the meanings constructed by community members regarding the practice of *Nyalasé.* The study was conducted in three regencies of Madura—Bangkalan, Pamekasan, and Sumenep. Primary data were collected through participant observation and in-depth interviews with *kiai* (Islamic scholars), community leaders, village heads, cemetery caretakers, and local residents who regularly practice *Nyalasé*.[15] Secondary data were obtained from Qur'anic exegesis literature, Islamic ecotheology, and studies on Madurese society. All collected data were analyzed thematically and interpretively to identify the ecological values embedded within the *Nyalasé* tradition and to explain their relevance to the concept of ecological awareness in Islam.[16] Through this approach, the study seeks to enrich Living Qur'an scholarship and Islamic ecotheology while demonstrating that local traditions can serve as

[11] Hablil Warid, *Cultural Meaning and Society Belief of the Nyalasé Tradition Reflecting Local Wisdom in Death Ceremony in Aeng Tong-Tong, Saronggi, Sumenep, Madura: An Ethnolinguistic Study*, April 1, 2022, 12–17, https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.32996.

[12] Kamarudin Kamarudin and Sabil Mokodenseho, "A Debate on the Islamic Practice of Pilgrimage to the Grave: Study of the Hadīth on Grave Pilgrimage for Women," *AL QUDS: Jurnal Studi Alquran Dan Hadis* 6, no. 2 (2022): 495, https://doi.org/10.29240.

[13] Siti Rohwati and Hamdani, "The Dynamics of Power and Prosperity: An Interdisciplinary Study of Saint Pilgrimage in Indonesia," *KARSA Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 33, no. 1 (2025): 215–240.

[14] Rani Rani, Siti Rahmawati, dan Surawan, "The Role of Religion as Environmental Ethics: An Ecotheological Perspective on the Ecological Crisis among Muslim Communities in Central Kalimantan," *Jurnal Studi Agama* 9, no. 2 (2025), pp. 234–255, doi:10.19109.

[15] Alfred Schutz, *The Phenomenology of the Social World* (Northwestern University Press, 1967).

[16] Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology," *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3, no. 2 (2006): 77–101, doi:10.1191.

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effective media for the internalization of Qur'anic values that support environmental conservation.[17]

## B. Result and Discussion

### Nyalasé Tradition in the Context of Madurese Culture

As one of the enduring traditions within Madurese society, *Nyalasé* is understood not merely as a grave pilgrimage practice but also as a space where religious values, local culture, and human–environment relationships intersect.[18] Etymologically, the term *Nyalasé* derives from the Madurese word *nyalas*, meaning "to clean" or "to purify." The tradition is commonly performed on Thursday evenings (the eve of Friday), prior to the month of Ramadan, during Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha celebrations, and on other occasions associated with honoring ancestors.[19] Within the community, *Nyalasé* serves not only as a form of prayer for deceased family members but also as a means of strengthening social solidarity and maintaining people's connection with their living environment.[20]

Observations conducted at three research sites—public cemeteries in Bangkalan, Sampang, and Sumenep—revealed that *Nyalasé* is carried out collectively and involves participants from various age groups.[21] The activities typically begin in the late afternoon, between 4:00 and 5:30 p.m. Community members arrive at the cemetery carrying cleaning equipment such as palm-fiber brooms, small hoes, and plastic bags. Women generally sweep the cemetery grounds and scatter flower petals on graves, while men remove weeds, repair tilted gravestones, and clean drainage channels surrounding the burial area. Upon completing the cleaning activities, some participants gather to recite Surah Yāsīn, *tahlīl*, and prayers for deceased relatives.[22]

Interestingly, the cleaning activities extend beyond the graves themselves. The researcher observed that community members also collected fallen leaves and plastic waste that had accumulated within the cemetery area. Some of the waste was disposed of in designated trash bins, while a portion was taken home and utilized as *kampuan*, a traditional practice of fumigating livestock shelters to reduce mosquito infestations.[23] This finding indicates that the community does not perceive environmental cleaning as a separate activity from religious ritual; rather, it is regarded as an integral component of the *Nyalasé* tradition itsel.[24]

In addition to its ecological dimension, field observations also revealed the strong social character of the tradition. Community members assisted one another without any formal division of labor. Tasks were distributed spontaneously according to immediate needs. Children who attended the event were observed watching and occasionally helping

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[17] Bachtiar S. Bachri, "Meyakinkan Validitas Data Melalui Triangulasi Pada Penelitian Kualitatif," *Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan*, Vol. 10, No. 1, April 2010, hlm. 46-62.

[18] Abd Munib, Imamuddin, and Mohammad Ali Al Humaidy, "Nyalase as a Socio-Cultural Interface Between the Sacred and the Profane in Madura, East Java, Indonesia," *Al-Basirah Journal* 15, no. 2 (2025): 89–97, doi:10.22452.

[19] Interview with Moh. Badruddin, on 16 October 2025.

[20] Interview with Fadhilah, on 13 October 2025.

[21] Field Observation. Public Cemeteries in Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan and Sumenep, October 21, 2025.

[22] Field Observation. Public Cemeteries in Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan and Sumenep, October October, 19, 2025

[23] Field Observation. Public Cemeteries in Bangkalan, Sampang, Pamekasan and Sumenep, September 17, 2025.

[24] David Ocón and Wei Ping Young, "Bridging the Nature–Cultural Heritage Gap: Evaluating Sustainable Entanglements through Cemeteries in Urban Asia," *Sustainability Science* 19, no. 5 (2024), pp. 1641–1660.

with simple tasks performed by adults. This situation demonstrates that *Nyalasé* functions as a medium for intergenerational value transmission, through which religious norms, communal cooperation (*gotong royong*), and environmental responsibility are passed down through direct participation rather than solely through verbal instruction.[25]

These findings suggest that *Nyalasé* cannot be understood merely as a grave pilgrimage ritual in a narrow religious sense. Activities such as cleaning graves, maintaining vegetation, preserving water channels, and managing waste illustrate a reciprocal relationship between humans and their environment that is cultivated through cultural practice. From the perspective of *nature-based governance*, as proposed by Carsten Herrmann, this relationship reflects a form of community-based environmental management grounded in social participation and emotional attachment to ecological space.[26] Unlike formal and institutional conservation approaches, the practice of *Nyalasé* demonstrates that environmental stewardship can emerge from religious and cultural activities deeply embedded in everyday community life.[27]

Furthermore, the findings of this study expand the concept of *ritual ecology* within the fields of religion and environmental studies. Religious rituals are often understood primarily as activities oriented toward relationships between humans and God or their ancestors.[28] However, the empirical evidence presented here demonstrates that such rituals can also generate ecological practices that directly contribute to environmental maintenance.[29] Consequently, the ecological dimension of *Nyalasé* should not be viewed as a secondary by-product of the ritual but rather as an integral component of the practice itself.[30] This finding is significant because it indicates that ecological awareness is not formed exclusively through formal environmental education; it can also emerge through repetitive and collective religious activities embedded within local cultural traditions.[31]

The results of this study resonate with the findings of Asep et al, concerning the role of traditional beliefs and local wisdom in forest conservation.[32] Their study demonstrated that cultural beliefs can shape environmental behavior and encourage conservation practices within local communities. However, whereas their research focused on forest protection through traditional belief systems, the present study shows that grave pilgrimage practices can also function as a medium of environmental conservation at the micro level. In other words, the primary contribution of this study lies in demonstrating that religious rituals rooted in local wisdom can serve as mechanisms for cultivating ecological awareness through concrete actions such as waste management, vegetation maintenance, and collective environmental cleaning.[33]

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[25] Laurel Kearns and Kate Rigby, *Eco-Religious Studies* (2025), 1–7, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-70886-6.

[26] Suneetha M. Subramanian et al., "Rituals as Nature-Based Governance of Social-Ecological Systems," *Open Research Europe* 4 (2024): 66, doi:10.12688.

[27] Fachruddin Majeri Mangunjaya and Jeanne Elizabeth McKay, "Reviving an Islamic Approach for Environmental Conservation in Indonesia," *Worldviews* 16, no. 3 (2012): 286–305, https://doi.org/10.1163/15685357-01603006.

[28] Laurel Kearns and Kate Rigby, *Eco-Religious Studies* (2025), 1–7, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-662-70886-6.

[29] Suneetha M. Subramanian et al., "Rituals as Nature-Based Governance of Social-Ecological Systems," *Open Research Europe* 4 (2024): 66, doi:10.12688.

[30] Interview with Asy'ari, on 18 October 2025.

[31] Interview with Moh. Badruddin, on 16 October 2025.

[32] Asep Mulyadi et al., "The Role of Traditional Beliefs and Local Wisdom in Forest Conservation," *Jurnal Geografi Gea* 22, no. 1 (April 2022): 55–66, https://doi.org/10.17509/gea.v22i1.43702.

[33] Richard C. Foltz et al., *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust* (Center for the Study of World Religions, Harvard Divinity School, 2003).

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**Qur'anic Values Embedded in the Nyalasé Tradition**

At its core, the Nyalasé tradition conveys an important message about maintaining harmony between humans and nature.[34] The community is taught not to be greedy in exploiting natural resources and to consistently respect nature as Allah's creation, which must be protected and preserved.[35] Thus, Nyalasé is not merely a ritual practice but also a tangible expression of environmental stewardship.[36] It is regarded as an effort to preserve and sustain nature, which constitutes one of the fundamental duties and responsibilities of human beings as *khalīfah* (stewards) on earth.[37] Furthermore, the Nyalasé tradition represents a concrete manifestation of preserving local wisdom that is closely aligned with Qur'anic values.[38]

The values embodied in Nyalasé and practiced by the Madurese community reflect the Qur'anic principles of *ṭahārah* (purity), *mīzān* (balance), and *amānah* (responsibility).[39] As such, the tradition may be interpreted as a local manifestation of Islamic ecological ethics.[40] In practice, Nyalasé represents Qur'anic values concerning environmental responsibility through the everyday actions of the community. For example, maintaining graves and planting trees reflect the concept of *khalīfah*, which emphasizes humanity's responsibility toward nature.[41] Likewise, cleaning and organizing cemetery areas embody the principles of *mīzān* (maintaining balance) and *amānah* (avoiding acts of destruction). Qur'anic principles such as *mīzān* and *amānah* affirm that all components of nature possess intrinsic value and must be treated fairly and proportionately in accordance with the will of Allah. From this perspective, nature is not an object to be exploited without limits; rather, it is a manifestation of divine signs that must be protected and preserved.[42] More specifically, the Qur'anic values reflected in the Nyalasé tradition include the following:

**a. Human Stewardship of Nature (*Khalīfah*) (Qur'an 2:30)**

*"And (remember) when your Lord said to the angels, 'Indeed, I will place a vicegerent (khalīfah) upon the earth.'"* (Qur'an 2:30)

Within the framework of *tawḥīd* (the doctrine of divine unity), the universe is viewed as a theophany, namely a manifestation of the names and attributes of Allah.[43] This

[34] Abd Munib et al., "Nyalase as a Socio-Cultural Interface Between the Sacred and the Profane in Madura, East Java, Indonesia," *Al-Basirah Journal* 15, no. 2 (2025): 89–97, doi:10.22452.

[35] Interview with Moh. Badruddin, on 16 October 2025

[36] Interview with Asy'ari, on 18 October 2025

[37] Aftab Haider et al., From Stewardship to Sustainability: A Comparative Analysis of Islamic Ecological Jurisprudence and Western Anthropocentric Regimes, *JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah)*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (2026).

[38] Zainal Bagir, "Beyond Instrumentalization: Lived Religion, Politics, and Justice in Indonesian Muslim Environmentalisms," *Studia Islamika* 32, no. 3 (2025): 439–466, doi:10.36712/sdi. v32i3.46652.

[39] Muliati dkk., "Dialectics of Theology and Ecology in Ammatoa ri Kajang in Bulukumba, Indonesia: Paradigm of Tawhidic and Environmental Fiqh in *Sulapa Appa*," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 9, no. 1 (2025): 374–393.

[40] Frans Wijsen, "How Green Is Green Islam? Religious Environmentalism and Public Policy in Indonesia," *Studia Islamika* 32, no. 3 (2025): 421–437, doi:10.36712.

[41] Irhamullah et al., "Khilafah Lingkungan: Peran Manusia Sebagai Khalifah dalam Menjaga Bumi," *QAZI: Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (2025): 435–47, https://doi.org/10.61104/qz.v2i2.465.

[42] Mike Andrini, Imam Syafei, Baharudin, dan Ali Murtadho, "Etika Ekologis Islam: Landasan Moral Pemeliharaan Lingkungan Hidup dalam Al-Qur'an dan Hadis," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10, no. 4 (2025), doi:10.23969.

[43] Ayub Kumalla et al., "Rekonstruksi Nilai-Nilai Qur'ani sebagai Paradigma Etika Ekologis Islam dalam Menjawab Krisis Lingkungan Global," *Pendas: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan Dasar* 10, no. 4 (2025), https://doi.org/10.23969/jp.v10i04.36435.

perspective emphasizes that every element of creation—from the heavens and the earth to all living beings—reflects His greatness and majesty. Consequently, nature is not merely a physical entity that can be exploited at human discretion; rather, it constitutes part of the divine signs that must be respected and preserved in balance. The Islamic perspective on the environment is comprehensive and holistic, encompassing theological, ethical, and legal principles that regard nature as an integral component of the cosmic order that must be protected.[44] Islam positions human beings as *khalīfah* on earth, entrusted with the moral responsibility of maintaining ecological balance and preventing environmental destruction.[45]

The verse above affirms humanity's role as *khalīfah fī al-arḍ* (vicegerent on earth), entrusted by Allah with the responsibility of safeguarding the balance and sustainability of life. The concept of *khalīfah* should not be understood merely as a theological doctrine; rather, it represents a universal ethical framework that remains highly relevant in addressing contemporary ecological crises.45 As such, *khalīfah* emphasizes moral responsibility and accountability. In an ecological context, it does not grant unrestricted authority over nature; instead, it entails a form of stewardship governed by the principles of balance, sustainability, and justice.[46]

The role of *khalīfah* requires harmonious interaction between human beings and the natural environment. Such interaction should be guided by the teachings of Allah as revealed in the Qur'an, while also taking into account changing environmental conditions and contemporary ecological challenges. This principle serves as a fundamental basis for establishing a balanced relationship between humans and nature and represents one of the primary objectives of Islamic ethics.

In the context of the *Nyalasé* tradition (grave pilgrimage) among the Madurese community, this value is reflected in the way people treat the environment surrounding the cemetery. Activities such as clearing wild vegetation, repairing pathways leading to graves, and planting trees around burial sites demonstrate tangible forms of ecological responsibility. As *khalīfah*, human beings interact with God not only through ritual worship but also through environmental stewardship aimed at promoting the common good (*maṣlaḥah*). By maintaining cemetery areas in a clean, shaded, and sustainable condition, the Madurese community effectively fulfills the ecological *amānah* entrusted to them by Allah. Moreover, the tradition serves as a social space for transmitting moral values to younger generations, reinforcing the understanding that Islamic spirituality is inseparable from ecological ethics.[47]

The value of *khalīfah* embedded in the *Nyalasé* tradition can also be understood as a manifestation of the dual consequences of human existence, encompassing both rights and responsibilities. Human beings are not granted absolute authority as vicegerents on earth, nor are they free to exploit nature without limits. Rather, a *khalīfah* is Allah's representative entrusted with the duty of preserving the balance and sustainability of life on earth. Fulfilling this role also requires an understanding of the paradigm of *tawḥīd* (the oneness of God). The study *Dialectics of Theology and Ecology in Ammatoa ri Kajang* emphasizes that *tawḥīd* constitutes the theological foundation of Islamic environmental ethics, whereby the universe

[44] Mohammad Rindu Fajar Islamy et al., "The Role of Islamic Law in Addressing Global Warming: Perspectives from Indonesia and Global Contexts," *Mazahib* 24, no. 2 (2025): 358–386, https://doi.org/10.21093/mj.v24i2.11314.

[45] Irhamullah et al., "Khilafah Lingkungan: Peran Manusia Sebagai Khalifah dalam Menjaga Bumi," *QAZI: Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 2 (2025): 435–47, https://doi.org/10.61104/qz.v2i2.465.

[46] Aftab Haider et al., From Stewardship to Sustainability: A Comparative Analysis of Islamic Ecological Jurisprudence and Western Anthropocentric Regimes, JURIS (Jurnal Ilmiah Syariah), Vol. 25, No. 1 (2026).

[47] Interview with KH. Abdul Hamid, religious leader, in Sampang, October 14, 2025.

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is not perceived as an entity separate from God but as a manifestation of His greatness whose balance must be maintained.[48] As a spiritual principle, *tawḥīd* plays a crucial role in shaping human attitudes and behavior toward the environment. In this context, spirituality functions not only as a source of moral guidance but also as a motivating force for environmentally responsible action. In other words, *tawḥīd* is transformed from a theological belief into concrete ecological practice. Ecological awareness emerges from the realization that any act of environmental destruction constitutes a violation of the *tawḥīdic* covenant between humanity and God.

Therefore, pilgrimage within the *Nyalasé* tradition is not merely an expression of respect for ancestors but also a form of ecological devotion through which human beings fulfill their role as Allah's *khalīfah* on earth. In the context of *Nyalasé*, the principles of *khalīfah* and *tawḥīd* are manifested concretely through collective activities such as cleaning and maintaining cemetery environments, demonstrating how theological values are translated into practical environmental stewardship.

**b. Cleanliness as Part of Faith (Qur'an 74:4)**

*"And purify your garments."* (Qur'an 74:4)

The Qur'an does not explicitly use the term "cleanliness" (*naẓāfah*) in the same manner as the Prophetic traditions (*ḥadīth*), which frequently employ the term. Instead, the Qur'an utilizes the concept of *ṭahārah* (purity) and its derivatives, which appear approximately thirty-one times throughout the text. The term *ṭahārah* primarily denotes purity and sanctity, in contrast to impurity (*najāsah*), whereas cleanliness generally refers to the absence of dirt or contamination.

This verse embodies the fundamental principle of *ṭahārah*, which extends beyond personal physical cleanliness to encompass environmental and spiritual purity.38 Within the *Nyalasé* tradition, the Madurese community actualizes this value through activities such as cleaning graves, sweeping fallen leaves, arranging tombstones, and beautifying cemetery areas with flowers and greenery. These practices reflect an awareness that cleanliness constitutes an integral aspect of faith and serves as a manifestation of Muslim spirituality.[49]

From an ecological perspective, maintaining the cleanliness of cemetery areas can be understood as a form of *eco-cleanliness*, namely the belief that environmental hygiene is an essential component of religious devotion.[50] This demonstrates how Qur'anic teachings on cleanliness transcend the personal sphere and evolve into a social and ecological ethic embedded within local traditions.48 For the Madurese community, preserving the cleanliness of graves is not merely an act of respect for deceased ancestors but also a means of maintaining harmony among human beings, nature, and the Creator.

In the Islamic worldview, cleanliness is not merely a recommendation but a religious obligation that carries spiritual merit.49 Islamic teachings provide comprehensive guidance regarding practices of cleanliness and have cultivated habits of hygienic living for centuries. These teachings are remarkably consistent with the principles of modern public health and

[48] Muliati et al., "Dialectics of Theology and Ecology in Ammatoa ri Kajang in Bulukumba, Indonesia: Paradigm of Tawhidic and Environmental Fiqh in *Sulapa Appa*," *Samarah: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga dan Hukum Islam* 9, no. 1 (2025): 374–393.

[49] David Ocón and Wei Ping Young, "Bridging the Nature–Cultural Heritage Gap: Evaluating Sustainable Entanglements through Cemeteries in Urban Asia," *Sustainability Science* 19, no. 5 (2024): 1641–1660, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11625-024-01533.

[50] Civil Engineering Department, Faculty of Engineering, Islamic University of Madinah, KSA and Abdelkader. T. Ahmed, "Comparison of Environment Protection and Public Health Practices in Islamic Culture to the Modern Regulations," *Islamic University Journal of Applied Sciences* VII, no. 2 (2025), https://doi.org/10.63070/jesc.2025.025.

environmental sanitation that are widely promoted and implemented across the globe today.49

From a psychological perspective, cleaning activities—including the cleaning of graves as part of the *Nyalasé* tradition—provide pilgrims with a sense of inner peace and emotional tranquility. A clean, well-maintained, and aesthetically pleasing cemetery environment enables visitors to engage more deeply in prayer and contemplation on the transient nature of worldly life. Such an atmosphere fosters spiritual reflection, encourages mindfulness of mortality, and strengthens one's awareness of the relationship between human existence, the natural environment, and the Creator. Consequently, the practice of maintaining the cleanliness of cemetery areas contributes not only to environmental preservation but also to the psychological and spiritual well-being of those who participate in the ritual.

**c. Awareness of the Cycle of Life (Qur'an 20:55)**

*"From it (the earth) We created you, and into it We shall return you, and from it We shall bring you forth once again."* (Qur'an 20:55)

From a spiritual perspective, a grave pilgrimage brings individuals closer to Allah, reminds them of the transience of worldly life, and encourages self-reflection to improve their deeds and moral conduct. It also motivates individuals to contemplate the journey of life, draw lessons from the experiences of those who came before them, and seek forgiveness for their sins.[51] In the modern era, which is often characterized by materialism, grave pilgrimage serves as a spiritual medium that helps individuals reflect upon the meaning of life, the inevitability of death, and the importance of performing righteous deeds. Furthermore, grave pilgrimage serves to educate communities about local Islamic history, foster a spirit of moderate and tolerant Islam, and strengthen local wisdom amid the challenges of globalization.[52]

The verse above conveys a profound awareness of the origin and destiny of human existence: humans are created from the earth, will return to the earth, and will ultimately be resurrected from it. Within the *Nyalasé* tradition, visiting the graves of ancestors becomes a reflective moment through which the Madurese community contemplates the essence of life and death.51 Through this practice, participants are reminded that human beings possess an intrinsic connection with the earth, both spiritually and ecologically.[53] The earth is not merely the physical source of human creation and the final resting place after death; it is also a living environment that must be respected, protected, and sustained. Thus, *Nyalasé* fosters an awareness that human life forms part of a broader ecological cycle in which humans and nature are interconnected within the divine order established by Allah.

The awareness of the cycle of life fostered through this tradition cultivates respect for the earth as the "womb" of human existence. By caring for the soil in which their ancestors are buried, community members symbolically preserve the very origin from which they themselves were created. This attitude reflects an *eco-spiritual consciousness* rooted in Qur'anic values, which view the earth not merely as a place to live but as an integral part of

[51] Abd. Aziz, "Ziarah Kubur, Nilai Didaktis dan Rekonstruksi Teori Pendidikan Humanistik," *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman* 13, no. 1 (2018): 33–61, https://doi.org/10.21274/epis.2018.13.1.33-61.

[52] Fitroturohmawati, Faridah, dan Ifa Nurhayati, "Islam dan Tradisi Ziarah Kubur Perspektif Para Peziarah Muslim Jawa," *Sujud: Jurnal Agama, Sosial dan Budaya* 1, no. 3 (2025): 390–395.

[53] Ibrahim Malick, "Muslim Environmentalisms: Religious and Social Foundations, by Gade, Anna, M.," *Religion and the Arts* 25 (June 2021): 341–43, https://doi.org/10.1163.

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human existence that must be protected and sustained.[54] In this sense, the *Nyalasé* tradition functions as a form of *tadhakkur* (spiritual reflection) that simultaneously strengthens *eco-consciousness*, emphasizing the importance of maintaining harmony between humanity and the earth.

Furthermore, the notion of cyclicality embedded in the *Nyalasé* tradition is understood as a means of cultivating awareness of death, which in turn encourages individuals to perform righteous deeds. The tradition reminds participants that death is an inevitable decree of Allah and inspires pilgrims to engage in continuous *muḥāsabah* (self-evaluation), reflecting upon their actions and exercising caution regarding their conduct toward themselves, other people, and the surrounding environment, as well as the consequences of those actions in this world and the hereafter.[55]

This understanding teaches that the good deeds performed during one's lifetime—including efforts to protect and preserve the environment—continue to generate rewards even after death. In practice, those who participate in *Nyalasé* do not merely visit graves; they also engage in concrete acts such as planting trees in cemetery areas and donating cleaning equipment, including brooms and waste bins.[56] These actions are regarded as *ṣadaqah jāriyah* (ongoing charity), since the trees and facilities continue to benefit others long after the donor has passed away. Thus, the *Nyalasé* tradition nurtures not only a worldly form of ecological awareness but also an eschatological ecological consciousness, one that is oriented toward the afterlife and grounded in the belief that environmental stewardship constitutes a lasting spiritual investment.

**Integration of Ecological Awareness with Madurese Local Wisdom**

The *Nyalasé* tradition serves as an effective educational medium for raising public awareness of the importance of preserving nature. This is because the tradition is deeply embedded in the culture of the Madurese community, making it easily accepted without generating social resistance. In order for *Nyalasé* to remain sustainable and continue contributing to environmental conservation, a renewal of perspectives is necessary. This can be achieved by emphasizing the moral, spiritual, and ecological values contained within its implementation and by involving educational institutions so that younger generations become familiar with this positive tradition.[57]

In Islam, respect for nature is regarded as part of ecological *'ubūdiyyah*, namely a form of worship expressed through the preservation of creation. The concept of ecological *'ubūdiyyah* has a strong correlation with the idea of religious environmentalism developed by scholars such as Bron Taylor in his book *Dark Green Religion*. Taylor views nature as a sacred entity possessing intrinsic value.[58] Meanwhile, from the perspective of religious environmentalism, nature is understood as God's creation that must be protected and

[54] Muhammad Tahir Alibe et al., "The Meaning of Pilgrimage at The Grave of Kyai Modjo: A Study of Living Hadis About Grave Pilgrimage," *Diroyah: Jurnal Studi Ilmu Hadis* 9, no. 2 (2025).

[55] Abd. Aziz, "Ziarah Kubur, Nilai Didaktis dan Rekonstruksi Teori Pendidikan Humanistik," *Epistemé: Jurnal Pengembangan Ilmu Keislaman* 13, no. 1 (2018): 33–61, https://doi.org/10.21274/epis.2018.13.1.33-61.

[56] Field Observation. Public Cemeteries in Bangkalan, Sampang, and Sumenep, October 17, 2025.

[57] Ibrahim Malick, "Muslim Environmentalisms: Religious and Social Foundations, by Gade, Anna, M.," *Religion and the Arts* 25 (June 2021): 341–43, https://doi.org/10.1163.

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

preserved.[59] The *Nyalasé* tradition serves as a medium for teaching respect for ancestors while simultaneously encouraging the protection of the environment surrounding their burial sites. Therefore, cleaning graves and maintaining the surrounding environment are not merely social actions but also acts of worship imbued with spiritual and sacred value.[60]

The Qur'anic values reflected in the Nyalasé tradition demonstrate that Islam and the local wisdom of the Madurese community maintain a synergistic relationship in fostering ecological awareness.[61] The values of *khalīfah* (stewardship), *ṭahārah* (purity), and *tazakkur* (spiritual reflection) converge to form a living ecological ethic deeply rooted in society. Nyalasé is not merely a form of spiritual reverence for ancestors but also serves as a medium of ecological education grounded in Qur'anic values, encouraging people to maintain cleanliness, care for the earth, and recognize the existential interconnectedness between life, death, and the natural world.58

This synergistic relationship between Islam and local wisdom within the Nyalasé tradition of the Madurese community is also reflected in previous studies. For instance, Richard Foltz, in his book Islam and Ecology, demonstrates that environmental stewardship in Muslim societies does not always emerge from formal religious rulings or state policies. Rather, it often develops through local traditions that have long been internalized with Islamic values and embedded within community life.[62] This finding indicates that Islamic teachings are not only understood normatively through the texts of the Qur'an and Hadith but are also brought to life through the everyday cultural practices and traditions of Muslim communities[63]

The cultivation of ecological awareness is therefore an urgent necessity for every individual as part of broader efforts to preserve the environment. However, inadequate understanding of environmental issues has often contributed to the low level of public awareness regarding environmental care and protection. In Islam, believers are taught to maintain harmony, balance, and equilibrium in all aspects of life, including their relationship with the natural environment.[64] Likewise, the *Nyalasé* tradition practiced by the Madurese community incorporates environmental preservation efforts as an integral component of its implementation, demonstrating how religious values and local wisdom can work together to promote ecological responsibility.[65]

Therefore, strengthening the *Nyalasé* tradition is not only important for preserving the cultural heritage of the Madurese community but also represents an alternative strategy for fostering ecological awareness. This tradition possesses significant potential as a medium

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[59] Wietske Medema, Chengzi Chew, Jan Franklin Adamowski, Igor Mayer, dan Arjen E. J. Wals (eds.), *Understanding Game-Based Approaches for Improving Sustainable Water Governance: The Potential of Serious Games to Solve Water Problems* (Basel: MDPI, 2020), https://doi.org/10.3390.

[60] Amir Hussain, "Anna M. Gade, Muslim Environmentalisms: Religious and Social Foundations," *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture* 16, no. 2 (2022): 314–15, Book review, https://doi.org/10.1558.

[61] Edi Susanto et al., "Ruh Islam dalam 'Wadag' Lokal Madura: Kasus 'Tanean Lanjeng'," *KARSA: Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 14, no. 2 (2012): 161-74, https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v14i2.124.

[62] Ahmad Muttaqin, "Islam and the Changing Meaning of Spiritualitas and Spiritual in Contemporary Indonesia," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 50, no. 1 (2012): 23–56, https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2012.501.23-56.

[63] Sudarto dkk., "Cultural-Religious Ecology Masyarakat Pesisir Cilacap," *Danadyaksa Historica* 4, no. 2 (2024): 10-11, https://doi.org/10.32502.

[64] Sri Handayani et al., "Islam, Kesehatan dan Lingkungan Hidup: Studi Tentang Jamu Madura," *KARSA: Journal of Social and Islamic Culture* 14, no. 2 (2012): 161-74, https://doi.org/10.19105/karsa.v14i2.124.

[65] Maimun Maimun et al., "Analyzing the Maduranese's Traditional Inheritance from al-Tūfi's Maslahah Theory," *AL-'ADALAH* 18, no. 1 (2021): 35–54, https://doi.org/10.24042/adalah.v18i1.8649.

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for value internalization because it originates from and develops within the social life of the community itself. The integration of religious values and local wisdom provides an essential foundation for shaping patterns of thought and behavior that are oriented not only toward ritual religious practices but also toward continuous and sustainable ecological responsibility[66]

The *Nyalasé* tradition also teaches the principle of ecological sustainability, which is in line with Qur'anic concepts concerning the preservation of natural assets such as land, trees, and water resources, while discouraging exploitation. By maintaining cemetery grounds and planting trees that provide long-term benefits, the Madurese community indirectly practices the principle of *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* (environmental preservation), ensuring that ecological heritage can be enjoyed not only by the present generation but also by future generations. This reflects the Qur'anic principle of sustainability, which emphasizes that the earth is inherited by God's righteous servants.

In this context, the *Nyalasé* tradition can be understood as a form of religious practice that is not merely normative but also contextual and transformative. It creates a space in which spiritual, social, and ecological values are harmoniously interconnected. Consequently, this tradition is highly relevant as a model for responding to contemporary environmental crises, particularly in fostering collective awareness of the responsibility to protect the environment for future generations.

The implications of this study indicate that the *Nyalasé* tradition possesses considerable potential to be developed as a model of ecological education grounded in local wisdom and inspired by Qur'anic values. Therefore, strategic efforts are needed to integrate the values embodied in this tradition into both formal and non-formal educational systems. Educational institutions can utilize *Nyalasé* as a contextual learning medium for instilling environmental awareness and responsibility among students. Furthermore, local governments and community leaders should play an active role in preserving this tradition by strengthening narratives that emphasize not only its spiritual significance but also its ecological dimensions. This may be achieved through community-based programs such as cemetery-cleaning campaigns, tree-planting initiatives in cemetery areas, and locally based waste-management activities involving local youth. Such initiatives can cultivate environmental sensitivity, responsibility, and conservation awareness from an early age.

Moreover, this study recommends stronger collaboration among academics, religious leaders, and local communities to explore and develop local traditions as potential solutions to environmental crises. Through such collaboration, the *Nyalasé* tradition can continue to survive not merely as a cultural heritage but also as a relevant and sustainable ecological practice for the future, while maintaining the ethical values, propriety, and Qur'anic principles that form the foundation of the tradition itself.

## C. Conclusion

The *Nyalasé* tradition in Madura reflects the integration of religiosity, local wisdom, and ecological awareness within a single socio-cultural practice. As a living tradition, Nyalasé embodies Qur'anic values concerning human responsibility toward nature, cleanliness, and reflection on the cycle of life. The findings demonstrate that ecological awareness is not merely constructed through formal environmental discourse but is also nurtured through religious and cultural practices that have been internalized across generations. Through activities such as maintaining cemetery environments, preserving

[66] Ahmad Muttaqin, "Islam and the Changing Meaning of Spirituality and Spiritual in Contemporary Indonesia," *Al-Jami'ah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 60, no. 1 (2022): 1–31, https://doi.org/10.14421/ajis.2022.601.1-31.

vegetation, and collective community participation, *Nyalasé* functions not only as a spiritual ritual but also as a medium for ecological education and environmental stewardship.

This study contributes to the development of Living Qur'an studies and Islamic ecotheology by showing that grave pilgrimage traditions can serve as a medium for the internalization of Qur'anic ecological ethics. The study offers a new perspective by positioning *Nyalasé* not only as a religious and cultural practice but also as a community-based mechanism for fostering ecological consciousness rooted in local wisdom. These findings reinforce the argument that Islamic values can be manifested in concrete environmental practices through local cultural traditions. Nevertheless, this research is limited to selected communities in Madura and focuses primarily on qualitative interpretations of ecological values embedded in the *Nyalasé* tradition. Future studies may expand the geographical scope, compare similar pilgrimage traditions in other Muslim societies, or employ mixed-method approaches to examine the relationship between local religious traditions and environmental behavior more comprehensively. In this way, *Nyalasé* may be understood not only as a cultural heritage of the Madurese people but also as a relevant model for promoting sustainable ecological awareness in contemporary society.

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