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Reconstructing Fasād fī al-Arḍ in Classical and Contemporary Qur'anic Exegesis: Toward an Ecological Diagnostic Framework

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Abstract

The global ecological crisis in the Anthropocene has intensified attention to the Qur'ānic concept of fasād fī al-arḍ as a foundation for environmental ethics. This study aims to analyze the transformation of the interpretation of fasād across classical and contemporary exegetical traditions and to reconstruct its ecological meaning through ecological hermeneutics. This qualitative study employs a comparative textual analysis of selected Qur'ānic verses concerning fasād, khalīfah, mīzān, and amānah. This qualitative study employs comparative textual analysis of selected Qur'ānic verses concerning fasād, khalīfah, mīzān, and amānah, drawing on a corpus comprising classical tafsīr, modern-contemporary tafsīr, and a complementary work of Islamic environmental thought. Data were analyzed through thematic (mawḍū'ī) Qur'ānic exegesis, comparative tafsīr analysis, and thematic coding. The findings show that classical tafsīr primarily understands fasād as moral and cosmic disorder resulting from human disobedience, whereas contemporary interpretations expand it to encompass structural and ecological consequences of human activities. This study reconstructs fasād as an ecological diagnostic category for identifying human-induced ecological disruption and proposes an integrated Islamic environmental ethics framework based on the interconnected concepts of fasād, khalīfah, mīzān, and amānah. This framework contributes a Qur'ānic theological foundation for ecological responsibility and sustainable environmental governance in the Anthropocene.

Keywords: Fasād fī al-arḍ, Islamic Ecotheology, Anthropocene, Environmental Ethics.

Abstrak

Krisis ekologi global pada era Anthropocene telah meningkatkan perhatian terhadap konsep Qur'ani fasād fī al-arḍ sebagai landasan bagi etika lingkungan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis transformasi penafsiran fasād dalam tradisi tafsir klasik dan kontemporer serta merekonstruksi makna ekologisnya melalui pendekatan ecological hermeneutics. Penelitian kualitatif ini menggunakan analisis tekstual komparatif terhadap sejumlah ayat Al-Qur'an yang berkaitan dengan fasād, khalīfah, mīzān, dan amānah, dengan menggunakan korpus yang terdiri atas tafsir klasik, tafsir modern-kontemporer, dan satu karya pelengkap mengenai pemikiran lingkungan Islam. Data dianalisis melalui tafsir tematik (mawḍūʿī), analisis komparatif tafsir, dan pengodean tematik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tafsir klasik terutama memahami fasād sebagai kerusakan moral dan kosmis yang disebabkan oleh ketidaktaatan manusia, sedangkan penafsiran kontemporer memperluas maknanya hingga mencakup konsekuensi struktural dan ekologis dari aktivitas manusia. Penelitian ini merekonstruksi fasād sebagai kategori diagnostik ekologis (ecological diagnostic category) untuk mengidentifikasi kerusakan ekologis yang disebabkan oleh manusia serta mengusulkan kerangka etika lingkungan Islam yang integratif berdasarkan keterkaitan konsep fasād, khalīfah, mīzān, dan amānah. Kerangka ini memberikan kontribusi berupa landasan teologis Qur'ani bagi tanggung jawab ekologis dan tata kelola lingkungan berkelanjutan pada era Anthropocene.

Kata kunci: *fasād fī al-arḍ, etika lingkungan Islam, Antroposen, ekoteologi Islam.*

A. Introduction

The global environmental crisis of the twenty-first century has become one of the most pressing challenges facing humanity. Phenomena such as climate change, deforestation, biodiversity loss, marine pollution, and ecosystem degradation indicate that human activities have significantly disrupted the balance of the Earth's systems. Various studies demonstrate that land-use change, excessive exploitation of natural resources, and greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuel combustion are the primary drivers of global environmental change and widespread ecosystem degradation.[1] Scientific evidence further shows that global warming, the increasing frequency of hydrometeorological disasters, and ecological degradation are closely associated with unsustainable patterns of human interaction with the environment.[2]

The concept of the Anthropocene offers a useful lens for examining this condition because it draws attention to the extent to which human activities have become a major force shaping ecological change. Beyond its geological significance, the Anthropocene also represents an analytical framework for understanding how human-induced environmental degradation has reached planetary scale, thereby requiring not only scientific and technological responses but also ethical and normative ones.[3] This perspective fundamentally shifts the understanding of the human-nature relationship, from viewing humans merely as users of natural resources to recognizing them as the principal agents responsible for maintaining or disrupting ecological balance.

As awareness of environmental degradation continues to grow, scholars increasingly argue that the ecological crisis is not solely a scientific or technical problem but also an ethical and spiritual one. Consequently, religious traditions are increasingly recognized as important sources of moral values capable of guiding environmental responsibility. Previous studies have emphasized that religious teachings provide ethical principles governing not only the relationship between humans and God but also relationships among humans, other living beings, and the natural world.[4] Within Islamic thought, this relationship is firmly rooted in the Qur'an, which portrays nature as an integral part of God's creation established upon the principles of harmony, balance, and order.

One of the Qur'an's central concepts related to environmental degradation is *fasād fī al-arḍ* (corruption or destruction on earth). This concept appears in several Qur'ānic verses and refers to actions that disrupt the divinely established order governing life and creation. One of the most frequently discussed passages is QS. al-Rūm (30):41, which states that corruption has appeared on land and sea as a consequence of human actions. This verse establishes a clear causal relationship between human behavior and environmental conditions, indicating that ecological degradation can be understood as the consequence of human misconduct that violates the balance of nature.[5] Accordingly, previous studies have

[1] Lidong Li and others, 'Global Land Use Change and Its Impact on Greenhouse Gas Emissions', *Global Change Biology*, 30.12 (2024), p. e17604, doi:10.1111/gcb.17604.

[2] Amir AghaKouchak and others, 'Climate Extremes and Compound Hazards in a Warming World', *Annual Review of Earth and Planetary Sciences*, 48.1 (2020), pp. 519–48, doi:10.1146/annurev-earth-071719-055228.

[3] Jeremy J. Schmidt, Peter G. Brown, and Christopher J. Orr, 'Ethics in the Anthropocene: A Research Agenda', *The Anthropocene Review*, 3.3 (2016), pp. 188–200, doi:10.1177/2053019616662052.

[4] Ghezal Sabir, Lina M. Tennhardt, and Robert Home, 'Heaven and Earth: A Systematic Review of Theories on the Relationship between Religion and Environmental Behaviour', *Discover Sustainability*, 6.1 (2025), p. 178, doi:10.1007/s43621-025-01005-2.

[5] Fazlun Khalid, 'Islam and the Environment – Ethics and Practice an Assessment', *Religion Compass*, 4.11 (2010), pp. 707–16, doi:10.1111/j.1749-8171.2010.00249.x.

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argued that *fasād fī al-arḍ* functions as a normative warning against excessive exploitation of natural resources and the destruction of ecological systems.[6]

However, classical Qur'ānic exegesis generally interpreted *fasād* within moral, social, and political frameworks rather than ecological ones. Classical exegetes such as al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, and al-Qurṭubī primarily understood the concept as referring to moral deviation, social injustice, disobedience to divine commands, and actions that disrupt the established order of society.[7] Although some exegetes acknowledged broader implications of the concept, its ecological dimension was not systematically developed, largely because premodern societies had not yet experienced environmental crises on a scale comparable to those confronting the contemporary world.[8] Consequently, classical interpretations predominantly emphasized anthropocentric moral concerns, leaving the environmental significance of *fasād* relatively underexplored.[9] This historical context also explains why contemporary ecological challenges require a renewed interpretation capable of connecting the Qur'ānic concept of *fasād* with present-day environmental realities without disregarding its original theological foundations.[10]

Research on Islamic environmental ethics and Qur'ānic ecotheology has expanded substantially over the last decade, reflecting growing scholarly concern over the intersection between religious ethics and ecological sustainability. Recent international scholarship has moved beyond normative theological discussions toward systematic analyses of how Islamic worldviews contribute to sustainable development, environmental justice, and climate ethics. Within this broader discourse, Indonesian scholars have increasingly focused on QS. al-Rūm (30):41, examining the concept of *fasād* through classical exegesis, maqāṣid-based interpretation, semantic analysis, and ecotheological approaches. Collectively, these studies demonstrate growing academic interest in Qur'ānic environmental ethics. Nevertheless, they largely concentrate on normative interpretation or conceptual reconstruction, while relatively little attention has been devoted to integrating semantic analysis, classical tafsīr, and contemporary ecotheological theory within a single analytical framework.

Despite these important contributions, existing scholarship has predominantly focused on semantic analysis, *maqāṣidī* interpretation, ecotheological perspectives, or partial examinations of QS. al-Rūm (30):41. Comparative investigations that systematically integrate classical and contemporary exegetical traditions remain relatively limited.[11] More importantly, previous studies have not sufficiently explained how the transition from classical moral interpretations to contemporary ecological readings reshapes the conceptual function of *fasād* within Islamic environmental ethics. More specifically, existing studies have not sufficiently established how fasād can function analytically as a diagnostic concept that

[6] Fazlun M. Khalid, 'Exploring Environmental Ethics in Islam: Insights from the Qur'an and the Practice of Prophet Muhammad', in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Religion and Ecology*, ed. by John Hart, 1st edn (Wiley, 2017), pp. 130–45, doi:10.1002/9781118465523.ch11.

[7] Mokh. Sya'roni and others, 'Ecotheological Insights from Prophetic Hadiths: Reframing Islamic EnvironmentalEthics Based on SDGs', *Pharos Journal of Theology*, no. 106.5 (November 2025), doi:10.46222/pharosjot.106.51.

[8] Lisa Wersal, 'ISLAM AND ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS: TRADITION RESPONDS TO CONTEMPORARYa CHALLENGES', *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, 30.3 (1995), doi:10.1111/j.1467-9744.1995.tb00083.x.

[9] Ali M. Rizvi, 'Islamic Environmental Ethics and the Challenge of Anthropocentrism', *American Journal of Islam and Society*, 27.3 (2010), pp. 53–78, doi:10.35632/ajis.v27i3.366.

[10] Anna M. Gade, '"Muslim Environmentalisms and Environmental Ethics: Theory and Practice for Rights and Justice"', *The Muslim World*, 113.3 (2023), pp. 242–59, doi:10.1111/muwo.12474.

[11] Husamah and others, 'Islam and Sustainability Issues, How Far Has the Relationship Progressed? A Bibliometric Analysis', *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 12 (2025), p. 101703, doi:10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101703.

identifies the ethical causes of ecological disruption and relates them to the Qur'ānic principles of stewardship, balance, and accountability.

Addressing this gap requires an interpretive approach that not only compares exegetical traditions but also connects Qur'ānic ethical principles with present-day ecological realities. In this study, ecological hermeneutics is understood as an interpretive approach that rereads Qur'ānic texts by relating their theological and ethical messages to contemporary environmental conditions without disregarding their original textual and historical contexts.[12] Rather than treating ecological issues merely as external applications of scripture, ecological hermeneutics examines how Qur'ānic concepts can function as dynamic ethical principles for understanding and responding to environmental crises. Such an approach is consistent with contemporary developments in Islamic ecotheology, which emphasize that Qur'ānic teachings provide not only spiritual guidance but also an ethical foundation for environmental responsibility and sustainability.[13]

Against this background, the present study aims to analyze the development of interpretations of *fasād fī al-arḍ* across classical and contemporary exegetical traditions and to reinterpret the concept through the framework of ecological hermeneutics within the context of the Anthropocene. Specifically, this study addresses three interrelated questions: (1) how *fasād fī al-arḍ* was understood in classical Qur'ānic exegesis; (2) how its interpretation has evolved in modern and contemporary *tafsīr*; and (3) how an ecological reinterpretation of the concept can contribute to the formulation of an Islamic environmental ethic capable of responding to the global ecological crisis.

Unlike previous studies that have primarily emphasized semantic analysis, maqāṣidī interpretation, ecotheological perspectives, or partial readings of QS. al-Rūm (30):41, this study does not merely extend the meaning of fasād fī al-arḍ into the ecological domain. Its principal novelty lies in reconstructing fasād as an ecological diagnostic category through its systematic relationship with the complementary Qur'ānic concepts of khalīfah, mīzān, and amānah. In this framework, fasād identifies the occurrence and ethical causes of ecological disruption; khalīfah defines human responsibility for stewardship; mīzān provides the normative principle of ecological balance; and amānah establishes the dimension of accountability. The study therefore moves beyond treating fasād as a general category of moral or environmental disorder toward a relational framework in which ecological degradation can be interpreted as a manifestation of disrupted stewardship, violated balance, and breached trust.

This study employed a qualitative descriptive-analytical design integrating thematic (mawḍū'ī) Qur'ānic exegesis and ecological hermeneutics to examine the development of fasād fī al-arḍ across classical and contemporary tafsīr. The primary data consisted of selected Qur'ānic verses concerning fasād, khalīfah, mīzān, and amānah. The verses were selected purposively based on their thematic relevance to environmental ethics, particularly those discussing environmental degradation, human stewardship, ecological balance, and responsibility toward nature. The textual corpus was organized into three categories according to the status and function of each source. First, the classical exegetical corpus consisted of al-Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, and al-Qurṭubī. Second, the modern-contemporary exegetical corpus consisted of Rashīd Riḍā's *Tafsīr al-Manār* and M. Quraish Shihab's *Tafsir al-Misbah*. Muḥammad 'Abduh is considered within the intellectual formation of *Tafsīr al-Manār* rather than as a separate exegetical work. Third, Seyyed Hossein Nasr's *Religion and*

[12] Sevcan Öztürk, 'Islamic Ecotheology and the Anthropocene Challenge: Ethical Limits and Theological Possibilities', *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*, no. 0 (May 2026), p. 26098, doi:10.16995/zygon.26098.

[13] Odeh Al-Jayyousi and others, 'Re-Thinking Sustainable Development within Islamic Worldviews: A Systematic Literature Review', *Sustainability*, 14.12 (2022), p. 7300, doi:10.3390/su14127300.

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the Order of Nature was treated as a complementary work of Islamic environmental thought rather than as a Qur'ānic commentary.

The study therefore does not treat all six sources as equivalent tafsīr authorities. Three classical works and two modern-contemporary works constitute the primary exegetical corpus, while Nasr's work functions as a complementary source of Islamic environmental thought. Quraish Shihab is explicitly included because his *Tafsir al-Misbah* is directly used in the interpretation of QS. al-Rūm (30):41. The sources were purposively selected according to three criteria: (1) direct relevance to the interpretation of the selected Qur'ānic verses and the concepts of fasād, khalīfah, mīzān, and amānah; (2) representation of distinct historical and intellectual traditions; and (3) analytical relevance to the relationship between human conduct, ecological balance, and environmental responsibility.

The unit of analysis consisted of interpretive statements concerning fasād, khalīfah, mīzān, and amānah in the selected tafsīr works, complemented by relevant arguments concerning the human-nature-God relationship in Nasr's environmental thought. The ecological hermeneutic approach was operationalized through four sequential interpretive steps. First, textual-contextual analysis identified the lexical, semantic, and normative meanings of fasād within the selected Qur'ānic verses and their immediate textual contexts. Second, historical-exegetical analysis examined how classical and modern-contemporary exegetes interpreted fasād in relation to the social, moral, and theological contexts of their respective periods. Third, ecological contextualization connected the established textual and exegetical meanings with contemporary ecological conditions, including environmental degradation, resource exploitation, ecological imbalance, and the structural consequences of human activity in the Anthropocene. Fourth, ethical reconstruction synthesized these findings with the Qur'ānic concepts of khalīfah, mīzān, and amānah to formulate a contemporary ecological interpretation while maintaining continuity with the theological and historical foundations of the text.

The analytical process proceeded from textual interpretation to comparative exegesis and finally to ecological reconstruction. The study first established the semantic and historical dimensions of fasād, then identified continuities and differences between classical and contemporary exegetical interpretations, and subsequently evaluated their relevance to contemporary ecological conditions. Ecological hermeneutics therefore functioned as an analytical bridge between the historical meaning of the Qur'ānic text and its normative reconstruction in the context of the Anthropocene. This procedure was designed to avoid imposing contemporary environmental concerns directly onto the Qur'ānic text; instead, ecological meanings were derived through a controlled comparative process that preserved the textual, theological, and historical foundations of the selected interpretations.

B. Results and Discussion

The concept of *Fasād fī al-Arḍ* in the Qur'an

The analysis examines the development of fasād through three Qur'ānic passages QS. al-A'rāf (7):56, QS. al-Baqarah (2):11-12, and QS. al-Rūm (30):41 which represent complementary normative, ethical, and causal dimensions of the concept. The analysis compares how classical and modern-contemporary exegetes construct the meaning, human agency, and ethical implications of fasād across different historical contexts.

The comparison is conducted along four analytical dimensions: the primary meaning assigned to fasād, the perceived causes of corruption, the role attributed to human agency, and the normative implications of the interpretation. This comparison makes it possible to distinguish between continuity and transformation across exegetical periods. The comparison focuses on four dimensions: the meaning assigned to fasād, its perceived causes, the role of human agency, and the normative implications of each interpretation.

Linguistically, *fasād* derives from the Arabic root *fasada-yafsudu*, referring to deterioration, corruption, or the disruption of an order previously characterized by harmony and balance (Manẓūr, 1994). Within the Qur'ānic worldview, this concept extends beyond individual wrongdoing to encompass any action that undermines the balance established by God within human society and the natural world.[14] The comparative analysis focused on three principal Qur'ānic passages QS. al-A'rāf (7):56, QS. al-Baqarah (2):11-12, and QS. al-Rūm (30):41 because together they represent the normative, ethical, and causal dimensions of *fasād*.

The first interpretive pattern emerges from QS. al-A'rāf (7):56, which establishes the normative foundation of the concept.

In QS. al-A'rāf (7):56, God declares:

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ بَعْدَ اِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوْهُ خَوْفًا وَّطَمَعًا ۗ اِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللّٰهِ قَرِيْبٌ مِّنَ الْمُحْسِنِيْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾

"Do not cause corruption on the earth after it has been set in order, and call upon Him with fear and hope. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to those who do good."

The comparative analysis indicates that both al-Ṭabarī and al-Qurṭubī interpret this verse primarily as a prohibition against actions that destroy the divinely established order through injustice, disobedience, and social disorder.[15] Although their discussions remain centered on moral and social dimensions, neither interpretation excludes the broader principle that God's creation should be preserved rather than disrupted. Contemporary Islamic environmental thought builds upon this ethical foundation rather than replacing it. Nasr (1996) conceptualizes nature as an ordered and sacred reality whose disruption is associated with the modern desacralization of the natural world. His ecological philosophy therefore provides a complementary framework for extending the classical understanding of fasād toward environmental degradation and disruption of the natural order. This broader interpretation is consistent with contemporary scholarship that identifies Islamic concepts of stewardship and human responsibility as foundations for environmental sustainability.[16] Consequently, environmental degradation may be understood as a contemporary expression of violating the divine order described in the Qur'ān.

The agreement between al-Ṭabarī and al-Qurṭubī lies in their identification of fasād as a disruption of the divinely established moral and social order, whereas Nasr extends this interpretive framework by relating the preservation of divine order to the integrity and balance of the natural environment. The comparison therefore reveals continuity at the level of theological normativity but transformation at the level of analytical application: classical exegesis emphasizes the preservation of moral and social order, whereas the ecological reading extends this principle to the integrity of the natural order.

A second interpretive development appears in QS. al-Baqarah (2):11-12, where the Qur'ān exposes the contradiction between claims of reform and actions that actually generate corruption.

وَاِذَا قِيْلَ لَهُمْ لَا تُفْسِدُوْا فِى الْاَرْضِ ۙ قَالُوْٓا اِنَّمَا نَحْنُ مُصْلِحُوْنَ ﴿١١﴾ اَلَآ اِنَّهُمْ هُمُ الْمُفْسِدُوْنَ وَلٰكِنْ لَّا يَشْعُرُوْنَ ﴿١٢﴾

[14] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 'Religion & the Order of Nature', *The 1994 Cadbury Lectures at the University of Birmingham* (Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 191–234.

[15] Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmi' al-Bayān 'an Ta'Wīl Āy al-Qur'Ān* (Mu'assasah al-Risālah, 2000), II; M. A. Qurṭubī, *Tafsir Al-Qurtubi: Al-Jami Li-Ahkam al-Quran* (Dar wa-Matabi al-Shab, 1999), VII.

[16] Labeeb Bsoul and others, 'Islam's Perspective on Environmental Sustainability: A Conceptual Analysis', *Social Sciences*, 11.6 (2022), p. 228, doi:10.3390/socsci11060228.

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"When it is said to them, 'Do not cause corruption on the earth,' they reply, 'We are only reformers.' Truly, it is they who are the corrupters, but they do not realize it.'"

Al-Ṭabarī explains that these verses criticize individuals who justify harmful actions while considering themselves agents of reform.[17] The comparative analysis shows that contemporary ecological interpretations extend this ethical paradox to modern development practices. Activities such as deforestation, excessive resource extraction, and environmentally destructive industrial expansion are frequently presented as indicators of economic progress despite generating severe ecological degradation.[18] Accordingly, the distinction between *iṣlāḥ* and *fasād* provides a Qur'ānic ethical criterion for evaluating whether development genuinely preserves the integrity of creation or instead produces environmental destruction under the rhetoric of progress.[19]

The continuity between the classical and contemporary readings lies in the ethical distinction between iṣlāḥ and fasād: actions presented as beneficial are judged according to their actual consequences rather than their stated intentions. The principal difference concerns the scale of agency and consequence. Al-Ṭabarī's interpretation emphasizes individuals who conceal harmful conduct behind claims of reform, whereas the contemporary ecological reading extends the same ethical logic to institutions, development policies, economic systems, and resource-extraction practices. This expansion is shaped by the emergence of environmental problems whose causes are increasingly systemic rather than reducible to isolated individual acts. Thus, the contemporary interpretation does not introduce a new ethical principle but applies the Qur'ānic distinction between iṣlāḥ and fasād to a broader field of collective and structural human action.

The third and most explicit interpretive pattern is found in QS. al-Rūm (30):41, which directly links environmental degradation to human actions.

ظَهَرَ الْفَسَادُ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ اَيْدِى النَّاسِ لِيُذِيْقَهُمْ بَعْضَ الَّذِيْ عَمِلُوْا لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْجِعُوْنَ ﴿٤١﴾

"Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what people's hands have earned, so that He may let them taste part of what they have done, that perhaps they will return (to righteousness)."

Ibn Kathīr interprets this verse as demonstrating that corruption arises from human disobedience and sinful conduct, thereby emphasizing the causal relationship between human actions and adverse consequences.[20] M. Quraish Shihab expands this understanding by explaining that the phrase *al-barri wa al-baḥr* encompasses terrestrial and marine environments, indicating the comprehensive scope of environmental degradation.[21] From a complementary perspective, Nasr's environmental philosophy understands ecological crisis as a consequence of humanity's failure to preserve the divinely ordered balance of creation.[22]

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[17] Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ Al-Bayān ʿan Taʾwīl Āy al-Qurʾān, Ed. ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī* (Dār Hajr, 2001), XIX.

[18] Jonah Busch and Kalifi Ferretti-Gallon, 'What Drives and Stops Deforestation, Reforestation, and Forest Degradation? An Updated Meta-Analysis', *Review of Environmental Economics and Policy*, 17.2 (2023), pp. 217–50, doi:10.1086/725051.

[19] Ali Ali Gobaili Saged and Fatema Alzahraa Alsied Aly, 'Systematic Destruction and Contemporary Ecological Crises: A Quranic Maqasid-Based Perspective on Environmental Protection', *International Journal of Quranic Research*, 17.2 (2025), pp. 299–325, doi:10.22452/quranica.vol17no2.38.

[20] Ismāʿīl ibn ʿUmar Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm, Ed. Sāmī Ibn Muḥammad Salāmah,* 2nd edn (Dār Ṭayyibah li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 1999), VI.

[21] M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah: Pesan, Kesan, Dan Keserasian Al-Qur'an* (Lentera Hati, 2005), XI.

[22] Saad Saood Safdar and Ghulam Shams-ur-Rehmam, 'The Roots of the Ecological Crisis in the Theological and Philosophical Landscape of Modern Civilization: An Analysis of Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Perspective', *ISLAMIC STUDIES*, 60.3 (2021), pp. 287–308, doi:10.52541/isiri.v60i3.1847.

Compared with the previous verses, QS. al-Rūm (30):41 most clearly establishes the causal relationship between human behavior and ecological disruption, thereby providing the strongest textual basis for contemporary Islamic environmental ethics.

Taken together, the three passages establish complementary dimensions of fasād: QS. al-A'rāf (7):56 provides its normative foundation, QS. al-Baqarah (2):11-12 provides an ethical criterion for distinguishing iṣlāḥ from fasād, and QS. al-Rūm (30):41 makes the causal relationship between human conduct and corruption explicit. These dimensions provide the textual basis for the subsequent ecological reconstruction.

The comparative findings provide the basis for reconstructing fasād as an ecological diagnostic category. This reconstruction moves beyond its conventional treatment as a category of moral prohibition by examining how ecological disruption can be interpreted through the Qur'ānic relationship between human conduct, responsibility, balance, and accountability.[23]

Interpretations of Fasād in Classical and Modern Exegetical Traditions

To provide a clearer understanding of how the concept of *fasād* has developed across different exegetical traditions, the following table presents a comparison between classical and modern-contemporary interpretations. The comparison focuses on the meaning, human role, causes, scope, and ethical orientation of *fasād*.

Table 1. Comparative Development of the Interpretation of Fasād in Classical and Contemporary Tafsīr

Aspect	Classical Tafsīr	Modern-Contemporary Tafsīr
Primary meaning of *fasād*	Moral, social, and theological corruption	Moral, social, ecological, and structural corruption
Human role	Obedience to divine law	Stewardship (*khalīfah*) and ecological responsibility
Cause of environmental degradation	Consequence of human sin and moral deviation	Human-induced ecological exploitation and unsustainable development
Scope of interpretation	Individual and communal ethics	Environmental governance and sustainability
Ethical orientation	Moral restoration	Ecological justice and sustainable stewardship

Within the classical exegetical tradition, *fasād* is predominantly understood as a consequence of human deviation from divine guidance. Ibn Kathīr interprets QS. al-Rūm (30):41 as demonstrating that corruption appearing on land and sea results from human disobedience, with phenomena such as drought, famine, and social hardship functioning as divine admonitions intended to encourage repentance.[24] Likewise, al-Ṭabarī interprets *fasād* as the consequence of human disobedience to God's commands, manifested in moral corruption, injustice, and the disruption of the divinely ordained order.[25] Although his exegesis does not explicitly frame *fasād* as an ecological concept, it establishes a theological understanding that human misconduct undermines the order (*niẓām*) established by God. Contemporary Islamic environmental scholars have subsequently extended this theological

[23] Anna M. Gade, 'Climate, Sustainability, and Future Generations: An Ecotheology for Indonesia's Ummah of "Nonidentity"', *Studia Islamika*, 32.3 (2024), pp. 467–89, doi:10.36712/sdi.v32i3.46657.

[24] Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr Al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm, Ed. Sāmī Ibn Muḥammad Salāmah* (Dar Tayyibah, 1999), VI. pp. 320

[25] al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ Al-Bayān ʿan Taʾwīl Āy al-Qurʾān, Ed. ʿAbd Allāh Ibn ʿAbd al-Muḥsin al-Turkī*, XIX. pp. 398-400

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principle to interpret ecological degradation as one manifestation of *fasād fī al-arḍ*.[26] Al-Qurṭubī[27] further relates fasād to injustice and transgression, emphasizing their consequences for the social and divinely ordered conditions of human life.[28] Although these classical interpretations do not explicitly discuss ecological crises in the contemporary scientific sense, they consistently establish the theological principle that human misconduct disrupts the harmony of God's creation.[29]

The comparative analysis indicates that modern and contemporary exegetes retain this theological foundation while substantially expanding its interpretive implications. Muhammad 'Abduh adopts a contextual and rational approach by arguing that Qur'ānic references to *fasād* should also be understood as warnings concerning the observable consequences of irresponsible human behaviour toward society and nature.[30] Rather than attributing environmental degradation solely to individual moral failure, 'Abduh emphasizes the role of human reason and social responsibility in maintaining ecological balance through just and sustainable resource management.

This contextual orientation is further developed by Rashīd Riḍā, who interprets *fasād* within the broader framework of humanity's role as *khalīfah*.[31] In *Tafsīr al-Manār*, he argues that the trust (*amānah*) entrusted to humanity requires the responsible management of natural resources according to the principles of justice and balance.[32] Consequently, environmental exploitation is understood not merely as an individual ethical failure but also as a structural violation of humanity's divinely mandated stewardship. Compared with classical exegesis, Riḍā therefore shifts the discussion from personal morality toward broader questions of governance, social justice, and responsible environmental management.

This transformation reflects an epistemological shift in the scale through which fasād is interpreted. Classical exegetes primarily addressed forms of disorder observable within individual and communal moral life, whereas modern-contemporary interpreters encounter ecological problems produced through interconnected institutions, economic systems, technological development, and patterns of resource exploitation. The expansion of fasād into an ecological category therefore does not replace the classical theological framework; rather, it reconfigures its analytical scope in response to changing historical conditions and the emergence of systemic ecological risks.

The epistemological transformation from classical to modern-contemporary interpretations is therefore shaped by differences in historical context, the scale of human agency, and the emergence of systemic environmental problems.[33] Classical exegetes primarily encountered fasād through moral, social, and theological disorders observable within individual and communal life. Modern-contemporary interpreters, however, confront ecological problems whose causes and consequences operate through institutions, economic systems, technological development, and large-scale resource exploitation. The expansion of

[26] Ali Mohamed Al-Damkhi, 'Environmental Ethics in Islam: Principles, Violations, and Future Perspectives', *International Journal of Environmental Studies*, 65.1 (2008), pp. 11–31, doi:10.1080/00207230701859724.

[27] M. A. Qurṭubī, *Tafsir Al-Qurtubi: Al-Jami Li-Ahkam al-Quran* (Dar wa-Matabi al-Shab, 1999), VII.

[28] Hooshyar Hossini, 'The Environment from the Perspective of the Qur'an and Divine Teachings', *Journal of Health Reports and Technology*, 9.2 (2023), doi:10.5812/jhrt-133381.

[29] Ibrahim Erol, 'Ecotheological Implications of the Qur'anic Verses on Tawbah (Repentance): An Analysis from a Sufi Perspective', *Religions*, 16.12 (2025), p. 1529, doi:10.3390/rel16121529.

[30] Muhammad Abduh, *Risālat Al-Tawḥīd* (Dār al-Manār, 1925).

[31] Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr Al-Qurʾān al-Ḥakīm, al-Musammā Tafsīr al-Manār* (al-Hayʾah al-Miṣriyyah al-ʿĀmmah li-l-Kitāb, 1990), XI.

[32] Nur Adibah Mohidem and Zailina Hashim, 'Integrating Environment with Health: An Islamic Perspective', *Social Sciences*, 12.6 (2023), p. 321, doi:10.3390/socsci12060321.

[33] Testriono and Savran Billahi, 'Revisiting Religious Environmentalism in Indonesia: Navigating Ethics, Politics, and Policy', *Studia Islamika*, 32.3 (2025), pp. 405–19, doi:10.36712/sdi.v32i3.46674.

fasād toward ecological meaning therefore does not constitute a rejection of the classical theological framework rather, it represents a transformation in the scale of analysis through which the same Qur'ānic principle of human responsibility is applied to contemporary ecological conditions.

The ecological dimension is further contextualized through the environmental thought of Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Unlike the exegetes discussed above, Nasr does not provide a conventional tafsīr of the selected verses; rather, his ecological philosophy offers a complementary framework for interpreting the theological relationship between humanity, nature, and the divine order. Unlike earlier exegetes, Nasr argues that the contemporary environmental crisis is fundamentally a spiritual crisis rooted in humanity's desacralization of nature.[34] He maintains that modern civilization has transformed nature into an object of unrestricted economic exploitation, thereby severing the sacred relationship between humans and creation.[35] From this perspective, environmental degradation represents a contemporary manifestation of *fasād* because it reflects humanity's abandonment of the cosmological principles established by God. Nasr therefore extends the classical ethical understanding of *fasād* into a comprehensive ecological critique of modern civilization without abandoning its theological foundations.[36]

The comparative evidence indicates that the major transformation does not concern the theological meaning of fasād itself, but the scale through which its ethical consequences are interpreted. The classical exegetical tradition establishes the principle that human deviation disrupts a divinely ordered reality, while modern-contemporary interpretations extend this principle to collective institutions, resource management, and ecological systems. The resulting shift is therefore best understood as a contextual transformation in analytical scale: from primarily moral and communal disorder toward systemic ecological disruption, while retaining the underlying Qur'ānic premise of human accountability.

These findings suggest that contemporary ecological interpretations should not be viewed as replacing classical tafsīr but rather as extending its ethical significance to address present-day environmental challenges. The continuity between these interpretive traditions demonstrates that Qur'ānic environmental ethics evolve through contextual expansion while remaining firmly grounded in the same theological principles concerning justice, balance, and human responsibility.

These findings extend previous discussions of Qur'ānic environmental ethics in two respects. First, existing studies have frequently examined fasād through semantic, maqāṣidī, or ecotheological approaches, while the present comparison demonstrates how its interpretive function changes across exegetical periods. Second, previous environmental readings tend to emphasize the normative significance of fasād, whereas the present reconstruction specifies its analytical relationship with khalīfah, mīzān, and amānah. The contribution therefore lies not simply in identifying an ecological meaning of fasād, but in explaining how the concept can function within a relational ethical framework that connects ecological disruption with responsibility, balance, and accountability.

Ecological Reinterpretation of Fasād in the Anthropocene Perspective

This comparative reconstruction provides the basis for the study's central theoretical proposition: fasād can be understood not merely as a moral description of wrongdoing but as

[34] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Religion & The Order of Nature* (Oxford University Press, 1996), doi:10.1093/acprof:oso/9780195108231.001.0001.

[35] João Almeida Loureiro, 'Hossein Nasr on the Environmental Crisis', in *Pantheism and Ecology*, ed. by Luca Valera (Springer Nature Switzerland, 2023), pp. 345–55, doi:10.1007/978-3-031-40040-7_27.

[36] Zainal Abidin Bagir, 'Beyond Instrumentalization: Lived Religion, Politics, and Justice in Indonesian Muslim Environmentalisms', *Studia Islamika*, 32.3 (2025), pp. 439–66, doi:10.36712/sdi.v32i3.46652.

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an ecological diagnostic category through which deviations from Qur'ānic principles of stewardship, balance, and accountability can be identified and evaluated. Within the context of the Anthropocene, where human activities have become the dominant driver of planetary change, this reinterpretation enables *fasād* to be understood not merely as a theological concept but also as an analytical framework for evaluating the relationship between human behaviour, environmental degradation, and ecological responsibility.[37]

From this perspective, QS. al-Rūm (30):41 occupies a central position because it explicitly establishes a causal relationship between human actions and environmental disruption. While classical exegetes primarily interpreted this verse as a warning against moral disobedience, the comparative analysis presented in this study indicates that its ethical implications can be extended to contemporary ecological realities without departing from its original theological foundation. Modern environmental problems including climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, land degradation, and marine pollution therefore represent contemporary manifestations of *fasād* because they arise from patterns of human behaviour that violate the balance established by God.[38] Consequently, environmental degradation should be understood not merely as a physical phenomenon but also as evidence of disrupted ethical relationships between humans, nature, and the Creator.

This reinterpretation also demonstrates that ecological crises cannot be explained solely through technological or economic perspectives. Instead, they reflect the erosion of Qur'ānic ethical principles governing human interaction with creation. The findings of this study therefore support understanding *fasād* as an ecological diagnostic category through which the ethical causes, structural manifestations, and environmental consequences of human-induced ecological disruption can be systematically identified. Operationally, the diagnostic function of fasād is established through a four-dimensional relationship: fasād identifies the disruption, khalīfah identifies the sphere of human responsibility, mīzān identifies the normative balance that has been violated; and amānah identifies the accountability arising from that violation. Thus, an ecological condition becomes diagnostically intelligible as fasād not simply because environmental damage has occurred, but because such damage reflects a breakdown in stewardship, balance, and entrusted responsibility. Such a perspective broadens the significance of *fasād* from a category describing prohibited conduct into an interpretive framework capable of diagnosing the underlying ethical dimensions of contemporary environmental crises.

Building upon this reinterpretation, the Qur'ānic concepts of *khalīfah*, *mīzān*, and *amānah* function as complementary ethical principles that explain both the causes of ecological disruption and the moral responsibilities required for environmental restoration. Rather than representing independent concepts, these three principles collectively establish the ethical architecture through which *fasād* may be understood. The concept of *khalīfah* defines humanity's responsibility as God's steward on earth, *mīzān* provides the normative principle of ecological balance, and *amānah* emphasizes accountability for managing natural resources responsibly. The theoretical contribution therefore lies not in treating these concepts as parallel environmental values, but in assigning them distinct analytical functions within a single diagnostic system: fasād functions as the diagnostic category, khalīfah as the responsibility principle, mīzān as the normative criterion, and amānah as the accountability

[37] Will Steffen and others, 'The Trajectory of the Anthropocene: The Great Acceleration', *The Anthropocene Review*, 2.1 (2015), pp. 81–98, doi:10.1177/2053019614564785.

[38] Shalsabila Oktafiani, Rahmi Damis, and Muhammad Irham, 'Sistematisasi Nilai Ekologis Dalam Al-Qur'an: Kajian Tematik Atas Konsep Iṣlāḥ, Fasād, Dan 'Imārah Sebagai Etika Pelestarian Lingkungan', *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 3.1 (2025), pp. 13–21, doi:10.61341/jis/v3i1.123.

principle. Environmental degradation therefore occurs when stewardship is neglected, balance is violated, and the divine trust is breached.[39]

The synthesis of these Qur'ānic principles enables a more comprehensive understanding of environmental governance within Islamic thought. Rather than treating sustainability solely as a technical objective, this framework positions environmental protection as an ethical and spiritual obligation.[40] Resource exploitation, excessive consumption (*isrāf*), pollution, and ecosystem destruction consequently represent not only environmental problems but also manifestations of failures in fulfilling humanity's role as *khalīfah*.[41] Ecological restoration, therefore, requires more than technological intervention; it also demands the restoration of ethical values that regulate the relationship between humans and the natural world.

Within the Anthropocene, this integrated framework provides important implications for contemporary environmental governance.[42] Current ecological challenges are largely driven by anthropocentric development models that prioritize unlimited economic growth while neglecting ecological sustainability.[43] From the perspective developed in this study, such development paradigms may be interpreted as manifestations of *fasād* because they systematically violate the Qur'ānic principles of balance, stewardship, and trust.[44] Accordingly, Islamic environmental ethics offers not merely moral guidance but also a normative framework for evaluating environmental policies, natural resource management, and sustainable development strategies in accordance with ecological justice.[45]

Overall, the ecological reinterpretation proposed in this study demonstrates that *fasād* should be understood as a comprehensive analytical framework linking Qur'ānic interpretation with contemporary environmental realities. Through the integration of *fasād*, *khalīfah*, *mīzān*, and *amānah*, environmental degradation is interpreted as the cumulative consequence of disrupted ethical relationships among humans, society, nature, and God. This synthesis strengthens the relevance of Qur'ānic teachings for addressing contemporary ecological crises while providing a coherent foundation for the development of Islamic environmental ethics capable of responding to the challenges of the Anthropocene.

Fasād as an Islamic Environmental Ethical Framework

The reconstructed framework has implications beyond textual interpretation because it provides a normative basis for evaluating contemporary environmental governance. Once fasād is understood as an indicator of ecological disruption, the concepts of khalīfah, mīzān,

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[39] P. Silva and others, 'Reinterpreting 'Khalifah Fil Ard'as an Islamic Environmental Ethic for Addressing the 21st-Century Climate Crisis', *Journal of Humanities Research Sustainability*, 2.6 (2025), pp. 334–44, doi:https://doi.org/10.70177/jhrs.v2i6.2786.

[40] Wardah Alkatiri, 'How about a Green Caliphate?: Global Islamic Environmental Governance for Devout Muslim Communities', *American Journal of Islam and Society*, 39.3–4 (2023), pp. 6–56, doi:10.35632/ajis.v39i3-4.3100.

[41] Labeeb Bsoul and others, 'Islam's Perspective on Environmental Sustainability: A Conceptual Analysis', *Social Sciences*, 11.6 (2022), p. 228, doi:10.3390/socsci11060228.

[42] Adha Shaleh and Md. Saidul Islam, 'Averting the Existential Threat of the Planet: Islamic Environmental Ethics to Address the Contemporary Environmental Crisis', *Intellectual Discourse*, 32.1 (2024), doi:10.31436/id.v32i1.1937.

[43] Achmad Alfan Kurniawan and Istiqomah Fadlillah, 'From Anthropocentric to Ecocentric Jurisprudence: A Maqasid-Based Reconstruction of Islamic Environmental Ethics toward Intergenerational Equity', *Al'Adalah*, 28.2 (2025), pp. 143–62, doi:10.35719/aladalah.v28i2.666.

[44] Abdulrasheed Zakari and Felix Orole, 'Do Islamic Principles Matter for Green Development?', *Local Environment*, 20 December 2025, pp. 1–16, doi:10.1080/13549839.2025.2596721.

[45] Fachruddin Majeri Mangunjaya and Jeanne Elizabeth McKay, 'Reviving an Islamic Approach for Environmental Conservation in Indonesia', *Worldviews*, 16.3 (2012), pp. 286–305, doi:10.1163/15685357-01603006.

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and amānah provide complementary criteria for assessing human responsibility, ecological balance, and institutional accountability. The framework therefore translates the exegetical findings into a normative structure relevant to resource management, environmental policy, and ecological restoration.[46] Rather than functioning solely as a prohibition against corruption or environmental destruction, *fasād* serves as the principal ethical indicator through which ecological imbalance can be identified and evaluated. Within this framework, environmental degradation is interpreted as evidence that the Qur'ānic principles governing the relationship between humans, nature, and God have been violated.[47] Consequently, Islamic environmental ethics is not constructed from a single theological concept but from the interaction among *fasād*, *khalīfah*, *mīzān*, and *amānah*, each of which performs a distinct yet complementary normative function.[48]

In this study, the term "ecological diagnostic category" refers to an analytical function of fasād through which ecological disruption can be identified, interpreted, and ethically evaluated in relation to human conduct and the Qur'ānic principles governing the relationship between human beings and the natural order. Fasād is therefore not understood merely as a descriptive term for environmental damage, but as a diagnostic category that directs attention to the condition of ecological disorder, its human causes, the responsibilities implicated in it, and the ethical obligations required to prevent or restore such disruption.

Operationally, the diagnostic function of fasād can be applied through four analytical questions: what form of ecological disorder has occurred, what human practices or forms of agency have contributed to it, which principle of ecological balance has been disturbed, and what form of moral accountability follows from that disruption. In this sense, fasād provides the initial diagnosis, while khalīfah, mīzān, and amānah provide the successive normative dimensions through which the diagnosed condition is interpreted and evaluated.

Figure 2 synthesizes the four concepts into an integrated Qur'ānic environmental ethical system in which each concept performs a distinct analytical function. Fasād functions as the diagnostic category through which ecological disruption and its ethical causes are identified. Khalīfah establishes human responsibility by defining humanity as a trustee and steward of the earth. Mīzān provides the normative criterion for evaluating whether human practices maintain or violate ecological balance. Amānah establishes accountability by framing the use of natural resources as a divinely entrusted responsibility that entails obligations toward God, humanity, and the created order. The four concepts therefore operate sequentially rather than independently: fasād identifies the ecological problem, khalīfah locates human responsibility, mīzān provides the criterion of balance, and amānah establishes accountability for maintaining or restoring that balance.

[46] Ansori Ansori, Muhammad Iqbal Juliansyahzen, and Hijrian Angga Prihantoro, 'Eco-Fatwas and the Role of Local "Ulamā" in Addressing Environmental Issues in Indonesia: Evidence from the Riau Islands', *Studia Islamika*, 32.2 (2025), pp. 181–209, doi:10.36712/sdi.v32i2.38706.

[47] Muhammad Yaseen Gada, *Islam and Environmental Ethics*, 1st edn (Cambridge University Press, 2024), doi:10.1017/9781009308236.

[48] Mochamad Hasyim and others, 'Integrating Islamic Environmental Ethics into Arabic Language Education: Eco-Theological Perspectives from Indonesian Madrasah Aliyah', *Studia Ecologiae et Bioethicae*, published online 8 May 2026, doi:10.21697/seb.5891.

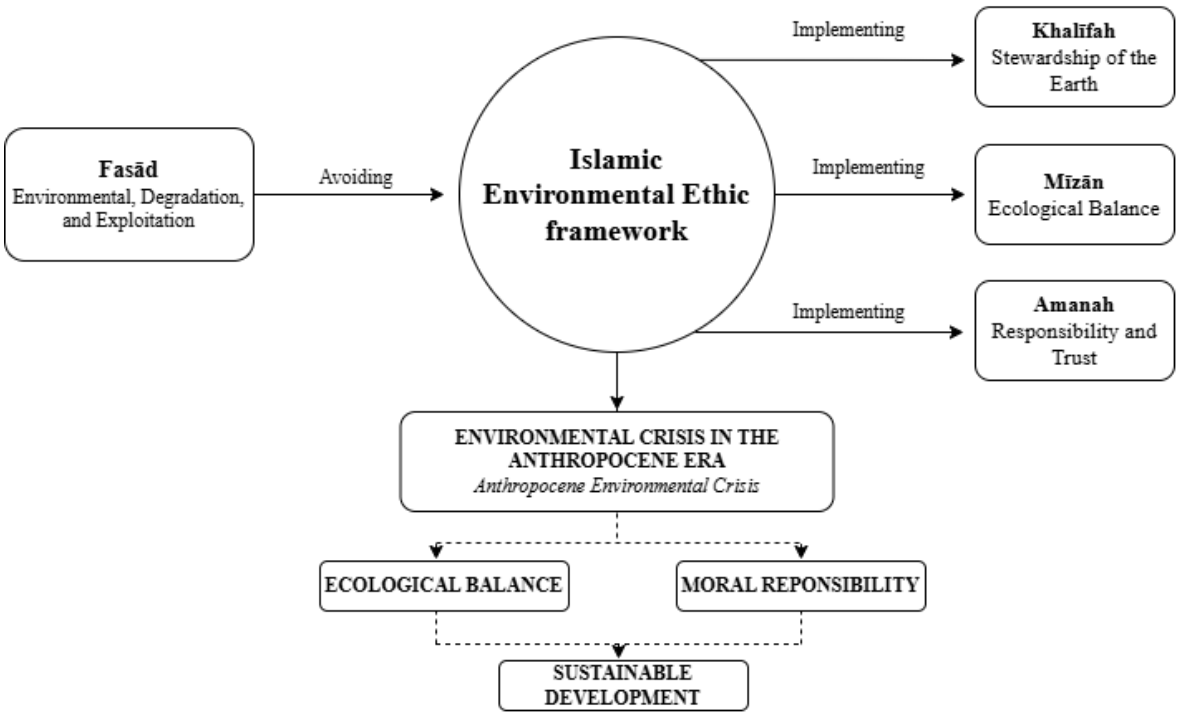


Figure 2. Integrated Qur'ānic environmental ethical framework linking fasād as ecological diagnosis, khalīfah as human responsibility, mīzān as ecological balance, and amānah as accountability.

Within this framework, *khalīfah* establishes humanity's responsibility as God's steward on earth. Stewardship is therefore understood not as domination over nature but as the obligation to manage natural resources responsibly while safeguarding the continuity of creation.[49] This responsibility is regulated by the principle of *mīzān*, which requires that ecological balance be maintained in every form of environmental intervention. Sustainable resource management, therefore, is measured not only by economic productivity but also by its capacity to preserve the equilibrium established by God.[50] The ethical dimension of this responsibility is reinforced through *amānah*, which emphasizes that all natural resources ultimately belong to God and are entrusted to humanity for responsible use rather than unlimited exploitation.[51] Accordingly, environmental destruction represents not merely a technical failure in resource management but also a violation of the divine trust entrusted to humankind.[52]

The four concepts consequently function as a single analytical chain rather than as a collection of parallel values. Once fasād identifies an ecological disruption, khalīfah directs attention to the human agency and responsibility underlying that disruption. Mīzān then provides the normative criterion for determining whether human practices maintain or disturb ecological balance, while amānah establishes the obligation of accountability for the

[49] Han Hsien Liew, 'The Caliphate of Adam: Theological Politics of the Qurʾānic Term Ḫalīfa', *Arabica*, 63.1–2 (2016), pp. 1–29, doi:10.1163/15700585-12341381.

[50] Mohammad Hashim Kamali, 'Peace as a Universal Islamic Value', *ICR Journal*, 4.2 (2013), pp. 169–87, doi:10.52282/icr.v4i2.472.

[51] Yasin Dutton, 'The Environmental Crisis of Our Time and the Ethics of Stewardship: A Muslim Response', in *Religion and Sustainability: Interreligious Resources, Interdisciplinary Responses*, ed. by Rita D. Sherma and Purushottama Bilimoria, Sustainable Development Goals Series (Springer International Publishing, 2022), pp. 107–17, doi:10.1007/978-3-030-79301-2_13.

[52] Satoshi Abe, 'Pursuing Moral Dimensions of the Environment: A Study of Islamic Tradition in Contemporary Iran', *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature and Culture*, 15.2 (2021), pp. 151–76, doi:10.1558/jsrnc.36397.

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consequences of those practices. The framework thus connects diagnosis, responsibility, balance, and accountability within one Qur'ānic ethical logic.

The integrated operation of these principles demonstrates the practical logic of the Qur'ānic environmental ethical system. When human stewardship is exercised irresponsibly, ecological balance is disrupted and the entrusted relationship between humanity and creation is violated; such disruption constitutes fasād. Conversely, ecological restoration requires not only repairing material damage but also restoring responsible stewardship, ecological balance, and accountability.

The implications of this framework extend beyond theological reflection to contemporary environmental governance. In the Anthropocene, ecological crises are increasingly driven by development models that prioritize economic growth while neglecting ecological sustainability.[53] From the perspective developed in this study, such practices constitute manifestations of *fasād* because they systematically undermine the Qur'ānic principles of stewardship, balance, and trust. Consequently, the proposed framework offers normative criteria for evaluating environmental policies, natural resource management, and sustainable development initiatives according to principles of ecological justice and intergenerational responsibility.[54] This perspective also reinforces the relevance of Islamic ethical values in responding to contemporary global environmental challenges without reducing environmental protection to purely technical or economic considerations.

Overall, the framework developed in this study demonstrates that Islamic environmental ethics is constructed through the dynamic interaction of four interconnected Qur'ānic concepts. Within this structure, *fasād* functions as the ethical and analytical indicator of ecological disruption, while *khalīfah*, *mīzān*, and *amānah* provide the normative principles that guide environmental stewardship and ecological restoration. This integrated framework establishes a coherent relationship between Qur'ānic ethics and contemporary environmental governance, thereby offering a systematic foundation for interpreting and responding to ecological crises in the Anthropocene through the perspective of Islamic environmental ethics.

Theological Implications for Islamic Environmental Ethics

The findings of this study demonstrate that the ecological reinterpretation of fasād extends the theological significance of the Qur'ān beyond moral prohibition toward the development of an integrated framework for environmental ethics. Rather than understanding environmental degradation solely as a physical or ecological phenomenon, the Qur'ānic perspective presented in this study interprets it as the consequence of ethical failures in humanity's relationship with God, fellow human beings, and the natural world. Consequently, environmental protection becomes an inseparable component of religious responsibility rather than merely a scientific or technological concern.[55]

This theological perspective reinforces the understanding that ecological responsibility constitutes an essential dimension of Islamic ethics. The reinterpretation of fasād developed in this study demonstrates that environmental destruction reflects violations of the ethical principles established by the Qur'ān, particularly those governing justice, balance, and responsibility toward creation. Accordingly, Islamic environmental ethics should not be viewed simply as an extension of contemporary sustainability discourse but as

[53] Clive L. Spash, 'A Tale of Three Paradigms: Realising the Revolutionary Potential of Ecological Economics', *Ecological Economics*, 169 (2020), p. 106518, doi:10.1016/j.ecolecon.2019.106518.

[54] Afrizal Nur and others, 'Qur'anic Ecotheology and the Ethics of Forest Protection in Indonesia', *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis*, 26.2 (2025), pp. 351–82, doi:10.14421/qh.v26i2.6312.

[55] E. Kula, 'Islam and Environmental Conservation', *Environmental Conservation*, 28.1 (2001), pp. 1–9, doi:10.1017/S0376892901000017.

an ethical system rooted in Qur'ānic theology itself.[56] This perspective strengthens the relevance of Islamic teachings in responding to environmental crises while preserving their theological foundations.

The proposed framework also carries important implications for environmental governance within Muslim societies. Since ecological degradation originates from human actions that violate ethical responsibility, environmental management should integrate scientific knowledge with religious values that promote accountability, moderation, and justice in natural resource utilization.[57] This integration provides normative guidance for sustainable development, encouraging environmental policies that consider not only economic interests but also ecological integrity and intergenerational responsibility.[58] In this context, Islamic environmental ethics functions as a normative reference for evaluating development practices from both ecological and theological perspectives.[59]

Beyond policy implications, the findings also highlight the strategic role of Islamic educational and religious institutions in cultivating environmental awareness. Mosques, Islamic schools (madrasah), and other faith-based institutions can contribute to strengthening ecological ethics by integrating Qur'ānic values into environmental education, community engagement, and public awareness programmes.[60] Such efforts encourage Muslims to perceive environmental stewardship as an expression of faith and obedience to God rather than merely an individual social obligation.[61] Consequently, ecological responsibility becomes embedded within everyday religious practice and collective social life.[62]

Overall, the theological implications of this study affirm that the ecological reinterpretation of fasād provides a coherent Islamic ethical foundation for responding to contemporary environmental challenges. By connecting Qur'ānic theology with ecological responsibility, the framework developed in this study demonstrates that environmental sustainability represents an integral manifestation of Islamic moral commitment. This perspective strengthens the contribution of Qur'ānic interpretation to contemporary discussions on environmental ethics while reaffirming the continuing relevance of Islamic theology in addressing the ecological challenges of the Anthropocene.

C. Conclusion

This study concludes that the ecological reinterpretation of fasād fī al-arḍ provides a theoretically coherent basis for understanding human-induced ecological disruption within Qur'ānic environmental ethics. Through ecological hermeneutics and comparative exegetical analysis, fasād is reconstructed not merely as a prohibition against environmental destruction

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[56] Gita Anggraini, 'Integration of Islamic Religion and Character Education with Environmental Education at Adiwiyata Junior High School', *Journal of Social Science*, 3.2 (2022), pp. 341–52, doi:10.46799/jss.v3i2.299.

[57] Norshariani Abd Rahman, Fatin Nur Marhamah Zabidi, and Lilia Halim, 'Integration of Tauhidic Elements for Environmental Education from the Teachers' Perspectives', *Religions*, 11.8 (2020), p. 394, doi:10.3390/rel11080394.

[58] Mara Tignino and Makane Moïse Mbengue, 'Climate Change at the Crossroads of Human Rights: The Right to a Healthy Environment, the Right to Water and the Right to Development', *Review of European, Comparative & International Environmental Law*, 31.1 (2022), pp. 3–6, doi:10.1111/reel.12440.

[59] Klaus Bosselmann, 'Losing the Forest for the Trees: Environmental Reductionism in the Law', *Sustainability*, 2.8 (2010), pp. 2424–48, doi:10.3390/su2082424.

[60] F. M. Mangunjaya, 'Developing Environmental Awareness and Conservation Through Islamic Teaching', *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 22.1 (2011), pp. 36–49, doi:10.1093/jis/etq067.

[61] Sadali, 'Harnessing Islamic Teachings for Climate Justice: Pathways for Faith-Based Environmental Action', *Sinergi International Journal of Islamic Studies*, 1.3 (2023), pp. 143–57, doi:10.61194/ijis.v1i3.597.

[62] Kurnia Arofah and others, 'Mediatized Eco-Religious Movements in Indonesia: Negotiating Religiosity and Environmentalism in Digital Islam', *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 26.3 (2025), pp. 530–51, doi:10.1080/14649373.2025.2489888.

but as an ecological diagnostic category that identifies the ethical dimensions of ecological disruption. Its relationship with khalīfah, mīzān, and amānah further establishes a systematic framework connecting ecological diagnosis, human responsibility, ecological balance, and accountability. The principal theoretical contribution lies in conceptualizing fasād as an ecological diagnostic category and integrating it with khalīfah, mīzān, and amānah as complementary dimensions of a Qur'ānic environmental ethical system. This formulation extends existing discussions of fasād by shifting attention from ecological destruction as a merely prohibited outcome toward the ethical structures that produce, evaluate, and require accountability for ecological disruption. The framework therefore strengthens the theoretical position of Qur'ānic environmental ethics within contemporary discussions of ecological responsibility and sustainable environmental governance. Practically, it offers a normative basis for environmental governance, sustainable resource management, environmental education, and ecological policy informed by Qur'ānic ethical principles.

This study is limited by its qualitative and textual design, its selection of specific Qur'ānic passages and exegetical works, and its use of one complementary work of Islamic environmental thought. It therefore does not empirically assess the implementation of the proposed framework across diverse Muslim socio-cultural, institutional, or environmental policy contexts. Future research should test the framework through interdisciplinary and empirical studies of Islamic environmental governance, faith-based conservation initiatives, and comparative applications of Qur'ānic environmental ethics across different socio-cultural contexts. Such research would clarify the practical validity and contextual adaptability of fasād as an ecological diagnostic category.

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