



Coastal Conservation in Fishing Communities of Malang: Transforming Qur'anic Ecological Values through a Cultural Anthropology Perspective

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Abstract

Coastal regions hold strategic importance, particularly for fishing communities, due to their ecological, economic, and socio-cultural significance. In the coastal areas of Malang, these zones serve as the foundation of local livelihoods. However, unsustainable exploitation, environmental degradation, coastal abrasion, and the impacts of climate change have severely threatened the ecological sustainability of these areas. This study aims to examine the transformation of Qur'anic ecological values and the cultural anthropology of Malang's coastal communities in efforts to conserve the coastal environment. Employing a qualitative ethnographic method and an interdisciplinary framework that incorporates ecology, cultural anthropology, and interpretations of relevant Qur'anic verses, the research gathers data through in-depth interviews with community leaders, fishermen, religious figures, and textual analysis. The findings indicate that environmental conservation can be more effectively pursued through an integrated approach that merges Qur'anic principles, ecological awareness, and anthropological insights. Qur'anic ecological concepts such as *khilāfah* (stewardship), *tawāzun* (balance), and *fasād* (corruption or degradation) foster a heightened awareness of human responsibility toward environmental stewardship. Simultaneously, from an anthropological perspective, human-environment relationships are expressed through symbolic acts of reverence, such as sea and earth offerings. Thus, the integration of Qur'anic and anthropological values offers a comprehensive and culturally resonant framework for ecological preservation, contributing to sustainable community development.

Keywords: Coastal conservation, fishing communities, ecological values, Qur'anic principles, cultural anthropology

Abstrak

Wilayah pesisir memiliki arti strategis, khususnya bagi komunitas nelayan, karena nilai ekologis, ekonomis, dan sosio-kultural yang dimilikinya. Di kawasan pesisir Malang, wilayah ini menjadi dasar utama penghidupan masyarakat setempat. Namun, eksploitasi yang tidak berkelanjutan, degradasi lingkungan, abrasi pantai, serta dampak perubahan iklim telah mengancam secara serius keberlanjutan ekologi di wilayah tersebut. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji transformasi nilai-nilai ekologi Qur'ani dan antropologi budaya masyarakat pesisir Malang dalam upaya pelestarian lingkungan pesisir. Dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif etnografi dan pendekatan interdisipliner yang mencakup ekologi, antropologi budaya, serta penafsiran ayat-ayat Al-Qur'an yang relevan, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan tokoh masyarakat, nelayan, pemuka agama, serta analisis teks. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa upaya pelestarian lingkungan akan lebih efektif bila dilakukan melalui pendekatan terpadu yang menggabungkan prinsip-prinsip Qur'ani, kesadaran ekologis, dan wawasan antropologis. Konsep-konsep ekologi dalam Al-Qur'an seperti khilāfah (kepemimpinan atau pengelolaan), tawāzun (keseimbangan), dan fasād (kerusakan atau degradasi) menumbuhkan kesadaran akan tanggung jawab manusia terhadap penjagaan lingkungan. Sementara itu, dari sudut pandang antropologi, relasi manusia dan alam tercermin dalam tindakan simbolik penghormatan seperti sedekah laut dan bumi. Dengan demikian, integrasi nilai-nilai Qur'ani dan antropologis menawarkan kerangka kerja pelestarian ekologi yang komprehensif dan selaras dengan budaya lokal, serta berkontribusi terhadap pembangunan masyarakat yang berkelanjutan.

Kata Kunci: *Konservasi pesisir, komunitas nelayan, nilai ekologi, prinsip Qur'ani, antropologi budaya*

Introduction

Coastal environmental degradation represents a significant global challenge, affecting numerous coastal communities worldwide. This phenomenon is driven by a combination of anthropogenic factors, notably global warming resulting from the combustion of fossil fuels, deforestation, industrial development, various production activities, transportation systems, and the unsustainable consumption of energy resources. Moreover, marine pollution particularly from waste disposal and plastic debris poses a serious threat to marine ecosystems by damaging natural habitats and disrupting the ecological integrity of marine biodiversity.¹ In the context of Indonesia, the problem is compounded by overfishing practices that employ harmful techniques such as bottom trawling (e.g., tiger trawls) and sophisticated fishing

¹Haliza Abdul Rahman, et. al., "Effects of an Environmental Education Intervention on Environmental Sustainability Among Youth in Malaysia," *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun* 11, No. 3 (2023). Subhan Abdullah Acim and Suharti Suharti, "The Concept of Fiqh al-Bi'ah in the Qur'an: A Study of the Quranic Verses on Environment in the Ulama's Views of Lombok," *Ulumuna* 27, No. 1 (2023).

technologies, alongside the rapid expansion of coastal infrastructure. These activities collectively undermine the resilience of coastal ecosystems, diminish their environmental carrying capacity, and jeopardize the socio-economic well-being of coastal populations whose livelihoods are intricately linked to these natural systems.

Coastal zones constitute essential ecological systems that fulfill a range of critical environmental functions. Ecosystems such as beaches, mangroves, and coral reefs act as natural buffers, mitigating the impacts of coastal erosion and storm surges on inland areas. A well-preserved coastal environment is integral to sustaining biodiversity, providing habitats for a diverse array of species that contribute to ecological stability. For communities residing along the coast, these areas serve as vital economic resources, particularly through fisheries and other marine-based livelihoods. Nevertheless, the integrity of coastal ecosystems is increasingly threatened by anthropogenic pressures, including erosion, pollution, and the impacts of climate change. These forms of degradation jeopardize the long-term sustainability of coastal regions. Consequently, the implementation of effective coastal conservation strategies is imperative to preserving biodiversity, maintaining ecological equilibrium, and securing the availability of marine resources for future generations.²

In this context, the ecological values and environmental ethics articulated in the Qur'an underscore the importance of maintaining the natural balance as a divine mandate. Numerous Qur'anic verses emphasize humanity's responsibility to preserve the integrity of the environment, framing ecological stewardship as a moral and spiritual obligation; 1) *Khilāfah* (stewardship) – as stated in *Surah Al-Baqarah* (2:30), humans are appointed as stewards (khalifah) on Earth, bearing the responsibility to manage natural resources wisely, ethically, and sustainably (*Al-Baqarah* 2: 30). 2) Prohibition of corruption (*fasād*) – *Surah Al-A'rāf* (7:56) warns against spreading corruption on Earth, which includes direct acts such as pollution and indirect actions such as overexploitation of natural resources. 3) Balance (*Mīzān*) – *Surah Ar-Rahmān* (55:7–9) emphasizes the divine order and balance within the universe, instructing humans not to transgress limits in utilizing natural resources. 4) *Amānah* (trust) – as outlined in *Surah Al-Anfāl* (8:27), environmental preservation is a form of trust, requiring accountability and responsible stewardship.³

Within the context of fishing communities in Malang, Qur'anic environmental ethics can serve as a vital moral and spiritual foundation for promoting coastal conservation initiatives. Core Islamic principles such as *khilāfah*

²Victor Nikijuluw, "Coastal Resources Conservation in Indonesia: Issues, Policies, and Future Directions," *Sumatra Journal of Disaster Geography and Geography Education* 1, No. 1 (2017), p. 15. Zainal Abidin, et.al., "The Role of Coastal Biodiversity Conservation on Sustainability and Environmental Awareness in Mangrove Ecosystem of Southern Malang, Indonesia," *Biodiversitas Journal of Biological Diversity* 22, No. 2 (2021), p. 648-658.

³Ahmad Barizi and SDA Defi Yufarika, "Ekologi dalam Al-Quran dan Hadis: Implikasinya Terhadap Kurikulum Pendidikan Islam," *Al-Madrasah: Jurnal Pendidikan Madrasah Ibtidaiyah* 9, No. 2 (2025), p. 1033.

(stewardship), *tawāzun* (equilibrium), and *fasād* (corruption or environmental degradation) can be instrumental in cultivating a deeper sense of ecological responsibility, framing environmental protection as a form of worship and ethical conduct. Adopting a socio-religious approach, particularly through *da'wah* (religious outreach) led by local religious figures, has the potential to enhance community awareness and engagement with coastal conservation as a religious obligation. These Islamic values can also complement and strengthen existing local wisdom, including practices aimed at safeguarding designated coastal zones from overexploitation, enforcing sustainable fishing regulations, and conserving vital marine ecosystems such as coral reefs.⁴

Malang Regency, particularly its coastal regions such as Sendang Biru, is experiencing notable environmental degradation characterized by coastal erosion, unsustainable fishing practices most critically the harvesting of baby lobsters—and increasing levels of marine pollution, largely attributable to domestic waste and plastic debris. Furthermore, the conversion of mangrove forests for agricultural expansion and tourism infrastructure has exacerbated ecological decline. According to the 2025 Regional Environmental Report, the regency continues to grapple with significant environmental challenges, including the intensification of conflicts between large-scale commercial fishers and small-scale traditional fishers regarding territorial fishing rights. In response to these complex issues, there is a pressing need for a comprehensive conservation strategy that integrates both ecological science and Islamic environmental ethics. Such a framework would draw on religious teachings that underscore human responsibility (*khilāfah*) in safeguarding natural ecosystems, with particular emphasis on the sustainable management of coastal environments.

The coastal region of Malang, situated along the southern coastline of East Java and bordering the Indian Ocean, is distinguished by its extensive shoreline and diverse marine ecosystems. This area is widely recognized for its scenic landscapes, featuring white sandy beaches, clear waters, and rich biological diversity. Prominent coastal sites include Sendang Biru Beach, a central hub for local fisheries and the primary access point to Sempu Island, a protected nature reserve; Balekambang Beach, noted for its offshore temple that bears a resemblance to Bali's iconic Tanah Lot; and Tiga Warna Beach, renowned for its striking color gradations and active coral reef conservation initiatives. These natural attributes underscore the ecological and socio-economic significance of Malang's coastal zones.⁵

⁴Nurdin Karim, et.al., "Environmental Conservation of Coral Reefs in the Wakatobi Region Based on Islamic Education and Customary Law Approaches," *Samarah* 8, No. 3 (2024).

⁵Andini Rheina Saraswati dan Fida Rachmadiarti, "Analisis Kandungan Logam Berat Timbal (Pb) pada Rumpun Laut di Pantai Sendang Biru Malang," *LenteraBio : Berkala Ilmiah Biologi* 10, no. 1 (2021), p. 67–76.

Despite their extraordinary natural beauty, the beaches of Malang face a range of serious environmental threats, including:⁶ 1) Coastal erosion, which reaches several meters annually, endangering nearby settlements and infrastructure. 2) Marine pollution caused by domestic waste and plastic debris carried by ocean currents, which often accumulates along the coastline, damaging both the aesthetic appeal and the marine ecosystem. Unregulated tourism, particularly at popular beaches such as *Balekambang* and *Tiga Warna*, also contributes to increased pollution levels. 3). Ecosystem degradation due to the clearing of mangrove forests for aquaculture and infrastructure development, which undermines the natural role of mangroves as coastal buffers and breeding grounds for various marine species. 4). Coral reef damage in several areas resulting from unsustainable and environmentally harmful fishing practices.

An integrative and interdisciplinary approach to coastal conservation not only addresses technical concerns,⁷ but also fosters social awareness rooted in the ecological values of the Qur'an. This leads to more holistic and sustainable conservation strategies that engage local communities on emotional, cultural, and spiritual levels. Such engagement establishes a solid foundation for environmental protection one that carries broader meaning and frames conservation as both a sacred trust (*amānah*) and an act of worship (*'ibādah*).

This study employs a qualitative methodology using ethnographic techniques and is analyzed through an interdisciplinary lens that incorporates ecology, cultural anthropology, and Qur'anic concepts.⁸ Data were collected through in-depth interviews with community leaders, fishers, religious figures, and through document analysis of relevant Qur'anic exegesis (*tafsīr*). Academically, there has been a lack of studies that sufficiently integrate Qur'anic values and cultural anthropology in the context of coastal environmental conservation. This study addresses the gap in several ways: 1). There is limited research that explores the Malang coastal region in depth, particularly from the perspective of integrating religious and cultural values. This study contributes by focusing specifically on fishing communities in this area. 2). Research combining Islamic values such as the Qur'anic concept of *khalīfah* with cultural anthropology, including local wisdom in environmental practices, remains scarce, particularly within coastal community contexts. 3). While many existing studies focus separately on local wisdom or religion, few examine

⁶Nabila Nuralya Az Zahra, et.al., "Analisis Karakteristik Sampah Laut dan Tingkat Kebersihan di Pantai Sendang Biru dan Pelabuhan Perikanan Pondokdada, Kabupaten Malang, Jawa Timur," *Jurnal Ilmu Lingkungan* 22, no. 4 (2024), p. 852–60.

⁷Nandang Jasmadi Jasmadi, et.al., "Pendekatan Interdisipliner dalam Studi Islam Kontemporer: Pengembangan Kolaborasi antara Ulama dan Intelektual Muslim," *Jurnal Ikhtibar Nusantara* 3, No. 1 (2024), p. 139-150.

⁸Nandang Hidayat dan Husnul Khotimah, *Metode Penelitian Etnografi: Konsep, Sejarah, Paradigma, dan Desain Penelitian*, Malang: Literasi Nusantara Abadi, 2024. Lukman Nul Hakim, "Integrasi Pendekatan Multidisipliner dalam Studi Islam: Menjawab Tantangan Global dan Relevansi Kontemporer," *EduFalah Journal* 1, No. 2 (2024), p. 92-101.

how religious values are transformed and internalized into local cultural practices for environmental conservation. 4). Interdisciplinary approaches that bridge ecology, cultural anthropology, and Islamic studies are still underutilized in coastal environmental research.

This study aims to make a meaningful contribution to the understanding of how Qur'anic ecological principles can be internalized and operationalized by fishing communities through the lens of local cultural practices to support coastal conservation efforts. It further proposes an integrative framework that combines spiritual, cultural, and ecological values as a foundation for environmental stewardship. This model holds the potential for broader applicability in other coastal regions and communities in Indonesia, as well as in similar socio-ecological contexts globally, where religious and cultural dimensions play a pivotal role in shaping environmental behavior.

Environmental Conservation, Value Transformation, and Cultural Anthropology

Environmental conservation encompasses a range of efforts directed at safeguarding biodiversity, preventing environmental degradation, and ensuring the sustainable management of natural resources for the benefit of both current and future generations. In the context of increasing anthropogenic pressures on global ecosystems, the importance of conservation has become more pronounced in the contemporary era.⁹ The core principles underpinning environmental conservation—ecological, social, economic, and ethical are grounded in the imperative to maintain ecological equilibrium and to mitigate the long-term impacts of human activity. Furthermore, conservation strategies emphasize the equitable distribution of natural resources among local communities, the promotion of sustainable development practices, and the recognition of the intrinsic rights of all living organisms to exist free from existential threats.¹⁰

Effective environmental conservation requires the implementation of diverse strategies and methods, including:¹¹ 1) Reforestation, particularly of degraded forests and mangrove areas, to restore wildlife habitats, prevent soil erosion, and absorb carbon emissions. 2) Waste management through recycling technologies and the use of organic waste for composting to reduce environmental pollution. 3) Water resource conservation, which includes protecting clean water sources by constructing reservoirs and promoting water efficiency programs. 4) Education and awareness campaigns, providing communities with knowledge about the importance of

⁹Hendy Setiawan, et.al., "The Ecotheological Movement of the Muhammadiyah Environmental Council in Response to the Environmental Governance Crisis," *Millah: Journal of Religious Studies* (2022), p. 639–70.

¹⁰Nita Triana dan Farah Nuril Izza, "The Perspective of Islamic Law on the Application of the Polluter Pays Principle in Indonesian Environmental Law," *Al-'Adalah* 17, no. 2 (2021), p. 359–82

¹¹Putu Oka Ngakan, et.al., "The Value of the Wallacea Region: Considerations behind the Changing Scope of JPK Wallacea," *Jurnal Penelitian Kehutanan Wallacea* 12, No. 1 (2023).

environmental protection through workshops and social media outreach. 5) Greenhouse gas emission reduction, to mitigate the impacts of climate change. 6) Transitioning to renewable energy sources, such as solar, wind, and hydro power, while reducing reliance on fossil fuels. 7) Enforcement of environmental regulations, including strict penalties for violations and incentives for the adoption of environmentally friendly technologies. These efforts play a critical role in safeguarding ecosystems, preserving biodiversity, protecting human and animal health, stabilizing the climate, and ensuring long-term food security.

In alignment with broader conservation efforts, value transformation can be understood as the process through which communities internalize, reinterpret, and implement new value systems through continuous engagement with pre-existing norms, beliefs, and cultural practices. In the context of coastal communities in Malang, the integration of Qur'anic ecological values into local traditions represents a dynamic adaptation, wherein religious principles are contextualized within long-standing social structures and cultural norms. This process signifies an evolution in collective belief systems, driven by the interplay between external religious influences and the internal dynamics of local cultural heritage, ultimately fostering a localized expression of environmental ethics.¹²

In this context, Qur'anic values that articulate ecological ethics such as *khalīfah* (stewardship), *tawāzun* (balance), and *fasād* (corruption or environmental degradation) provide a moral and spiritual foundation for environmental conservation. Concurrently, local customs, including coastal rituals and traditional practices that regulate human engagement with marine environments, embody long-standing cultural norms. Value transformation emerges through the integration of these Qur'anic principles into existing cultural frameworks, allowing religious ecological teachings to be internalized, contextualized, and collectively enacted by the community.

Along the coastal areas of Malang, the integration of Qur'anic teachings with local cultural practices presents a unique opportunity to develop a synergistic approach to coastal conservation. This interaction unfolds through a series of progressive stages: 1) The reinterpretation of Qur'anic principles regarding environmental conservation is contextualized within local settings, exemplified by the application of the concept of *caliphate* in efforts to safeguard specific areas from overexploitation. 2) Empowerment of local wisdom, such as the traditional ritual *sedekah laut* (sea offerings), which can be enriched with Islamic values like gratitude (*shukr*) to Allah for the sustenance provided by the sea, thereby deepening the spiritual and cultural significance of the practice. 3) Collaboration among social actors, particularly between religious leaders (*ulama*) and traditional leaders, to

¹²Khoirul Anam, Abdul Kadir, dan Aunur Rofiq, "Interpretation And Internalization Of Moderation Values In Pondok Modern Darussalam Gontor," *MIQOT: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 47, no. 2 (2023), p. 238–53.

reinforce environmental values through sermons, religious education, and cultural rituals.

From the perspective of cultural anthropology, the relationship between humans and their environment is understood as a dynamic and reciprocal interaction, shaped by value systems, symbolic meanings, and processes of ecological adaptation. To analyze this complex interplay, three conceptual frameworks are particularly instrumental: cultural adaptation theory, which examines how societies adjust their practices in response to environmental conditions; symbolism, which explores how nature is imbued with cultural meaning; and cultural ecology, which investigates the interdependence between human culture and ecological systems.¹³ Cultural adaptation theory posits that communities adapt collectively to their environment by developing habits, technologies, and social systems. In this context, coastal fishing communities in Malang have developed ways to utilize marine resources that align with natural conditions for instance, by observing fishing seasons or limiting catch areas.

Symbolism, as conceptualized by Clifford Geertz, views culture as a system of symbols through which people interpret and give meaning to their actions and experiences. Within fishing communities, the sea is frequently regarded as a sacred and life-sustaining entity. Ritual practices such as *sedekah laut* (sea offering) exemplify this symbolic relationship, serving not only as expressions of reverence for nature but also as mechanisms for reinforcing communal bonds. This symbolic approach is instrumental in demonstrating how Qur'anic ecological teachings can be effectively integrated into local cultural practices through the use of culturally resonant symbols. For instance, the concept of *khalifah* (steward of the Earth) can be interpreted not only as a spiritual obligation but also as an environmental ethic, allowing communities to embody this role within both religious and ecological dimensions. Through such symbolic integration, Islamic environmental values gain cultural relevance and become embedded in everyday practices and rituals.

Julian Steward's theory of cultural ecology posits that the relationship between human societies and their environment is mediated through culturally specific adaptations that develop in response to ecological conditions. According to Steward, the environment plays a central role in shaping the social, economic, and cultural structures of a community, with conservation practices emerging as pragmatic responses to environmental challenges. In the context of Malang's fishing communities, this theoretical lens helps to explain how traditional ecological knowledge such as seasonal restrictions on fishing activities, exemplified by *sasi laut* or analogous local customs functions as an adaptive strategy to maintain the balance of coastal ecosystem.

The integration of the three theoretical perspectives—cultural adaptation, symbolism, and cultural ecology with Qur'anic ecological values offers a

¹³Alan Darmawan, "A methodological examination of multidisciplinary research of mak yong theatre: text, heritage, and performance," *SPAFA Journal* 5 (2021).

comprehensive framework for understanding how environmental ethics rooted in the Qur'an, such as *khalīfah* (stewardship), *tawāzun* (balance), and *fasād* (corruption), can be internalized within culturally embedded systems. For instance, the Qur'anic prohibition against *isrāf* (excessiveness) can be operationalized through community practices that regulate the sustainable use of natural resources. Likewise, the principle of *amānah* (trust) in relation to the Earth may be reinforced through local rituals and symbolic expressions that embody environmental responsibility. The interplay between Qur'anic teachings and indigenous cultural traditions facilitates the emergence of a holistic and adaptive model for coastal conservation. This approach highlights that environmental preservation is not merely a technical or regulatory issue, but also a process of value transformation, deeply influenced by religious beliefs and cultural norms—an approach that is likely to yield more sustainable and community-rooted outcomes.

Concepts and Ecological Values in the Qur'an

The Qur'an, as a source of divine guidance (*hudā*), offers profound teachings concerning human responsibility toward the natural world. Central to this study are three key Qur'anic concepts with direct relevance to environmental conservation: *khalīfah* (stewardship), *fasād* (destruction or corruption), and *tawāzun* (balance).¹⁴ The Qur'anic worldview emphasizes the interconnectedness and mutual dependence between humans and nature, asserting that any disruption to one element of creation adversely affects the whole. This principle of cosmic balance is illustrated in *Sūrat al-Rahmān* (55:7), which affirms, “And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance.” Further emphasizing the moral weight of human responsibility, *Sūrat al-Ahzāb* (33:72) recounts how the divine trust (*amānah*) was offered to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, all of which declined to bear it, while humanity accepted it. This trust is intimately connected to the human role as *khalīfah*, as revealed in *Sūrat al-Baqarah* (2:30): “And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed, I will make upon the earth a *khalīfah*.’” These verses collectively frame the human role as both a spiritual and ecological mandate, underscoring the Qur'an's comprehensive vision of environmental ethics.”

In response to God's declaration of appointing a *khalīfah* on Earth, the angels expressed concern, asking: “Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood?” (*Sūrat al-Baqarah*, 2:30). God answered, “Indeed, I know that which you do not know” (*Sūrat al-Baqarah*, 2:30). This divine response does not reject the angels' concerns outright; rather, it suggests a conditional justification for humanity's role. Adam's appointment as *khalīfah* is not based on inherent moral superiority but on his capacity to acquire *al-asmā'* (knowledge), which God proceeds to teach him. This passage reveals a profound theological principle: the human role as steward is justified not by the absence of destructive potential (*fasād*), but by the

¹⁴Mappanyompa, et.al., “Eco-Theology Dalam Persepektif Al-Qur'an,” *Ibtida'iy: Jurnal Prodi PGMI* 8, no. 1 (2023), p. 33–44.

presence of divinely endowed knowledge and moral responsibility. It underscores the idea that stewardship must be exercised with wisdom, ethical discernment, and accountability, qualities that can counterbalance humanity's capacity for harm.

Following the angels' inquiry, the Qur'an states that God taught Adam the names—*al-asmā'*—which symbolizes the impartation of knowledge. When this knowledge was revealed, the angels responded, "*Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us*" (*Sūrat al-Baqarah*, 2:32). This passage highlights that the role of *khalīfah* is not granted unconditionally; rather, it is predicated upon the possession of knowledge, which encompasses faith (*īmān*), scientific understanding (*‘ilm*), and ethical action (*‘amal*). Thus, the capacity to fulfill the divine trust (*amānah*) and exercise responsible stewardship over the Earth is contingent upon an integrated knowledge system that informs both belief and behavior.

Therefore, Adam's role as *khalīfah* required not only the possession of knowledge but also a process of testing and moral development to cultivate resilience and spiritual maturity. This notion is reinforced in *Sūrat al-‘Ankabūt* (29:2): "*Do the people think that they will be left to say, ‘We believe’ and they will not be tried?*" The verse underscores that belief alone is insufficient without undergoing trials that affirm and refine one's character. Adam's initial test came through God's command: "*Do not approach this tree*" (*Sūrat al-Baqarah*, 2:35), which symbolized the first and foundational moral trial.

Some scholars interpret the divine prohibition against approaching the Tree of Eternity (*shajarat al-khuldi*) as symbolically representing a broader injunction against the destruction or harm of trees.¹⁵ This interpretation invites deeper ecological reflection: why was this specific tree chosen, and what might its ecological significance be within the Qur'anic depiction of paradise? In Arabic, *Jannah* denotes a garden or orchard a cultivated, life-sustaining space characterized by lush vegetation and natural harmony. The health and integrity of paradise, therefore, are intrinsically tied to the presence and preservation of trees. If the trees within *Jannah* are damaged or removed, its very identity and function as a paradise—both spiritually and ecologically are compromised. This perspective highlights the foundational role of trees as the structural and ecological backbone of the paradisiacal environment, underscoring their sanctity and the broader Islamic imperative to preserve the natural world.

This interpretation underscores the essential and life-sustaining role of trees within ecological systems, both in the metaphysical realm of paradise and in the physical world. Trees serve not only as a source of sustenance and shelter but also as foundational elements that ensure the stability, comfort, and harmony of their

¹⁵Muttaqin Ahmad, "Al-Qur'an Dan Wawasan Ekologi," *Al-Dzikra: Jurnal Studi Ilmu al-Qur'an Dan al-Hadits* 14, no. 2 (2020), p. 333–58.

respective environments.¹⁶ The designation of the tree as *khuldi* meaning "eternal" symbolically reflects the enduring importance of ecological preservation. It serves as a powerful reminder to humanity, particularly in its divinely appointed role as *khalīfatullāh fil ardh* (God's stewards on Earth), of the ongoing responsibility to protect and sustain the natural environment.¹⁷

The prohibition against approaching the tree in paradise carries profound symbolic meaning, illustrating that humans, in their role as *khalīfatullāh fil ardh* (God's stewards on Earth), bear an enduring obligation to safeguard nature and the environment. Violating this trust through acts of ecological destruction is not merely a moral lapse but constitutes a grave offense, classified among the *min al-kabā'ir* (major sins) in Islamic ethical discourse. Within the Qur'anic narrative, Adam's transgression results in his expulsion from paradise and his designation as having committed an act of *ẓulm* (injustice or wrongdoing).

1. *Khalīfah* Defined

According to classical Qur'anic exegetes such as *al-Ṭabarī*, the term *khalīfah*, derived from the root *khalafa*–*yakhluḥu*, signifies a "successor" or "replacement" (*mubaddil*).¹⁸ *Al-Ṭabarī* interprets the appointment of Prophet Adam as *khalīfah* to mean that he was created to succeed a prior creation—specifically the *jinn*—who, according to exegetical tradition, had previously inhabited the Earth and engaged in widespread corruption. In this view, Adam's role was not merely symbolic but functional: to carry out God's trust (*amānah*) by protecting, cultivating, and ensuring the prosperity of the Earth. In *Maḥāṣin al-Ghayb*, *Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī* interprets the concept of *khalīfah* as embodying the human responsibility to obey Allah's commands and uphold the balance (*tawāzun*) of the Earth. *Al-Rāzī* emphasizes that the appointment of humans as *khalīfah* signifies their inherent dignity and honor, underscoring a divinely ordained role that entails both ethical accountability and custodianship of the natural order.¹⁹

In his *Tafsīr al-Manār*, *Rashīd Ridā* interprets the concept of *khalīfah* as encompassing a multifaceted responsibility that is social, spiritual, and ecological in nature. He emphasizes that humans are entrusted with the mission of advancing civilization while simultaneously fulfilling their duty to maintain harmony within

¹⁶Zein Alviansyah dan Yeti Dahliana, "Analisis Tafsir Ekologis Keistimewaan Air Hujan Dalam QS. Al-A'raf Ayat 57," *Nuansa : Jurnal Studi Islam Dan Kemasyarakatan* 16, no. 1 (2023).

¹⁷Faisol Nasar bin Madi dan Moh Barmawi, "Ayat-Ayat Spiritual Ekologi (Eco-Spirituality) Dan Kontribusianya Pada Lingkungan Rawan Bencana Banjir (Studi Living Al-Qur'an)," *Islamika Inside: Jurnal Keislaman Dan Humaniora* 8, no. 2 (2022), p. 233–51.

¹⁸Achmad Warson Munawir dan Muhammad Fairuz, *Kamus Al-Munawwir Versi Indonesia-Arab Terlengkap* (Surabaya: Pustaka Progresif, 2007), p. 270.

¹⁹Muhammad Said dkk., "Penyuluhan Konservasi Lingkungan Berbasis Al Qur'an: (Living Qur'an Dan Penguatan Nilai-Nilai Qur'ani Pada Masyarakat Sembalun Bumbung Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Ekologi dan Konservasi)," *Empowerment: Jurnal Pengabdian pada Masyarakat* 3, no. 1 (2023), p. 30–38. M. Quriash Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbah*: Pesan, Kesan, dan Keserasian al-Qur'an, Jakarta: Lentera, 2000).

creation. Quraish Shihab highlights several key dimensions of *khalifah*:²⁰ 1) As a successor to previous creatures (*jin*). 2) As a generation succeeding previous generations. 3) As Allah's representative on earth to enforce His laws. Quraish Shihab underscores that the duties and responsibilities of a *khalifah* encompass social, moral, and ecological dimensions, highlighting the comprehensive nature of human stewardship. Similarly, Ibn Kathīr explains that humans, as *khalifah*, are entrusted with the task of establishing justice (*'adl*) and preventing corruption (*fasād*) on Earth. He further notes that the angels' initial questioning of human creation stemmed from their awareness of humanity's potential for destruction; however, Allah's wisdom and knowledge transcend their understanding. This interpretation emphasizes the balance between human fallibility and divine purpose in the role of stewardship.

The interpretations provided by these *mufassir* (Qur'anic exegetes) concerning the role of humans as *khalifah* and its ecological significance in the Qur'an collectively underscore a multidimensional framework of human responsibility. Humans are entrusted with spiritual, moral, and social duties, which include upholding Allah's trust by adhering to His commands and refraining from prohibitions, managing the Earth's natural resources with wisdom to preserve ecological balance, and promoting justice and prosperity as manifestations of human dignity grounded in divine knowledge and will. This holistic understanding positions environmental stewardship as an integral component of fulfilling the broader mandate of righteous vicegerency.²¹

Thus, the primary obligations of humans as *khalīfatullāh fil ardh* in relation to ecology are:²² 1) To promote the prosperity of the Earth through the active preservation, maintenance, and sustainable management of its natural resources, while conscientiously avoiding actions that cause harm or degradation. 2) To uphold justice and ecological balance by developing and implementing inclusive, integrative, and sustainable policies and regulatory frameworks that ensure equitable resource distribution and environmental protection. 3) To safeguard the trust (*amānah*) inherent in life's blessings by honoring these gifts with gratitude and fulfilling the accompanying responsibilities with conscientious stewardship. 4) To align all actions with the ultimate purpose of human creation worship (*'ibādah*) by engaging in righteous deeds, refraining from causing harm, and fostering the spread of goodness and collective benefit.

²⁰Nasihun Amin, *Pemikiran Teologi Islam Modern* (Semarang: CV. Lawwana, 2021), p. 71.

²¹Yayah Yayah et.al., "Environmental Ethics in Tafsir of the Qur'an (Study of Surah Ar-Rum Verse 41 Quraish Shihab's Perspective)," *Riwayat: Educational Journal of History and Humanities* 7, no. 3 (2024), p. 1223–31

²²Mappanyompa, et.al., "Eco-Theology Dalam Persepektif Al-Qur'an," *Ibtida'iy: Jurnal Prodi PGMI* 8, no. 1 (2023), p. 33–44.

2. *Fasad* Defined

The Qur'an presents a profound understanding of the relationship between humans and the environment, emphasizing their role as *khalīfatullāh fī al-arḍ* (God's vicegerents on Earth) and the attendant responsibilities this entails. It further highlights that environmental degradation is a direct outcome of human actions.²³ This is exemplified in the verse: "*Corruption has appeared throughout the land and sea by [reason of] what the hands of people have earned*" (Qur'an 30:41). The Arabic term *ayd* the plural of *yad* (hand) is frequently associated with power, authority, and agency, while also carrying connotations of pride, arrogance, and hubris.

As reflected in classical Arabic expressions such as "you may die by his hand" or "he is under his hand," the term *yad* (hand) conveys notions of power, authority, and control traits that, in theological discourse, are also considered among the attributes or symbolic garments of Allah Almighty. Classical Arabic lexicons such as *Lisān al-‘Arab*, *Mu‘jam Maqāyīs al-Lughah*, and *Al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qur‘ān* offer deeper insights into these semantic nuances. When applied to human actions in Qur'an 30:41, the term *ayd* (hands) implies the exercise of authority and agency, particularly by individuals in positions of power.²⁴ Thus, the verse serves not only as a general warning about environmental degradation but also as a pointed admonition to those entrusted with leadership and governance. It urges them to exercise their authority with vigilance, humility, and ethical restraint, lest their actions lead to further corruption and imbalance on Earth.

Consequently, numerous scholars have cautioned that when humans are entrusted with power, they often succumb to *arrogance, pride, and recklessness*, which can manifest in the denial of Allah's sovereignty and result in widespread corruption (*fasād*). The Qur'anic accounts of the destruction of the 'Ād and Thamūd civilizations serve as powerful historical precedents of this phenomenon. These communities were obliterated due to their persistent arrogance, defiance, and moral decay. Such narratives are not merely historical records but function as ethical warnings, offering critical insight into contemporary environmental crises. Today's global challenges such as climate change, environmental degradation, and biodiversity loss can similarly be traced to human hubris, greed, and the unchecked exploitation of nature, often exacerbated by technological dominance and an anthropocentric worldview.

The term *fasād* (corruption), as referenced in Qur'an 30:41, has been subject to extensive interpretation by both classical and contemporary scholars. Ibn Kathīr (d. 1373 CE), in his renowned *Tafsīr al-Qur‘ān al-‘Aẓīm*, interprets *fasād* primarily as social and spiritual corruption, encompassing transgressions such as shirk

²³Ali Mostfa, "Violence and Jihad in Islam: From the War of Words to the Clashes of Definitions," *Religions* 12, no. 11 (2021), p. 966.

²⁴"Khalifah, the Environment and Recycling Copies of the Holy Qur'an: A Symbiotic Semantic Consideration | Electronic Publications," diakses 24 Maret 2025, <https://www.electronicpublications.org/stuff/788>.

(associating partners with Allah), murder, moral depravity, and violations of divine commandments. However, contemporary scholars such as Yūsuf al-Qaradāwī have expanded the conceptual scope of *fasād* to include environmental degradation, framing it as a modern manifestation of moral failure. This broader interpretation includes phenomena such as pollution, climate change, resource depletion, and food insecurity, which collectively endanger the well-being of ecosystems and all living beings.²⁵

In essence, the *fasād* (corruption) attributed to human actions encompasses not only tangible transgressions such as deforestation, pollution, and the exploitation of natural resources but also intangible moral and spiritual failings, including shirk (polytheism), wickedness, hypocrisy, and other forms of immorality.²⁶ These non-physical acts are equally significant, as they can foster broader societal decay and precipitate further wrongdoing, potentially invoking divine punishment or environmental calamities. The verse in *Sūrat al-Rūm* (30:41) is thus regarded as a *jawāmi' al-kalim* a concise yet comprehensive expression conveying layered meanings that offer moral, spiritual, and ecological insight. It invites deep reflection on the interconnectedness of ethical conduct and environmental outcomes, serving as a timeless reminder across past, present, and future contexts.

In the Qur'an, *Sūrat al-A'rāf* (7:56), Allah commands: “*And do not cause corruption on the earth after it has been set in order. And invoke Him in fear and aspiration. Indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to the doers of good.*” This verse affirms that the Earth was originally created in a state of harmony and balance, and that human interference through acts of injustice and transgression has introduced corruption (*fasād*) into a divinely ordered system. Although this verse lacks a specific *asbāb al-nuzūl* (occasion of revelation), classical exegetes often associate its meaning with the actions of Pharaoh, who is frequently cited in the Qur'an as a symbol of tyranny, arrogance, and environmental disorder. The verse thus serves as a broader ethical warning, reminding humanity of the severe consequences both worldly and divine that befell earlier civilizations for their spread of corruption.

Allah admonishes believers not to emulate or align themselves with those who engage in transgression and corruption. Instead, they are called to become agents of reform and preservation, upholding the Earth's integrity through adherence to divine law (*sharī'ah*) as revealed through the prophets, the righteous, and individuals endowed with divine guidance, inspiration, and wisdom. These exemplary figures have taught humanity how to interact with the natural world responsibly how to extract and utilize its resources with discernment and ethical restraint, ensuring that such use does not result in harm, imbalance, or destruction.²⁷

²⁵Mamluatun Nafisah, “Tafsir Ekologi:,” *Al-Fanar : Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Tafsir* 2, no. 1 (2019), p. 93–112.

²⁶Tarto Tarto, “Epistimologi Ar-Razi Dalam Tafsir Mafatih Al Ghaib,” *El-Mu'jam. Jurnal Kajian Al Qur'an Dan Al-Hadis* 3, no. 1 (2023), p. 1–14.

²⁷Ibnu 'Asyur Muhammad al-Thahir, *Tafsir al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir* (Tunisia: Dar Shuhnun li al-Nasyr wa al-Tauzi', 1997), p. 175.

The Qur'anic message consistently calls upon humankind to return to the worship of Allah, urging believers to pray with hope for His mercy, which accompanies every act of righteousness.²⁸ This theological principle is reinforced in *Sūrat Hūd* (11:61), where Allah recounts the message of the prophet Ṣāliḥ to his people, the Thamūd: “*And to the Thamūd [We sent] their brother Ṣāliḥ. He said, ‘O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him. He created you from the earth and settled you therein, so ask forgiveness of Him and repent to Him. Indeed, my Lord is near and responsive.’*” This verse highlights the intimate connection between worship, repentance, and ecological consciousness, as it reminds humanity that their very existence and place on Earth are granted by the Creator.

This verse recounts the story of the Thamūd people, who dwelled in the region of al-Ḥijr, and to whom Allah sent the prophet Ṣāliḥ as a messenger to redirect them from idolatry toward the worship of the One true God. The phrase “*He created you from the earth*” functions as a *li-ta’līl* a rhetorical rationale that substantiates the command to worship Allah alone and to renounce all other deities. It emphasizes that Allah is the sole originator of life, bringing humanity forth from the earth and enabling them to prosper upon it. This statement affirms both divine sovereignty over creation and the exclusive right of Allah to be worshipped, while also establishing a theological foundation for ethical responsibility in how humans inhabit and utilize the earth.

The reference to being “*created from the earth*” also evokes the Qur’anic narrative of the creation of Prophet Adam (peace be upon him), thereby extending the implication to all of his descendants. This expression establishes a metaphysical and existential bond between humanity and the earth, underscoring human embeddedness within the natural order. In the specific context of the Thamūd a people known for their agricultural livelihood and advanced engineering the metaphor acquires added resonance. Their deep familiarity with cultivation, construction, and land management is evident in their ability to carve dwellings into mountains and erect monumental structures.

The Thamūd’s advanced civilization and prosperity were the result of both divine endowment and human effort. This, perhaps, is what Allah intended when speaking of humankind being “brought forth from the earth” that is, engaging in responsible stewardship, agriculture, construction, and societal development. In relation to this, the term *al-isti’ṁār* implies *al-i’ṁār* Allah’s intent for humans to inhabit and develop the earth.

Within this context, the people of Thamūd exemplified the Qur’anic concept of *i’ṁār al-arḍ* the constructive inhabitation and cultivation of the earth through their engagement in agriculture and architecture. After enumerating the blessings bestowed upon them, Allah commands them to seek forgiveness (*istighfār*) and turn in repentance (*tawbah*), emphasizing the moral and spiritual conditions required to sustain those blessings. They are also urged to abstain from actions that incur divine

²⁸Muhammad al-Thahir, *Tafsir al-Tahrir wa al-Tanwir*.

displeasure, particularly shirk (polytheism) and *fasād* (corruption), which includes both moral and environmental transgressions.²⁹ Despite their prosperity and technological capability, the Thamūd's ultimate downfall was a consequence of their arrogance, ingratitude, and rejection of divine guidance.

3. *Tawāzun* Defined

The principle of *tawāzun* (balance) is explicitly articulated in the Qur'an, as exemplified in the verse: "And the sky He raised, and He set the balance. That you not transgress within the balance. And establish weight in justice and do not make deficient the balance" (Qur'an 55:7–9). This concept underscores the intrinsic interconnectedness and interdependence of all elements within the natural world—including water, air, soil, and human beings and emphasizes the necessity of preserving and protecting these elements in a state of harmony.

Allah further commands: "*and do not cause corruption upon the earth after it has been set in order*" (Qur'an 7:56). Acts that contravene the principle of *tawāzun* such as *isrāf* (wastefulness) and excessive consumption contribute to environmental degradation, including pollution and deforestation. The Qur'an condemns those who engage in such behaviors, referring to them as "brothers of the devils" (Qur'an 17:27). These prohibitions are intended to safeguard the ecological balance established by divine order. Thus, Qur'anic teachings offer not only a profound moral and spiritual framework but also practical guidance for addressing contemporary environmental challenges, such as pollution, resource overexploitation, and climate change.

Coastal Preservation and the Transformation of Qur'anic Ecological Values: A Cultural Anthropological Perspective

Various efforts have been undertaken by coastal communities in Malang, Indonesia, to address these issues: 1) Mangrove Rehabilitation – Community initiatives include the replanting and rehabilitation of mangroves along coastal areas to prevent erosion and promote biodiversity. 2) Environmental Education – Programs aimed at educating both local residents and tourists have been implemented to raise awareness and reduce pollution, thereby supporting coastal ecosystem sustainability. 3) Coral Reef Conservation – Areas such as Pantai Tiga Warna have become sites of coral reef conservation to protect marine habitats.

The coastal fishing communities in Malang possess a wealth of indigenous ecological knowledge that has been transmitted across generations. This traditional understanding plays a crucial role in guiding their practices aimed at preserving ecological balance and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources. According to Mat Lawi, a prominent local figure, residents of Malang's coastal regions regard the sea as a vital source of life, and its protection is seen as a fundamental

²⁹Siti Asirah, et.al., "Konsep Isti'ma'r (Memakmurkan Bumi) Dalam Al-Qur'an (Suatu Kajian Tahlili Terhadap QS. Hud/11: 61)," *Jurnal Al-HaqĀrah Al-IslĀmiyah* 1, no. 1 (2021).

responsibility essential for sustaining both marine biodiversity and their own livelihoods,³⁰ Similarly, M. Rais emphasizes that the economic well-being of fishing communities in South Malang is closely tied to marine resources, including those that support tourism-related activities. This dependence on the marine environment motivates local communities to actively protect it from pollution and environmental degradation, recognizing that such damage would adversely affect their fishing productivity and income.³¹

To achieve sustainable marine and coastal conservation, both Mat Lawi and M. Rais highlight several traditional ecological practices upheld by local communities: 1) Marine Protection Bans – Communities implement seasonal or area-specific fishing restrictions grounded in customary law, allowing marine populations to recover. These traditional prohibitions contribute to the preservation of biodiversity and the long-term sustainability of fish stocks. 2) Habitat Conservation – Customary regulations prohibit the cutting or destruction of mangrove forests, which are valued as critical natural barriers against coastal erosion and as important habitats for marine species. These conservation practices are typically enforced by traditional leaders or community elders, with violations often resulting in significant social penalties.³² 3) Rituals of Gratitude (Sedekah Laut) – Communities regularly perform traditional ceremonies, such as *selamatan* or *sedekah laut* (sea offerings), to express gratitude to God for the ocean's abundance. These rituals underscore a spiritual awareness of human reliance on nature and reinforce collective values of environmental stewardship.

According to Mujiono³³ traditional rituals practiced by coastal fishing communities in Malang are carried out collectively, typically under the guidance of customary elders or religious leaders. These rituals often include communal prayers, offerings released into the sea, and cultural expressions such as traditional dances and artistic performances. Mujiono underscores that these practices are closely linked to ecological awareness. They foster a collective sense of stewardship and responsibility toward the sea as a crucial source of life, while also serving as a symbolic reminder of the need to protect marine sustainability for future generations. 4) Another key practice includes the use of environmentally friendly fishing gear. Fishers employ selective techniques such as small nets and fish traps and explicitly avoid destructive methods such as explosives or toxic substances. Fishing activities are also adjusted seasonally to maintain ecological balance and ensure the regeneration of marine species.

According to Subhan, the cultural traditions embodying the local wisdom of Malang's coastal fishermen align closely with Qur'anic values, which emphasize the balance of nature and underscore human responsibility for maintaining

³⁰Interviewed with Mat Lawi, a fisherman in Sendang Biru Malang Selatan, 12 April 2025.

³¹Interviewed with M. Rais, a fisherman Sengdang Biru Malang Selatan, 12 April 2025.

³²Interviewed with Sugiono, a fisherman in Desa Tambakrejo Malang Selatan, 13 April 2025.

³³Interviewed with Mujiono, a fisherman in Sendang Biru Malang Selatan, 14 April 2025.

environmental sustainability.³⁴ Although Subhan notes that the Malang coastal fishing communities possess a limited understanding of the Qur'anic environmental teachings, their traditional and cultural practices nonetheless reflect these values. For instance, they demonstrate an awareness of the necessity to protect the sea for the welfare of both current and future generations. Based on this, Subhan emphasizes that enhancing community awareness and participation in safeguarding coastal and marine environments is crucial. Specifically, for the Malang fishing communities, this requires a transformative engagement with the ecological values embedded in the Qur'an. These values convey that the excessive exploitation of natural resources, environmental pollution, and habitat destruction not only threaten the sustainability of ecosystems but also constitute ecological transgressions, or *min al-kaba'ir*, with serious consequences for both nature and all living beings.

Subhan notes that these local traditions are consistent with Qur'anic principles, particularly those emphasizing environmental balance and the human duty to protect nature. While the fishermen in Malang's coastal areas may possess limited formal knowledge of the Qur'an's teachings on environmental ethics. Subhan argues that their customary practices inherently reflect these values. For example, there is a broad recognition among community members of the vital importance of preserving the health of the sea to sustain both current and future livelihood. To reinforce this alignment between local wisdom, environmental preservation, and religious values, Subhan proposes the following targeted strategies: 1) Education on Qur'anic Ecological Concepts – Introduce foundational concepts such as *khalīfah* (stewardship), *fasād* (corruption), and *mīzān* (balance) through the teaching of Qur'anic verses directly related to ecological ethics. These teachings should be incorporated into eco-theological education within school and pesantren curricula. 2) Sustainable Resource Management – Encourage conservation efforts such as mangrove reforestation and community-based waste management as integral parts of environmental stewardship. 3) Adoption of Eco-Friendly Technologies – Promote the use of environmentally sustainable technologies in fishing and agricultural practices. 4) Strengthening Local Wisdom and Religious Culture Elevate and integrate local cultural practices and religious values as guiding frameworks for environmental conservation.³⁵

According to Subhan, the practical application of Qur'anic ecological principles such as *khalīfah* (stewardship), *fasād* (corruption), and *mīzān* (balance) can be realized by integrating these values into existing cultural traditions. Examples of this integration include: 1) Zoning and Marine Resource Management – The designation of regulated fishing zones to conserve marine ecosystems is understood and promoted as an act of *'amal ṣāliḥ* (righteous deed), in alignment with Qur'anic injunctions against *isrāf* (excess) and *fasād* (harm or corruption). These conservation efforts are thus framed not only as ecological necessities but also as spiritually

³⁴Interviewed with Subhan, a fisherman in Desa Tambakrejo Malang Selatan, 13 April 2025.

³⁵Interviewed with Subhan, a fisherman in Desa Tambakrejo Malang Selatan, 13 April 2025.

commendable practices. 2) Ritual Offerings to the Sea (*Sedekah Laut*) – Traditional Sea offerings are enriched through the inclusion of Islamic prayers and invocations, enhancing their religious and ecological meaning as acts of reverence for God's creation. 3) Eco-Theological Education – Educational programs introduce both Qur'anic teachings and local cultural wisdom to the younger generation, fostering a sense of ecological responsibility and reinforcing their role as stewards of coastal and marine environments.³⁶

These initiatives facilitate a transformative integration of Qur'anic ecological values within the framework of local cultural traditions, particularly in the coastal region of Malang. The effects of this transformation include: 1) Collective Ecological Consciousness – An increased awareness among coastal communities that environmental stewardship constitutes both a form of worship and a divine responsibility. 2) Emergence of New Traditions – The fusion of Qur'anic principles with local cultural practices gives rise to new traditions that actively promote sustainable coastal conservation. 3) Strengthening of Community Identity – The interplay between Islamic values and indigenous knowledge reinforces the identity of Malang's coastal communities as spiritually grounded and environmentally conscientious custodians of nature.

Moreover, Qur'anic ecological concepts such as *khalīfah*, *tawāzun* (balance), and *fasād* have been successfully employed as foundational frameworks in other regions, including the Kendeng Mountains in Pati (Central Java).³⁷ Here, they are integrated with local rituals such as *sedekah laut*, performed annually by coastal communities in Brebes and Pasuruan (East Java), symbolizing a collective commitment to preserving coastal ecosystem balance.³⁸ These principles have also informed wider environmental advocacy, exemplified by fatwas issued by religious scholars, thereby extending their impact beyond local settings.³⁹

Conclusion

The coastal region of Malang is renowned for its natural beauty and ecological diversity, yet it faces serious environmental challenges, including coastal erosion, pollution, mangrove deforestation, and coral reef degradation—largely resulting from human activities. In response, local communities have actively engaged in environmental conservation through initiatives such as mangrove restoration, environmental education, and coral reef protection. These efforts are

³⁶Interviewed with Subhan, a fisherman in Desa Tambakrejo Malang Selatan, 13 April 2025.

³⁷Ahmad Subakir, et.al., "Synergy of Samin Culture With Environmental Fiqh in Central Java," *Syariah: Jurnal Hukum dan Pemikiran* 24, No. 1 (2024).

³⁸Bambang Yuniarto, et.al., "Peran Humaniora Terhadap Tradisi Sedekah Laut," *Jurnal Sosial Sains* 2, No. 11 (2022), p. 1227-1235. Karimatul Agustina, "Konstruksi Sosial Pada Tradisi Sedekah Laut di Kelurahan Ngemplakrejo Kecamatan Panggungrejo Kota Pasuruan," *Jurnal Publique* 4, No. 2 (2023), p. 107-119.

³⁹Zainul Mun'im, et.al., 'Ulama', Authority, and Political Relations: How the PCNU Jember Fatwa Influenced Public Policy on Gold Mining in Silo? *Journal of Islamic Law* 6, No. 1 (2025).

strongly rooted in indigenous ecological knowledge, reflected in customary fishing regulations, habitat preservation, *sedekah laut* rituals, and the use of environmentally friendly fishing methods. This local wisdom aligns closely with the environmental ethics found in the Qur'an, which emphasize balance (*tawāzun*) and human accountability in interactions with the natural world. The integration of Qur'anic ecological values into cultural practices and eco-theological education enhances collective environmental awareness, promotes sustainable conservation practices, and reinforces the spiritual and cultural identity of Malang's coastal communities as responsible environmental stewards. The case of Malang illustrates that effective and sustainable environmental conservation can be achieved through an interdisciplinary approach that combines Qur'anic principles such as *khalīfah* (stewardship), *tawāzun* (balance), and *fasād* (corruption) with local cultural traditions, including regulated fishing zones, *sedekah laut*, and *sedekah bumi* (earth offerings). Together, Qur'anic ethics and cultural anthropology offer a holistic and contextually grounded ecological framework that advances environmental sustainability and serves the broader interests of society.

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Interviews

Interview with Mat Lawi, Fisherman of Sendang Biru, South Malang, April 12, 2025.

Interview with M. Rais, Fisherman of Sengdang Biru, South Malang, April 12, 2025.

Interview with Sugiono, Fisherman of Tambakrejo Village, South Malang, April 13, 2025.

Interview with Mujiono, Fisherman of Sendang Biru, South Malang, April 14, 2025.

Interview with Subhan, Fisherman of Tambakrejo Village, South Malang, April 13, 2025.