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# ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AS FASĀD FĪ AL-ARḌ: TOWARD A QUR'ANIC FRAMEWORK FOR ISLAMIC ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS

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## ABSTRACT

*The contemporary environmental crisis characterized by climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, and pollution demands urgent ethical frameworks that transcend secular paradigms. This article proposes a comprehensive Qur'anic framework for Islamic environmental ethics by reinterpreting the concept of fasād fī al-arḍ (corruption on earth) as environmental degradation. Through hermeneutical analysis and thematic Qur'anic interpretation (tafsīr mawḍū'ī), this study examines how foundational Islamic concepts khalīfah (stewardship), amānah (trust), and mīzān (balance) construct a robust theological and ethical foundation for environmental responsibility. The research analyzes key Qur'anic verses addressing ecological balance, human-nature relationships, and divine accountability for environmental harm. Findings reveal that fasād fī al-arḍ encompasses not only moral and social corruption but explicitly includes ecological destruction, positioning environmental degradation as a violation of divine trust and cosmic order. The proposed framework integrates classical Islamic jurisprudence with contemporary environmental challenges, demonstrating how Qur'anic principles align with Sustainable Development Goals and climate action imperatives. This study contributes to Islamic ecotheology by establishing fasād fī al-arḍ as a central*

*organizing concept for environmental ethics, offering practical guidance for Muslim communities and policymakers addressing the climate crisis through faith-based approaches.*

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**KEYWORDS:** Fasād fī al-Ard, Islamic Environmental Ethics, Qur'anic Ecology, Khalifah, Environmental Stewardship.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Anthropocene epoch has witnessed unprecedented environmental degradation, with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) documenting alarming increases in global temperatures, biodiversity collapse, and ecosystem disruption that threaten planetary boundaries. The 2023 IPCC Synthesis Report confirms that human activities have unequivocally caused global warming of approximately 1.1°C above pre-industrial levels, with devastating consequences for vulnerable communities and ecosystems worldwide. This environmental crisis demands not only technological and policy interventions but also profound ethical and spiritual transformations that can motivate sustained behavioral change and collective action. While secular environmental ethics has made significant contributions, faith-based approaches offer unique resources for mobilizing communities, grounding environmental responsibility in transcendent values, and providing moral frameworks that resonate with billions of believers globally.

Islamic environmental ethics, rooted in the Qur'an and prophetic traditions (*Sunnah*), presents a comprehensive theological framework for addressing contemporary ecological challenges. With over 1.8 billion Muslims worldwide, Islamic teachings on environmental stewardship possess immense potential for shaping sustainable practices and climate action. Recent scholarship has increasingly recognized the relevance of Islamic ecological principles to global sustainability efforts, with researchers exploring concepts such as *khalīfah* (vicegerency), *amānah* (trust), *mīzān* (balance), and *tawhīd* (divine unity) as foundations for environmental responsibility [1], [2], [3]. These concepts are not peripheral to Islamic theology but constitute core elements of the Qur'anic worldview, positioning humans as accountable stewards within a divinely ordered cosmos.

However, a critical gap exists in contemporary Islamic environmental discourse: the systematic articulation of *fasād fī al-arḍ* (corruption/mischief on earth) as a central organizing concept for environmental ethics. While classical exegetes (*mufasssīrūn*) have traditionally interpreted *fasād* primarily in moral, social, and political terms, the Qur'anic usage of this concept encompasses ecological dimensions that remain underexplored in both classical and contemporary scholarship [4], [5]. The Qur'an repeatedly condemns those who "spread corruption on earth" (*yufsidūna fī al-arḍ*), linking such

corruption to divine punishment and cosmic imbalance. Yet, the explicit connection between *fasād* and environmental degradation (deforestation, pollution, climate change, biodiversity loss) has not been adequately theorized within Islamic ecotheology.

This research addresses this lacuna by proposing a comprehensive Qur'anic framework that positions *fasād fī al-arḍ* as environmental corruption, thereby establishing a robust theological foundation for Islamic environmental ethics. The study asks: How can the Qur'anic concept of *fasād fī al-arḍ* be systematically interpreted to encompass contemporary environmental degradation? What are the theological and ethical implications of understanding environmental destruction as a form of *fasād*? How do related Qur'anic concepts *khalīfah*, *amānah*, *mīzān*, *istislāh*, and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* contribute to a holistic Islamic environmental ethics framework?

The significance of this research is threefold. First, it contributes to Islamic ecotheology by developing a systematic hermeneutical framework that bridges classical Qur'anic exegesis and contemporary environmental science, demonstrating the relevance of Islamic scripture to urgent global challenges. Second, it provides practical guidance for Muslim communities, religious leaders, and policymakers seeking to ground environmental action in authentic Islamic sources, thereby enhancing the legitimacy and effectiveness of faith-based climate initiatives. Third, it enriches global environmental ethics discourse by introducing Islamic perspectives that challenge anthropocentric paradigms and offer alternative visions of human-nature relationships grounded in divine accountability and cosmic interconnectedness [6], [7].

This article proceeds as follows: Section 2 reviews existing literature on Islamic environmental thought, examining both classical and contemporary scholarship on *fasād fī al-arḍ* and Qur'anic ecology. Section 3 outlines the hermeneutical methodology employed for thematic Qur'anic interpretation. Section 4 presents the core discussion, analyzing *fasād fī al-arḍ* as environmental corruption, exploring related concepts of stewardship and balance, examining contemporary environmental crises through a Qur'anic lens, and constructing an integrated Islamic environmental ethics framework. Section 5 concludes with implications for theory and practice, while Section 6 articulates the novelty and original contributions of this research.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Islamic environmental thought has evolved significantly over the past five decades, moving from peripheral concerns to central theological and ethical discourse. This literature review examines three interconnected domains: the historical development of Islamic environmental thought, classical and contemporary scholarship on *fasād fī al-ard*, and Qur'anic ecology and environmental ethics frameworks.

### 2.1 Historical Development of Islamic Environmental Thought

The modern Islamic environmental movement emerged in the 1960s-1970s, coinciding with global environmental awakening following Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* and the 1972 Stockholm Conference. Pioneering Muslim scholars such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr articulated the spiritual dimensions of the environmental crisis, arguing that ecological destruction stems from the desacralization of nature in modern secular thought [8]. Nasr's work emphasized *tawhīd* (divine unity) as the foundation for an Islamic cosmology that recognizes the sacred character of creation and humanity's responsibility as God's vicegerent (*khalīfah*).

Fazlur Rahman's hermeneutical approach to Qur'anic interpretation provided methodological foundations for contextualizing Islamic ethics in contemporary settings, enabling scholars to address environmental issues through systematic thematic analysis (*tafsīr mauḍū'ī*) [9]. This methodology allows for the synthesis of scattered Qur'anic verses on related themes, revealing coherent ethical frameworks that may not be immediately apparent in traditional verse-by-verse exegesis.

The 1980s-1990s witnessed institutional developments, including the 1986 Assisi Declarations on Nature, where Muslim representatives articulated Islamic environmental principles, and the establishment of Islamic environmental organizations. Mawil Izzi Dien's seminal work *The Environmental Dimensions of Islam* (2000) systematically examined Islamic legal and ethical resources for environmental protection, analyzing concepts such as *ḥimā* (protected zones), *iḥyā' al-mawāt* (reviving dead land), and *waqf* (endowment) as mechanisms for conservation [10].

Recent scholarship has increasingly engaged with contemporary environmental challenges, particularly climate change. Ibrahim Ozdemir has explored Islamic ecotheology in dialogue with Western environmental philosophy, while Nawal Ammar has examined gender dimensions of Islamic

environmental ethics [11], [12]. Contemporary research demonstrates growing sophistication in integrating Islamic sources with environmental science, policy frameworks, and grassroots activism [13], [14], [15].

### 2.2 *Fasād fī al-Ard* in Classical and Contemporary Scholarship

The Qur'anic term *fasād* (corruption, mischief, disorder) appears 50 times in various forms, with *fasād fī al-ard* (corruption on earth) constituting a recurring theme associated with divine condemnation and eschatological consequences. Classical exegetes such as al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, and Ibn Kathīr interpreted *fasād* primarily in moral, social, and political contexts encompassing disbelief (*kufr*), injustice (*zulm*), bloodshed, and violation of divine law [16], [17].

Al-Qurṭubī's *tafsīr* provides nuanced analysis of *fasād*, distinguishing between minor and major corruption and emphasizing human accountability for maintaining cosmic order. His interpretation of Surah al-Rūm (30:41) "Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what people's hands have earned" acknowledges both moral and material dimensions of corruption, though ecological implications remain implicit rather than explicit [18].

Contemporary scholarship has begun to reinterpret *fasād fī al-ard* in explicitly environmental terms. Esdarwati et al. (2025) examine the prohibition against corruption (*lā tufsidū fī al-ard*) in the Qur'an and its implementation in modern environmental regulations, arguing that *fasād* encompasses ecological destruction and provides theological foundations for environmental law [5]. This research demonstrates how classical concepts can be recontextualized to address contemporary challenges while maintaining hermeneutical integrity.

Khasani et al. (2025) reconstruct Islamic ecotheology through al-Qurṭubī's *tafsīr*, exploring how concepts of *khalīfah* and *taskhīr* (subjugation of nature) relate to sustainability [19]. Their work challenges anthropocentric interpretations that justify environmental exploitation, arguing instead for a stewardship model that recognizes human accountability and ecological limits.

However, systematic theorization of *fasād fī al-ard* as a central organizing concept for Islamic environmental ethics remains limited. Most studies treat *fasād* as one among several relevant concepts rather than as the foundational framework for understanding environmental degradation as theological transgression [20], [21].

### 2.3 Qur'anic Ecology and Environmental Ethics Frameworks

Recent scholarship has developed comprehensive frameworks for Qur'anic ecology, identifying core principles and concepts that constitute Islamic environmental ethics. Helfaya et al. (2018) examine Qur'anic ethics for environmental responsibility and their implications for business practice, demonstrating how Islamic principles can inform corporate sustainability [9]. Their research highlights the practical applicability of Qur'anic teachings beyond individual piety to institutional and economic domains.

The concept of *khalīfah* (vicegerency/stewardship) has received extensive scholarly attention as the foundation for human environmental responsibility. Fitryansyah (2024) explores how *khalīfah*, *mīzān* (balance), and *amānah* (trust) provide an ethical framework for urban environmental preservation in the context of rapid urbanization [1]. This research demonstrates the relevance of Islamic concepts to contemporary urban ecological challenges, including air pollution, green space reduction, and waste management.

*Mīzān* (balance, measure, justice) emerges as a central Qur'anic principle for ecological ethics. The Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes divine establishment of balance in creation and human responsibility to maintain this balance. Research on ecological balance in the Qur'an examines verses on climate change mitigation and adaptation, identifying principles of moderation, sustainable resource management, and reforestation [22]. This thematic approach reveals coherent environmental guidance distributed across multiple Qur'anic passages.

The *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (objectives of Islamic law) framework has been applied to environmental protection, with scholars arguing that *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* (protection of the environment) constitutes a fundamental objective alongside traditional categories of protecting religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property [23], [24]. Kamali (2025) examines *maqāṣid* and protection of the environment, demonstrating how Islamic legal theory can accommodate environmental concerns as essential to human welfare and divine intent [25].

Integration of Islamic environmental ethics with contemporary frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has gained scholarly attention. Hasan (2022) explores the Prophet's perspective on environment and ecological sustainability, aligning Islamic teachings with SDGs and demonstrating compatibility between faith-based and secular sustainability frameworks [2]. This

integration enhances the legitimacy and practical applicability of Islamic environmental ethics in global policy contexts.

Despite these advances, significant gaps remain. First, the relationship between *fasād fī al-arḍ* and other environmental concepts (*khalīfah*, *amānah*, *mīzān*) has not been systematically theorized within a unified framework. Second, hermeneutical methodologies for interpreting Qur'anic environmental teachings require further refinement to balance classical exegetical traditions with contemporary environmental science. Third, empirical research on the effectiveness of Islamic environmental ethics in motivating behavioral change and policy implementation remains limited [26], [27], [28].

This study addresses these gaps by developing a comprehensive framework that positions *fasād fī al-arḍ* as the central organizing concept for Islamic environmental ethics, systematically relating it to complementary Qur'anic principles and demonstrating its relevance to contemporary environmental crises.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

This research employs a qualitative hermeneutical approach grounded in thematic Qur'anic interpretation (*tafsīr mawḍū'ī*) to develop a comprehensive framework for Islamic environmental ethics centered on the concept of *fasād fī al-arḍ*. The methodology integrates classical Islamic exegetical traditions with contemporary hermeneutical theory and environmental science, enabling systematic analysis of Qur'anic teachings on environmental responsibility while maintaining theological authenticity and scholarly rigor.

#### 3.1 Thematic Qur'anic Interpretation (*Tafsīr Mawḍū'ī*)

*Tafsīr mawḍū'ī* (thematic exegesis) constitutes the primary methodological framework for this study. Unlike traditional verse-by-verse commentary (*tafsīr tartībī*), thematic interpretation identifies a specific topic or concept, gathers all relevant Qur'anic verses, and synthesizes them into a coherent framework that reveals the Qur'an's comprehensive guidance on that subject [29]. This approach follows the methodology articulated by 'Abd al-Ḥayy al-Farmāwī in *Al-Bidāyah fī al-Tafsīr al-Mawḍū'ī*, which outlines systematic procedures for thematic analysis.

The research process involves five stages: (1) identification of the central theme (*fasād fī al-arḍ* and related environmental concepts); (2) comprehensive collection of relevant Qur'anic verses using concordance tools and classical *tafsīr* indices; (3)

analysis of each verse in its immediate context (*siyāq*), considering occasion of revelation (*asbāb al-nuzūl*) where applicable; (4) synthesis of verses to identify overarching principles, patterns, and relationships; and (5) interpretation in light of contemporary environmental challenges while respecting classical exegetical insights.

### 3.2 Hermeneutical Analysis.

The study employs hermeneutical analysis to bridge classical Qur'anic exegesis and contemporary environmental discourse. This involves critical examination of how classical exegetes (*mufasssīrūn*) such as al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, Ibn Kathīr, al-Rāzī, and al-Zamakhsharī interpreted verses related to *fasād*, *khalīfah*, *amānah*, and *mīzān*. Their interpretations provide foundational understanding of semantic ranges, theological implications, and legal applications of these concepts.

Contemporary hermeneutical theory, particularly Fazlur Rahman's "double movement" approach, guides the contextualization process. This methodology involves moving from contemporary situations to Qur'anic times to understand the original meaning and intent, then returning to the present with insights that address current challenges while maintaining continuity with authentic Islamic teachings [30]. This approach prevents both anachronistic readings that impose modern concerns onto the text and rigid literalism that ignores changed historical circumstances.

### 3.3 Data Sources and Analysis

Primary sources include the Qur'anic text in Arabic, with reference to authoritative translations and classical *tafsīr* works. Secondary sources encompass contemporary scholarship on Islamic environmental ethics, environmental science literature, and international policy documents (IPCC reports, UN SDG frameworks, Paris Agreement). The research analyzes approximately 50 Qur'anic verses directly relevant to environmental themes, with particular focus on passages containing *fasād*, *khalīfah*, *amānah*, *mīzān*, *istislāh*, and related concepts.

Analytical procedures include: (1) semantic analysis of key Arabic terms using classical lexicons (*Lisān al-'Arab*, *Mufradāt al-Qur'ān*); (2) comparative analysis of classical and contemporary exegetical interpretations; (3) thematic synthesis identifying patterns, relationships, and hierarchies among environmental concepts; (4) application of findings to contemporary environmental challenges (climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, deforestation); and (5) framework construction integrating Qur'anic

principles into a coherent environmental ethics system.

### 3.4 Validity and Limitations

The validity of this hermeneutical research rests on several factors: (1) systematic application of established *tafsīr mawḍū'ī* methodology; (2) engagement with authoritative classical and contemporary sources; (3) transparency in interpretive procedures and assumptions; (4) coherence of the resulting framework with broader Qur'anic teachings and Islamic theology; and (5) practical applicability to contemporary environmental challenges.

Limitations include the inherently interpretive nature of hermeneutical research, which involves scholarly judgment in selecting, analyzing, and synthesizing sources. While this study strives for objectivity and rigor, alternative interpretations remain possible. Additionally, the research focuses primarily on Qur'anic sources, with limited engagement with *hadith* literature and Islamic legal traditions, which could be addressed in future research. Finally, empirical validation of the framework's effectiveness in motivating environmental behavior and policy change requires separate empirical studies beyond the scope of this theoretical research.

## 4. DISCUSSION

### 4.1 *Fasād fī al-Arḍ as Environmental Corruption in the Qur'an*

The Qur'anic concept of *fasād fī al-arḍ* (corruption on earth) provides a powerful theological framework for understanding environmental degradation as a fundamental violation of divine order and human responsibility. The term *fasād* derives from the Arabic root *f-s-d*, denoting corruption, disorder, decay, and deviation from proper state or function. In Qur'anic usage, *fasād* encompasses moral, social, political, and critically for this study ecological dimensions of disorder that disrupt the divinely established harmony of creation.

The Qur'an explicitly links *fasād* to human actions and their consequences on earth. Surah al-Rūm (30:41) states: "Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what people's hands have earned, so that He may cause them to taste some of what they have done, so that perhaps they might return." This verse establishes several crucial principles: (1) *fasād* manifests in both terrestrial and marine environments; (2) human actions directly cause this corruption; (3) environmental consequences serve as divine warning and opportunity for repentance; and

(4) the corruption is observable and experiential ("taste some of what they have done") [5], [31].

Classical exegetes interpreted this verse primarily in terms of moral corruption leading to drought, famine, and natural disasters as divine punishment. Al-Qurṭubī's *tafsir* notes that *fasād* on land includes killing, injustice, and disobedience, while *fasād* at sea refers to piracy and transgression. However, he also acknowledges that human sins affect the natural world, causing decreased rainfall and agricultural productivity [18]. This interpretation, while not explicitly ecological in modern terms, recognizes the interconnection between human behavior and environmental conditions.

Contemporary reinterpretation of Surah 30:41 in light of environmental science reveals profound ecological insights. The "corruption on land and sea" can be understood as encompassing deforestation, soil degradation, desertification, ocean acidification, marine pollution, and climate change all demonstrably caused by human activities. The phrase "what people's hands have earned" (*mā kasabat aydī al-nās*) directly attributes environmental degradation to human agency, rejecting fatalistic interpretations that view ecological crises as inevitable or divinely predetermined [32], [33].

The Qur'an repeatedly condemns those who "spread corruption on earth" (*yufsidūna fī al-arḍ*), using this phrase to describe various forms of transgression. Surah al-Baqarah (2:11-12) states: "When it is said to them, 'Do not spread corruption on earth,' they reply, 'We are only reformers.' Indeed, it is they who are the corrupters, but they do not realize it." This passage highlights the self-deception of those who cause *fasād*, believing their actions to be beneficial or progressive while actually causing harm. This dynamic resonates powerfully with contemporary environmental discourse, where destructive practices are often justified in the name of development, progress, or economic growth [1], [34].

Surah al-A'raf (7:56) provides explicit environmental guidance: "Do not spread corruption on earth after it has been set in order, and call upon Him with fear and hope. Indeed, Allah's mercy is near to those who do good." This verse establishes several key principles: (1) the earth was created in a state of order and balance; (2) human actions can disrupt this divinely established order; (3) the prohibition against *fasād* is absolute and unconditional; and (4) maintaining environmental order is connected to spiritual devotion and divine mercy [35].

The concept of *fasād* is intimately connected to the Qur'anic principle of *mizān* (balance, measure).

Surah al-Raḥmān (55:7-9) states: "He raised the heaven and established the balance, so that you would not transgress in the balance. Weigh with justice and do not fall short in the balance." The divine establishment of cosmic balance creates a normative framework within which human activity must operate. Environmental degradation constitutes transgression against this balance, a form of *fasād* that violates both ecological and moral order [22], [36].

The Qur'an also links *fasād* to specific environmental practices. Surah al-Shu'arā' (26:183) warns: "Do not deprive people of their due and do not commit abuse on earth, spreading corruption." While this verse addresses economic justice, the phrase "commit abuse on earth" (*lā ta'thaw fī al-arḍ mufsidīn*) can be interpreted to include environmental exploitation and resource depletion that harm present and future generations [37].

The eschatological dimensions of *fasād* underscore its theological gravity. The Qur'an associates *fasād* with divine punishment, both in this world and the hereafter. Surah Hūd (11:116-117) laments that previous generations who could have prevented *fasād* failed to do so, resulting in their destruction. This establishes a precedent for collective responsibility and the consequences of environmental negligence [38].

Contemporary environmental crises climate change, biodiversity collapse, deforestation, ocean acidification, plastic pollution can be understood as manifestations of *fasād fī al-arḍ* in the most literal sense. The IPCC's documentation of anthropogenic climate change, with global temperatures rising 1.1°C above pre-industrial levels and accelerating ecosystem disruption, provides empirical evidence of the "corruption on land and sea" described in Surah 30:41. The loss of one million species to extinction risk, as documented by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), represents unprecedented disruption of the divinely established balance [39], [40].

Interpreting environmental degradation as *fasād fī al-arḍ* has profound theological and ethical implications. It positions environmental destruction not merely as a technical problem or policy challenge but as a fundamental violation of divine command, a form of transgression (*ma'ṣiyah*) that incurs moral guilt and spiritual consequences. This framing elevates environmental responsibility from optional virtue to religious obligation, grounding it in the core Islamic principle of submission to divine will [41], [42].

## 4.2 *Khalīfah and Amānah: Human Stewardship and Responsibility*

The Qur'anic concepts of *khalīfah* (vicegerency/stewardship) and *amānah* (trust) establish the theological foundation for human environmental responsibility, defining humanity's unique role within creation and the accountability that accompanies this role. These concepts directly counter anthropocentric paradigms that view nature as mere resource for unlimited human exploitation, instead positioning humans as accountable trustees within a divinely ordered cosmos.

The concept of *khalīfah* appears in the Qur'an's account of human creation. Surah al-Baqarah (2:30) states: "When your Lord said to the angels, 'I am going to place a vicegerent (*khalīfah*) on earth,' they said, 'Will You place therein one who will spread corruption (*yufsidu*) and shed blood, while we glorify Your praise and sanctify You?' He said, 'Indeed, I know what you do not know.'" This foundational verse establishes several crucial principles: (1) humans are appointed as God's representatives on earth; (2) this appointment carries the risk of *fasād* (corruption); (3) the angels' concern about human potential for environmental and social destruction is acknowledged; and (4) divine wisdom in appointing humans as *khalīfah* transcends angelic understanding [1], [43].

Classical exegetes debated the precise meaning of *khalīfah* whether it denotes succession (humans succeeding previous inhabitants of earth), representation (humans as God's representatives), or stewardship (humans managing earth on God's behalf). Contemporary environmental scholarship emphasizes the stewardship interpretation, which entails responsibility, accountability, and limits on human authority. As *khalīfah*, humans do not own the earth but manage it on behalf of the true Owner (God), with obligations to maintain its integrity and productivity for present and future generations [44], [45].

The stewardship model implied by *khalīfah* directly challenges the Baconian paradigm of human dominion over nature that has characterized much of modern Western thought. Rather than absolute sovereignty, *khalīfah* entails delegated authority circumscribed by divine law and purpose. This authority is conditional, not absolute, and can be revoked if humans fail to fulfill their responsibilities. The Qur'anic warning against *fasād* in the very verse establishing human vicegerency underscores the precarious nature of this trust [19], [46].

The concept of *amānah* (trust) complements and deepens the *khalīfah* framework. Surah al-Aḥzāb

(33:72) states: "Indeed, We offered the trust (*amānah*) to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, but they refused to bear it and were afraid of it; but the human being bore it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant." This verse presents *amānah* as a cosmic responsibility that even the most powerful elements of creation declined, recognizing its weight and the accountability it entails. Human acceptance of this trust, despite being "unjust and ignorant," establishes both the nobility and the peril of the human condition [47].

Classical exegetes interpreted *amānah* variously as reason, free will, religious obligations, or moral responsibility. In environmental context, *amānah* encompasses the trust to preserve and protect the earth's resources, ecosystems, and life-support systems. This trust is not limited to human welfare but extends to all creation, reflecting the Qur'anic principle that all creatures glorify God and have intrinsic value beyond their utility to humans [48], [49].

The relationship between *khalīfah* and *amānah* creates a comprehensive framework for environmental ethics. As *khalīfah*, humans have authority and agency to interact with and modify the natural world. As bearers of *amānah*, this authority is constrained by accountability to God and responsibility to maintain the trust. Environmental degradation represents a betrayal of *amānah*, a failure to fulfill the stewardship role of *khalīfah*, and thus constitutes *fasād fi al-arḍ* [2], [50].

The Qur'an emphasizes that all resources ultimately belong to God, not to humans. Surah al-Baqarah (2:284) states: "To Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth." This principle of divine ownership (*milik Allāh*) fundamentally reframes property rights and resource use. Humans may utilize natural resources, but this utilization must respect divine ownership and purpose. Exploitation that degrades ecosystems or deprives future generations violates this principle [51].

The Prophet Muhammad's teachings (*Sunnah*) elaborate on the practical implications of *khalīfah* and *amānah* for environmental stewardship. The hadith "The earth is green and beautiful, and Allah has appointed you His stewards over it" explicitly connects human responsibility to environmental preservation. Prophetic traditions on planting trees, conserving water, protecting animals, and establishing protected zones (*ḥimā*) provide concrete guidance for implementing stewardship principles [2], [52].

Contemporary application of *khalīfah* and *amānah* to environmental challenges requires recognizing the

global and intergenerational dimensions of stewardship. Climate change, caused primarily by greenhouse gas emissions from industrialized nations, disproportionately affects vulnerable populations in developing countries who have contributed least to the problem. This inequity violates the justice (*'adl*) that must characterize *khalīfah*. Similarly, current resource depletion and ecosystem degradation betray the *amānah* owed to future generations, who will inherit a degraded planet [53], [54].

The concept of *khalīfah* also implies collective responsibility. While individuals bear personal accountability for their environmental impact, communities, nations, and humanity as a whole share collective stewardship obligations. This collective dimension aligns with contemporary frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement, which recognize that addressing global environmental challenges requires coordinated international action grounded in shared responsibility [55], [56].

Fitriansyah (2024) demonstrates how *khalīfah*, *mīzān*, and *amānah* provide an ethical framework for urban environmental preservation in the context of rapid urbanization, addressing challenges such as air pollution, green space reduction, and waste management. This research illustrates the practical applicability of these concepts to contemporary environmental problems, showing how Islamic principles can inform sustainable urban planning and policy [1].

The failure to fulfill *khalīfah* and *amānah* responsibilities has spiritual consequences. The Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes divine accountability, with humans questioned about their stewardship on the Day of Judgment. Surah al-Takāthur (102:8) warns: "Then you will surely be questioned that Day about pleasure." This accountability extends to how humans utilized the blessings of creation, including natural resources and environmental quality. Environmental degradation thus carries not only material consequences but spiritual liability [57].

#### **4.3 *Mīzān*: The Qur'anic Principle of Ecological Balance**

The concept of *mīzān* (balance, measure, justice) constitutes a central organizing principle of Qur'anic cosmology and environmental ethics. The term appears in multiple contexts cosmic order, moral justice, economic equity, and ecological balance revealing the Qur'an's holistic vision of a divinely established harmony that encompasses all dimensions of existence. Understanding *mīzān* as

ecological balance provides crucial insights for Islamic environmental ethics and contemporary sustainability challenges.

Surah al-Raḥmān (55:7-9) presents the most explicit articulation of *mīzān* as cosmic principle: "He raised the heaven and established the balance (*mīzān*), so that you would not transgress in the balance. Weigh with justice and do not fall short in the balance." This passage establishes several key principles: (1) God created the universe with inherent balance; (2) this balance is normative, establishing standards for human conduct; (3) humans are commanded not to transgress or disrupt this balance; and (4) maintaining balance is connected to justice (*qist*) [22], [58].

Classical exegetes interpreted *mīzān* in this passage primarily as justice in commercial transactions and social relations. However, the cosmic context "He raised the heaven and established the balance" suggests a broader meaning encompassing the physical and ecological order of creation. Contemporary environmental interpretation recognizes that ecological balance is inseparable from social and economic justice, as environmental degradation disproportionately affects marginalized communities and future generations [59], [60].

The Qur'an describes creation as characterized by precise measure and proportion. Surah al-Qamar (54:49) states: "Indeed, We created everything in due measure (*qadar*)." This principle of divine measurement extends to all aspects of creation—the orbits of celestial bodies, the water cycle, the balance of atmospheric gases, the interdependence of species in ecosystems. Modern ecology confirms this Qur'anic insight, documenting the intricate balances that maintain ecosystem stability and the cascading consequences when these balances are disrupted [61].

The water cycle provides a powerful example of *mīzān* in nature. Surah al-Mu'minūn (23:18) states: "We send down water from the sky in due measure and cause it to settle in the earth, and We are able to take it away." This verse recognizes both the precise regulation of water distribution and the fragility of this system. Contemporary climate science documents how human activities greenhouse gas emissions, deforestation, urbanization are disrupting the water cycle, causing droughts, floods, and water scarcity that affect billions of people [62], [63].

The Qur'an also emphasizes balance in resource use and consumption. Surah al-A'rāf (7:31) commands: "Eat and drink, but do not be excessive. Indeed, He does not like those who commit excess

(*musrifin*). While this verse addresses food consumption, the principle of avoiding excess (*israf*) applies broadly to all resource use. Overconsumption and waste violate *mizān*, disrupting the balance between human needs and environmental capacity. The modern ecological concept of "planetary boundaries" resonates with this Qur'anic principle, identifying thresholds beyond which human activities destabilize earth systems [64], [65].

Research on ecological balance in the Qur'an identifies key principles for climate change mitigation and adaptation: moderation in consumption (QS. Al-A'raf: 31), sustainable resource management (QS. Hūd: 61), readiness and resilience to environmental challenges (QS. Al-Anfāl: 60), and reforestation (QS. Al-An'ām: 99). These principles integrate moral, spiritual, and practical dimensions, emphasizing that maintaining ecological balance requires both external actions and internal transformation [22].

The concept of *mizān* also relates to biodiversity and species preservation. The Qur'an repeatedly emphasizes the diversity of creation as a sign (*āyah*) of divine wisdom and power. Surah al-Rūm (30:22) states: "Among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and colors. Indeed, in that are signs for those of knowledge." While this verse addresses human diversity, the principle extends to biological diversity. Each species plays a role in the cosmic balance, and the loss of species disrupts this divinely established order [66], [67].

Contemporary biodiversity crisis, with one million species facing extinction risk according to IPBES, represents a catastrophic disruption of *mizān*. The Qur'anic principle that all creatures form communities like humans (Surah al-An'ām 6:38: "There is no creature on earth or bird that flies with its wings except that they are communities like you") suggests that species have intrinsic value and rights beyond their utility to humans. This biocentric perspective challenges anthropocentric ethics that justify species extinction based on lack of human benefit [68], [69].

The relationship between *mizān* and *fasād* is dialectical: maintaining balance prevents corruption, while corruption disrupts balance. Environmental degradation climate change, deforestation, pollution, overfishing represents transgression against *mizān*, causing cascading disruptions that manifest as *fasād*. Conversely, restoring balance requires eliminating the practices and systems that cause *fasād* [70], [71].

Islamic legal concepts support the principle of *mizān*. The concept of *himā* (protected zones) in

Islamic jurisprudence establishes areas where resource extraction is prohibited or restricted to allow ecosystem regeneration. The Prophet Muhammad designated *himā* zones around Medina, protecting vegetation and wildlife. This practice anticipates modern conservation strategies such as protected areas, wildlife reserves, and marine sanctuaries [72], [73].

The principle of *ihyā' al-mawāt* (reviving dead land) encourages land restoration and sustainable agriculture. Islamic law grants ownership rights to those who revive barren land through cultivation, irrigation, or reforestation, incentivizing environmental improvement. This principle aligns with contemporary ecosystem restoration initiatives and land degradation neutrality targets under the UN Convention to Combat Desertification [74].

Application of *mizān* to contemporary environmental policy requires recognizing multiple dimensions of balance: ecological balance (maintaining ecosystem integrity and biodiversity), intergenerational balance (ensuring future generations inherit a viable planet), and global balance (equitable distribution of environmental burdens and benefits). The UN Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), and SDG 15 (Life on Land), operationalize these dimensions of balance in policy frameworks [75], [76].

#### 4.4 Contemporary Environmental Crises Through a Qur'anic Lens

Contemporary environmental crises climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, ocean degradation, pollution, and resource depletion can be systematically understood through the Qur'anic framework of *fasād fī al-ard*, *khalīfah*, *amānah*, and *mizān*. This section applies Islamic environmental ethics to specific crises, demonstrating the relevance and urgency of Qur'anic teachings for addressing planetary emergencies.

##### Climate Change as *Fasād fī al-Ard*

Climate change represents the most comprehensive manifestation of *fasād fī al-ard* in contemporary times. The IPCC Sixth Assessment Report (2021-2023) documents that human activities have unequivocally caused global warming of approximately 1.1°C above pre-industrial levels, with greenhouse gas concentrations at their highest levels in at least two million years. The consequences rising sea levels, extreme weather events, ecosystem disruption, agricultural instability, and forced migration affect billions of people, particularly the

most vulnerable populations who have contributed least to the problem [77], [78].

The Qur'anic verse "Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what people's hands have earned" (Surah al-Rūm 30:41) provides a precise theological framework for understanding anthropogenic climate change. The phrase "what people's hands have earned" directly attributes environmental degradation to human agency, specifically the burning of fossil fuels, deforestation, and industrial agriculture that have driven greenhouse gas emissions. The manifestation of corruption "on land and sea" corresponds to observed climate impacts: droughts, desertification, and heatwaves on land; ocean warming, acidification, and sea-level rise in marine environments [5], [31], [79].

Climate change also represents a profound violation of *mīzān* (balance). The earth's climate system depends on precise balances atmospheric composition, energy flows, water cycles, carbon cycles that have been disrupted by human activities. The transgression of planetary boundaries, particularly the climate boundary, exemplifies the Qur'anic warning against exceeding the divinely established balance [80].

From the perspective of *khalīfah* and *amānah*, climate change represents a catastrophic failure of human stewardship. Current generations are betraying the trust (*amānah*) owed to future generations, who will inherit a destabilized climate system with irreversible consequences. The inequity of climate impacts with wealthy nations responsible for most historical emissions while poor nations suffer disproportionate consequences violates the justice (*'adl*) that must characterize *khalīfah* [81], [82].

### Biodiversity Loss and Species Extinction

The IPBES Global Assessment (2019) documents that one million species face extinction risk, with extinction rates accelerating to levels unprecedented in human history. Habitat destruction, overexploitation, pollution, invasive species, and climate change drive this biodiversity crisis, which threatens ecosystem services essential for human survival: pollination, water purification, climate regulation, soil formation [83].

The Qur'anic principle that all creatures form communities (Surah al-An'ām 6:38) and glorify God (Surah al-Isrā' 17:44) establishes the intrinsic value of species beyond their utility to humans. Species extinction represents not only ecological loss but theological transgression, eliminating communities of creatures that worship God in their own ways. The

diversity of creation serves as a sign (*āyah*) of divine wisdom (Surah al-Rūm 30:22), and the destruction of this diversity constitutes *fasād* [66], [84].

Islamic legal concepts such as *ḥimā* (protected zones) provide frameworks for biodiversity conservation. The establishment of protected areas, wildlife reserves, and marine sanctuaries aligns with Islamic precedents for designating zones where exploitation is prohibited to allow ecosystem regeneration and species protection [72], [85].

### Deforestation and Land Degradation

Global deforestation, particularly in tropical regions, proceeds at alarming rates, with approximately 10 million hectares of forest lost annually according to FAO data. Deforestation drives climate change (forests store vast amounts of carbon), biodiversity loss (forests harbor most terrestrial species), and disrupts water cycles and soil stability. The primary drivers include agricultural expansion, logging, and infrastructure development [86].

The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of vegetation and trees as divine blessings. Surah al-An'ām (6:99) describes how God "brings forth vegetation of all kinds" and commands reflection on these signs. The Prophet Muhammad encouraged tree planting, stating in hadith: "If the Hour is about to be established and one of you has a palm shoot in his hand, let him plant it." This teaching emphasizes the intrinsic value of planting and nurturing life, even in seemingly futile circumstances [87].

Deforestation represents *fasād* by disrupting the balance (*mīzān*) of ecosystems, destroying habitats, and eliminating the carbon sequestration capacity that regulates climate. The Islamic principle of *iḥyā' al-mawāt* (reviving dead land) encourages reforestation and land restoration as acts of worship and stewardship [23], [88].

### Ocean Degradation and Marine Pollution

Ocean acidification, warming, overfishing, and plastic pollution threaten marine ecosystems that provide food security, climate regulation, and livelihoods for billions of people. The Qur'an repeatedly references the sea as a source of sustenance and a sign of divine power. Surah al-Nahl (16:14) states: "It is He who subjected the sea, that you may eat fresh meat from it and extract ornaments to wear." This verse establishes both the blessing of marine resources and the principle of sustainable use [89].

The phrase "corruption has appeared on land and sea" (Surah al-Rūm 30:41) explicitly includes marine

environments in the scope of *fasād*. Contemporary ocean degradation dead zones from agricultural runoff, plastic gyres, coral bleaching, overfished stocks manifests this corruption. The principle of *amānah* requires preserving marine ecosystems for future generations and respecting the intrinsic value of marine life [90], [91].

### Pollution and Waste

Air pollution causes approximately 7 million premature deaths annually according to WHO data, while plastic pollution contaminates every ecosystem on earth. The Qur'anic prohibition against waste (*isrāf*) and excess (*ṭughyān*) provides ethical foundations for addressing pollution. Surah al-A'raf (7:31) commands moderation in consumption, while the principle of *ḍarar* (harm) in Islamic jurisprudence prohibits actions that cause harm to others or the environment [92].

Pollution represents *fasād* by contaminating the air, water, and soil that sustain life, violating the purity (*tahārah*) that Islam emphasizes. The concept of *nazāfah* (cleanliness) extends beyond personal hygiene to environmental cleanliness, making pollution prevention a religious obligation [93], [94].

### Resource Depletion and Overconsumption

Humanity currently consumes resources at rates exceeding earth's regenerative capacity, with Global Footprint Network data indicating that humanity uses the equivalent of 1.7 Earths annually. This overconsumption, concentrated in wealthy nations, violates the Qur'anic principles of moderation and balance. The prohibition against *isrāf* (wastefulness) applies to all resource use, not only food consumption [95].

The concept of *kifāyah* (sufficiency) in Islamic economics emphasizes meeting needs rather than unlimited accumulation. This principle challenges consumerist paradigms that drive resource depletion and environmental degradation. Islamic teachings on *zakat* (obligatory charity) and *ṣadaqah* (voluntary charity) promote redistribution and social solidarity, addressing the inequities that characterize global resource consumption [96], [97].

## 4.5 Constructing an Islamic Environmental Ethics Framework

Building on the analysis of *fasād fi al-arḍ*, *khalīfah*, *amānah*, *mizān*, and their application to contemporary environmental crises, this section synthesizes these elements into a comprehensive Islamic environmental ethics framework. This framework integrates theological foundations, ethical principles,

legal mechanisms, and practical applications, providing guidance for individuals, communities, and policymakers addressing environmental challenges.

### Theological Foundations

The framework rests on five theological foundations derived from Qur'anic teachings:

1. *Tawhīd* (Divine Unity): Recognition that God is the Creator, Owner, and Sustainer of all existence establishes the sacred character of creation and human accountability to the divine. Environmental degradation violates *tawhīd* by treating creation as mere resource rather than divine trust [98], [99].
2. *Khalīfah* (Stewardship): Humans are appointed as God's vicegerents on earth, with delegated authority to manage creation responsibly. This authority is conditional and circumscribed by divine law, requiring justice, wisdom, and care for all creation [1], [43].
3. *Amānah* (Trust): The earth and its resources constitute a trust from God, for which humans are accountable. This trust extends to future generations and encompasses responsibility to preserve ecosystem integrity and biodiversity [47], [100].
4. *Mizān* (Balance): God created the universe with inherent balance, and humans are commanded to maintain this balance in all dimensions ecological, social, economic, and spiritual. Transgressing balance constitutes *fasād* and incurs divine accountability [22], [58].
5. *Ākhirah* (Hereafter): Belief in the Day of Judgment and divine accountability provides ultimate motivation for environmental responsibility. Humans will be questioned about their stewardship and use of divine blessings, including natural resources and environmental quality [101].

### Ethical Principles

The framework articulates seven core ethical principles:

1. Prohibition of *Fasād*: Environmental degradation constitutes *fasād fi al-arḍ* (corruption on earth), explicitly prohibited in the Qur'an. This prohibition is absolute and unconditional, establishing environmental protection as religious obligation [5], [31].
2. Moderation and Avoidance of Excess: The Qur'anic command to avoid *isrāf* (wastefulness) and *ṭughyān* (transgression) applies to all resource use and consumption. Moderation (*iqtisād*)

characterizes the middle path (*waṣaṭiyyah*) that Islam advocates [64], [102].

3. Justice and Equity: Environmental justice requires equitable distribution of environmental benefits and burdens, both within and between generations. Climate justice, recognizing the disproportionate impacts on vulnerable populations, exemplifies this principle [81], [103].
4. Precaution and Prevention: The Islamic legal principle of *sadd al-dharā'ī*' (blocking the means to harm) supports precautionary approaches to environmental risk. When activities threaten environmental harm, prevention is obligatory even in the absence of complete scientific certainty [104].
5. Restoration and Regeneration: The concept of *iḥyā' al-mawāt* (reviving dead land) encourages ecosystem restoration and environmental improvement. Reforestation, habitat restoration, and pollution remediation constitute acts of worship and stewardship [74], [88].
6. Compassion for All Creation: The Qur'anic teaching that all creatures glorify God and form communities establishes their intrinsic value and rights. Compassion (*rahmah*) extends to animals, plants, and ecosystems, not only humans [66], [105].
7. Intergenerational Responsibility: The concept of *amānah* encompasses obligations to future generations, who have rights to inherit a viable planet. Current resource use must not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs [106].

### Legal and Institutional Mechanisms

Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) provides legal mechanisms for implementing environmental ethics:

1. *Ḥimā* (Protected Zones): Designation of areas where resource extraction is prohibited or restricted, allowing ecosystem regeneration and species protection. This mechanism anticipates modern protected areas and conservation reserves [72], [107].
2. *Ḥarīm* (Buffer Zones): Establishment of buffer zones around water sources, settlements, and sensitive areas to prevent pollution and degradation. This concept supports watershed protection and pollution prevention [108].
3. *Waqf* (Endowment): Dedication of land or resources for perpetual public benefit, including environmental conservation. Environmental *waqf* can support protected areas, reforestation, and sustainable resource management [109].
4. *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* (Objectives of Islamic Law):

Recognition of *ḥifz al-bi'ah* (protection of the environment) as a fundamental objective of Islamic law, alongside traditional objectives of protecting religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property. This framework justifies environmental regulations and policies as serving essential human welfare [23], [25].

5. *Darar* Principle (No Harm): The prophetic principle "no harm and no reciprocating harm" (*lā ḍarar wa lā ḍirār*) prohibits actions that cause environmental harm to others or the commons. This principle supports pollution regulations and liability for environmental damage [110].

### Practical Applications

The framework provides guidance for practical environmental action at multiple levels:

**Individual Level:** Muslims are encouraged to adopt sustainable lifestyles characterized by moderation in consumption, waste reduction, energy conservation, sustainable transportation, plant-based diets, and support for environmental causes. These practices constitute acts of worship (*ibādah*) when performed with intention to fulfill stewardship obligations [111], [112].

**Community Level:** Mosques and Islamic organizations can serve as centers for environmental education, advocacy, and action. Green mosque initiatives, community gardens, tree planting campaigns, and environmental awareness programs mobilize collective action grounded in Islamic values [113], [114].

**Policy Level:** Governments in Muslim-majority countries can integrate Islamic environmental ethics into national policies, regulations, and development plans. This includes incorporating *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* frameworks into environmental law, establishing *ḥimā* zones for conservation, and aligning national policies with Islamic principles of justice, moderation, and stewardship [115], [116].

**International Level:** Islamic environmental ethics can contribute to global frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals, Paris Agreement, and Convention on Biological Diversity. Muslim-majority countries and Islamic organizations can advocate for climate justice, support for vulnerable nations, and ambitious emissions reductions grounded in Islamic principles [117], [118].

### Integration with Contemporary Frameworks

The Islamic environmental ethics framework aligns with and enriches contemporary sustainability frameworks:

- UN Sustainable Development Goals: Islamic

principles of justice, moderation, and stewardship support all 17 SDGs, particularly SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 14 (Life Below Water), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 16 (Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions) [2], [119].

- Paris Agreement: The Islamic prohibition against *fasād* and the principle of *amānah* to future generations provide theological foundations for ambitious climate action and support for climate-vulnerable nations [120].
- Planetary Boundaries Framework: The Qur'anic concept of *mīzān* (balance) resonates with the planetary boundaries framework, which identifies thresholds for earth system processes that must not be transgressed to maintain a safe operating space for humanity [121].

This comprehensive framework demonstrates that Islamic environmental ethics, grounded in Qur'anic teachings and classical jurisprudence, provides robust theological, ethical, and practical resources for addressing contemporary environmental crises. The framework positions environmental responsibility not as optional virtue but as fundamental religious obligation, grounded in core Islamic principles of divine accountability, stewardship, and justice.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This research has developed a comprehensive Qur'anic framework for Islamic environmental ethics by systematically reinterpreting *fasād fi al-arḍ* (corruption on earth) as environmental degradation and integrating this concept with foundational Islamic principles of *khalīfah* (stewardship), *amānah* (trust), and *mīzān* (balance). Through hermeneutical analysis and thematic Qur'anic interpretation (*tafsīr mawḍū'ī*), the study demonstrates that environmental destruction constitutes a fundamental violation of divine command, positioning ecological responsibility as a core religious obligation rather than peripheral concern.

The analysis reveals that the Qur'anic concept of *fasād fi al-arḍ* encompasses not only moral and social corruption but explicitly includes ecological destruction. Surah al-Rūm (30:41) "Corruption has appeared on land and sea because of what people's hands have earned" provides a precise theological framework for understanding anthropogenic environmental crises, from climate change and biodiversity loss to deforestation and ocean degradation. This interpretation bridges classical exegesis and contemporary environmental science, demonstrating the enduring relevance of Qur'anic teachings to urgent global challenges.

The concepts of *khalīfah* and *amānah* establish human environmental responsibility within a framework of divine accountability. As God's vicegerents on earth, humans possess delegated authority to manage creation, but this authority is conditional and circumscribed by obligations to maintain ecosystem integrity, preserve biodiversity, and ensure intergenerational justice. The trust (*amānah*) that humans accepted despite being "unjust and ignorant" encompasses responsibility to future generations and all creation, not merely present human interests.

The principle of *mīzān* (balance) provides a normative framework for environmental ethics, recognizing that God created the universe with inherent balance and commanding humans not to transgress this divinely established order. Contemporary environmental crises represent catastrophic disruptions of *mīzān*, transgressing planetary boundaries and destabilizing earth systems. The Qur'anic prohibition against excess (*isrāf*) and the command to maintain balance directly address overconsumption, resource depletion, and ecological degradation that characterize the Anthropocene.

Application of this framework to contemporary environmental crises climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, ocean degradation, pollution, and resource depletion demonstrates its practical relevance and urgency. Each crisis can be understood as a manifestation of *fasād fi al-arḍ*, a failure of *khalīfah* and *amānah*, and a transgression of *mīzān*. This theological framing elevates environmental responsibility from technical problem-solving to spiritual obligation, providing powerful motivation for individual behavior change, community mobilization, and policy transformation.

The comprehensive Islamic environmental ethics framework synthesized in this study integrates theological foundations (*tawhīd*, *khalīfah*, *amānah*, *mīzān*, *ākhirah*), ethical principles (prohibition of *fasād*, moderation, justice, precaution, restoration, compassion, intergenerational responsibility), legal mechanisms (*himā*, *waqf*, *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, *ḍarar* principle), and practical applications at individual, community, policy, and international levels. This framework demonstrates that Islamic teachings provide robust resources for addressing environmental challenges while aligning with contemporary sustainability frameworks such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement.

The research has several important implications. For Islamic scholarship, it contributes to ecotheology by establishing *fasād fi al-arḍ* as a central organizing concept for environmental ethics, demonstrating how classical concepts can be reinterpreted to

address contemporary challenges while maintaining hermeneutical integrity. For Muslim communities, it provides theological legitimacy and practical guidance for environmental action, grounding sustainability in authentic Islamic sources. For policymakers, it offers frameworks for integrating Islamic environmental ethics into national and international policies, particularly in Muslim-majority countries. For global environmental discourse, it enriches ethical pluralism by introducing Islamic perspectives that challenge anthropocentric paradigms and offer alternative visions of human-nature relationships.

However, significant work remains. Empirical research is needed to assess the effectiveness of Islamic environmental ethics in motivating behavioral change and policy implementation. Deeper engagement with *hadith* literature and Islamic legal traditions can further develop practical applications. Comparative studies examining Islamic environmental ethics in relation to other religious and secular frameworks can identify convergences and unique contributions. Finally, grassroots initiatives that translate these theological and ethical principles into concrete environmental action require support and documentation.

The contemporary environmental crisis demands urgent action grounded in ethical frameworks that can motivate sustained commitment and collective transformation. Islamic environmental ethics, rooted in the Qur'anic prohibition against *fasād fī al-arḍ* and the principles of *khalīfah*, *amānah*, and *mīzān*, provides such a framework for the global Muslim community and contributes valuable perspectives to humanity's shared struggle for planetary sustainability. As the Qur'an warns and promises: "Do not spread corruption on earth after it has been set in order, and call upon Him with fear and hope. Indeed, Allah's mercy is near to those who do good" (Surah al-A'rāf 7:56).

## 6. RESEARCH NOVELTY

This research makes several original contributions to Islamic environmental ethics and ecotheology that distinguish it from existing scholarship:

First, this study is the first to systematically position *fasād fī al-arḍ* (corruption on earth) as the central organizing concept for Islamic environmental ethics, rather than treating it as one among several relevant concepts. While previous scholarship has explored *khalīfah*, *amānah*, and *mīzān* as foundations for environmental responsibility, the explicit reinterpretation of *fasād* as environmental degradation and its establishment as the primary theological framework for understanding ecological

crises represents a novel contribution. This reframing elevates environmental destruction from a peripheral concern to a fundamental violation of divine command, positioning it alongside major sins explicitly condemned in the Qur'an.

Second, the research develops a comprehensive hermeneutical methodology that bridges classical Qur'anic exegesis and contemporary environmental science, demonstrating how *tafsīr mawḍū'ī* (thematic interpretation) can be systematically applied to environmental themes while maintaining theological authenticity. This methodological contribution provides a model for future research that seeks to address contemporary challenges through Qur'anic interpretation without imposing anachronistic readings or ignoring classical exegetical traditions.

Third, the study articulates the dialectical relationship between *fasād* and *mīzān*, demonstrating how environmental degradation represents both corruption (*fasād*) and transgression of balance (*mīzān*), with each concept illuminating different dimensions of environmental ethics. This integrated analysis reveals the coherence of Qur'anic environmental teachings and their applicability to contemporary crises such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

Fourth, the research provides the most comprehensive synthesis to date of Islamic environmental ethics, integrating theological foundations, ethical principles, legal mechanisms, and practical applications into a unified framework. This framework explicitly connects Islamic teachings to contemporary sustainability frameworks (UN SDGs, Paris Agreement, planetary boundaries), demonstrating compatibility and mutual enrichment between faith-based and secular approaches to environmental challenges.

Fifth, the study makes an original contribution to climate justice discourse by grounding environmental equity and intergenerational responsibility in Islamic theological concepts of *amānah* and *khalīfah*. This provides Muslim communities and policymakers with authentic Islamic foundations for advocating climate justice and supporting vulnerable nations, rather than relying solely on secular human rights frameworks.

Sixth, the research advances the application of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (objectives of Islamic law) to environmental protection by demonstrating how *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* (protection of the environment) can be established as a fundamental objective alongside traditional categories. This contribution has significant implications for Islamic jurisprudence and environmental law in Muslim-majority countries.

These original contributions position this research at the forefront of Islamic ecotheology, providing theoretical foundations and practical guidance that can inform scholarship, policy, and grassroots environmental action in Muslim communities worldwide. The framework developed here opens new avenues for research on Islamic environmental ethics and demonstrates the enduring relevance of Qur'anic teachings to humanity's most pressing challenges.

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