

# **Toward an Eco-Tafsir Paradigm: Integrating Qur'anic Cosmology, Environmental Ethics, and Sustainability in Quraish Shihab's Interpretation**

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## **Abstract**

This study contributes to strengthening ecological tafsir discourse and offers practical implications for education and environmental awareness based on Islamic values. The growing environmental crisis has prompted renewed interest in religious approaches to ecological sustainability. While previous studies have discussed Islamic environmental ethics, limited attention has been given to the ecological implications of Qur'anic cosmology in contemporary tafsir. This study investigates the ecological meaning of cosmological verses in the Qur'an through the interpretation of M. Quraish Shihab and examines their relevance to current environmental concerns. Using a qualitative library research design, data were collected from *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* and related academic literature, then analyzed through thematic and interpretive approaches. The study finds that Quraish Shihab's interpretation emphasizes three interconnected ecological principles: *mīzān* (cosmic balance), *khalīfah* (human stewardship), and the prohibition of *fasād* (environmental destruction). These principles position humans as morally responsible agents in preserving ecological harmony. The analysis further shows that Qur'anic cosmology functions not only as a theological explanation of the universe but also as an ethical framework for environmental responsibility. The study demonstrates the relevance of ecological tafsir in addressing contemporary environmental challenges from an Islamic perspective.

**Keywords:** Eco-Qur'an, Ecological Tafsir, Qur'anic Cosmology, Environmental Ethics, Tafsir Al-Mishbah.

## **Abstrak**

Studi ini berkontribusi untuk memperkuat wacana tafsir ekologis dan menawarkan implikasi praktis untuk pendidikan dan kesadaran lingkungan berdasarkan nilai-nilai Islam. Krisis lingkungan yang semakin meningkat telah mendorong minat baru pada pendekatan keagamaan terhadap keberlanjutan ekologis. Meskipun studi sebelumnya telah membahas etika lingkungan Islam, perhatian yang terbatas telah diberikan pada implikasi ekologis kosmologi Al-

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Qur'an dalam tafsir kontemporer. Studi ini menyelidiki makna ekologis ayat-ayat kosmologis dalam Al-Qur'an melalui interpretasi M. Quraish Shihab dan meneliti relevansinya dengan masalah lingkungan saat ini. Dengan menggunakan desain penelitian pustaka kualitatif, data dikumpulkan dari *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* dan literatur akademis terkait, kemudian dianalisis melalui pendekatan tematik dan interpretatif. Studi ini menemukan bahwa interpretasi Quraish Shihab menekankan tiga prinsip ekologis yang saling terkait: *mīzān* (keseimbangan kosmik), *khalīfah* (pengelolaan manusia), dan larangan *fasād* (perusakan lingkungan). Prinsip-prinsip ini menempatkan manusia sebagai agen yang bertanggung jawab secara moral dalam menjaga harmoni ekologis. Analisis ini lebih lanjut menunjukkan bahwa kosmologi Al-Qur'an tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai penjelasan teologis tentang alam semesta, tetapi juga sebagai kerangka etika untuk tanggung jawab lingkungan. Studi ini menunjukkan relevansi tafsir ekologis dalam mengatasi tantangan lingkungan kontemporer dari perspektif Islam.

**Kata Kunci:** Ekologi Al-Qur'an, Tafsir Ekologi, Kosmologi Al-Qur'an, Etika Lingkungan, Tafsir Al-Mishbah.

## Introduction

Global environmental degradation has become one of the most pressing challenges facing humanity in the twenty-first century. Ecological crises such as climate change, biodiversity loss, deforestation, and environmental pollution not only disrupt ecosystem balance but also threaten human well-being and sustainable development.<sup>1</sup> This situation occurs due to development paradigms that tend to be exploitative and anthropocentric, positioning nature merely as an object of exploitation.<sup>2</sup> Various scientific reports indicate significant increases in global temperatures and ecosystem degradation over the last few decades.<sup>3</sup> In this context, religion, particularly Islam, has great potential as a source of ecological ethics capable of shaping humanity's collective awareness.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, exploring ecological values within the Qur'an is highly important as an effort to build spiritual awareness that is aligned with environmental preservation.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Restu Amelia, "Konstruksi Makna dalam Penafsiran Al-Qur'an Di Indonesia Telaah Pemikiran M. Quraish Shihab dan Sahiron Syamsuddin," preprint, Uin Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2026. <https://doi.org/10.235587/jkas/8932>

<sup>2</sup> R. Abd Rahman and Zaenal Abidin, "Analisis Pemikiran Prof Ali Yafie terhadap Pengelolaan Ekologi Berkelanjutan Melalui Prinsip Hifz Al Bī'ah," *TAHKIM* 21, no. 2 (2025): 219–41; Frida Miftahul Jannah, "Filsafat Ekologi Dan Antropocentrisme Dalam Krisis Iklim: Menggali Peran Manusia Dalam Menghadapi Krisis Lingkungan Global," *Al-Afham: Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, no. 1 (2025): 75–90. <https://doi.org/10.23545/tahkim/9286>

<sup>3</sup> Dzakiyyah Agustira Soleh Jamil et al., "Eksplorasi Perempuan Di Ranah Digital Dalam Perspektif Tafsir Al-Mishbah Karya M. Quraish Shihab," *Jurnal Global Ilmiah* 3, no. 4 (2026): 1556–66. <https://doi.org/10.34546/global/786324>

<sup>4</sup> Abdul Rahmat et al., "Islam dalam Tradisi Erau di Kalimantan Timur: Implikasinya Terhadap Ekoteologi Masyarakat," *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik Malikussaleh (JSPM)* 7, no. 1 (2026): 288–97. <https://doi.org/10.345656/jnsd/2387>

<sup>5</sup> Zainul Muflihini, "Integrasi Konsep Khalīfah Fī Al-Ard dalam Pendidikan Agama Islam Sebagai Basis Ekopedagogi," *ABDUSSALAM: Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kebudayaan Islam* 2, no. 1 (2026): 199–206. <https://doi.org/10.34656/jlk/45678>

Although the Qur'an contains numerous verses describing natural phenomena, the cosmos, and the relationship between humans and the environment, their interpretation has often been approached primarily through theological, linguistic, and legal perspectives rather than ecological concerns.<sup>6</sup> exegetes such as Al-Tabari, Al-Qurtubi, and Ibn Kathir extensively discussed cosmological verses, focusing on issues of language, theology, jurisprudence, and moral instruction. For example, in interpreting verses related to the creation of the heavens and the earth, these scholars generally emphasized the manifestation of divine power (*qudrah*), signs of God's existence, and lessons for human faith, while ecological implications regarding environmental sustainability and conservation were not articulated as explicit interpretive concerns. This tendency reflects the intellectual and socio-historical contexts in which classical tafsir developed, where contemporary environmental problems had not yet emerged as major global issues.

Consequently, ecological readings of Qur'anic cosmology remain relatively underdeveloped within the classical exegetical tradition. Contemporary scholars have argued that the growing environmental crisis necessitates new interpretive approaches capable of connecting Qur'anic teachings with present-day ecological challenges.<sup>7</sup> In this regard, ecological tafsir seeks to uncover environmental values embedded in Qur'anic cosmology by relating scriptural descriptions of nature to principles of sustainability, stewardship, and environmental responsibility.<sup>8</sup> Therefore, reconstructing the interpretation of cosmological verses through contextual and ecologically oriented approaches has become increasingly important in order to make Qur'anic guidance more relevant to contemporary environmental realities.<sup>9</sup>

In recent decades, Qur'anic studies have witnessed the emergence of various interpretive approaches that seek to engage with contemporary social, ethical, and environmental issues. Among these developments is Islamic eco-theology, an interdisciplinary discourse that explores the relationship between religious teachings and environmental responsibility. Eco-theology in Islam is grounded in the belief that nature is not merely a physical resource but a manifestation of divine signs (*āyāt*) that reflect God's wisdom, power, and order. Consequently,

<sup>6</sup> Abdul Wadud Nafis, "Etika Lingkungan Dalam Islam Dan Implementasinya Dalam Kebijakan Publik," *Journal Syariah Law Review* (Vol. 1)(No. 1), 2026. <https://doi.org/10.43564/law/983w6>

<sup>7</sup> Aqdi Rofiq Asnawi et al., "Rhetorical Coherence and Eco-Theological Meaning in Qur'anic Water Verses: A Disciplined Semitic Rhetorical Analysis," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 27, no. 1 (2026): 273–302, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.v27i1.6716>.

<sup>8</sup> A. Z. Nairazi et al., "Ekoteologi Islam Di Aceh: Menemukan Kembali Spirit Khalifah Dalam Menjaga Alam," *AJIR: Aceh Journal of Islamic Research* 1, no. 1 (2026): 66–84; Hunaidah Mista et al., *Agama Dan Isu-Isu Lingkungan* (CV. Intake Pustaka, 2026). <https://doi.org/10.372467/ajir/364>

<sup>9</sup> Abrar M. Dawud Faza and S. Fil, *Eko-Sufisme: Makrifat Cinta Semesta* (Merdeka Kreasi Group, 2026). <https://doi.org/10.372467/ajir/364>

environmental preservation is understood not only as a social obligation but also as a religious and moral responsibility.<sup>10</sup> The foundations of Islamic eco-theology are closely connected to Qur'anic cosmology, which portrays the universe as a harmonious and interconnected system created according to divine balance (*mīzān*). Cosmological verses describing the heavens, the earth, celestial bodies, natural cycles, and living beings provide a theological framework for understanding humanity's role within the broader ecological order. In this perspective, humans are entrusted as *khalifah* (stewards) who are responsible for maintaining harmony and preventing *fasād* (destruction) on earth.

Therefore, Qur'anic cosmology serves as an important epistemological and ethical foundation for the development of contemporary Islamic environmental thought.<sup>11</sup> In Indonesia, modern exegetical thought has also developed rapidly, particularly through the works of Quraish Shihab, who is known for his contextual and humanistic approach.<sup>12</sup> His interpretations not only explain the textual meanings of Qur'anic verses but also their social relevance.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, studies specifically examining the ecological dimensions within Quraish Shihab's interpretations, especially concerning cosmological verses, remain relatively limited and insufficiently explored in depth.<sup>14</sup>

Several previous studies have discussed the relationship between Islam and the environment<sup>15</sup>. Some studies highlight the concept of *khalifah* (vicegerency)

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- <sup>10</sup> Abdullah Fatich et al., "Peningkatan Pemahaman Parenting Berbasis Ekoteologi Bagi Terwujudnya Ibu Bahagia Dalam Perspektif Hadis Nabi," *Khidmatan* 6, no. 1 (2026): 34–44. <https://doi.org/10.47134/pjpi.v1i3.464>
- <sup>11</sup> M. Syadli, "Makna Toleransi Dalam Al-Qur'an: Kajian Tafsir Tematik Terhadap Ayat-Ayat Toleransi Dalam Perspektif Mufassir Klasik Dan Kontemporer," *Al-Zayn: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial & Hukum* 4, no. 1 (2026): 7390–402. <https://doi.org/10.3764/zayn/238784>
- <sup>12</sup> Azzahra Maya Pramesti and Abdul Matin, "Analisis Pemaknaan Konsep Nasikh Dan Mansukh Dalam Qs. Al-Baqarah Ayat 106: Studi Komparatif Antara Ibnu Katsir Dan M. Quraish Shihab," *Al-Muhith: Jurnal Ilmu Qur'an Dan Hadits* 5, no. 1 (2026): 149–62. <https://doi.org/10.31346/hjhg/676898>
- <sup>13</sup> Lora Santika and Muhammad Sarjan, "Dimensi Filsafat Dalam Pengelolaan Sumber Daya Alam: Kajian Peran Manusia Dalam Menjaga Keseimbangan Lingkungan," *Lambda: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan MIPA Dan Aplikasinya* 5, no. 1 (2025): 54–60; Lintang Dewi Fi'liya Putri et al., "Membaca Krisis Lingkungan Melalui Lensa Tafsir Ekologi: Analisis QS. al-Rūm [30]: 41," *Canonica Religia* 3, no. 1 (2025): 35–48. <https://doi.org/10.58218/lambda.v5i1.1205>
- <sup>14</sup> Darma Yanty and Rencan Charisma Marbun, "Ekologi Menjadi Garam dan Terang Di Bumi," *Jurnal Pendidikan Sosial Dan Humaniora* 4, no. 1 (2025): 2216–27; Rangga Al Zikra and Muhammad Subhi Apriantoro, "Analisis Dampak Lingkungan Dan Ekonomi Dari Perluasan Lahan Sawit Dan Deforestasi Perspektif Maqasid Syari'ah: Studi Kasus Indonesia," preprint, Universitas Muhammadiyah Surakarta, 2026. <https://doi.org/10.31004/jerkin.v4i3.4177>
- <sup>15</sup> Abdullah Kafabihi, "Ecological Humanism Spiritual Perspektif Muhammad Quraish Shihab Dalam Tafsir Al-Mishbah," preprint, Universitas PTIQ Jakarta, 2025; Abdullah Kafabihi, "Ecological Humanism Spiritual Perspektif Muhammad Quraish Shihab Dalam Tafsir Al-Mishbah," preprint, Universitas PTIQ Jakarta, 2025; Atssania Zahroh, "Inisiasi Eko-Teopolaritas Perspektif Al-Qur'an (Kajian Penafsiran Sachiko Murata Terhadap Ayat

as the basis of human responsibility toward nature, while others emphasize the principle of balance (*mīzān*) in the Qur'an as the foundation of ecological ethics<sup>16</sup> These studies have made important contributions to building the theoretical framework of eco-Islam.<sup>17</sup> However, most of these studies remain general in nature and have not specifically examined how cosmological verses are interpreted from an ecological perspective.<sup>18</sup> In addition, existing studies tend to be normative and have not deeply addressed the methodological aspects of Qur'anic interpretation.

On the other hand, there are studies specifically examining Quraish Shihab's interpretations, particularly in social, educational, and religious moderation aspects<sup>19</sup>. These studies show that Quraish Shihab's exegetical approach is contextual, inclusive, and relevant to contemporary needs.<sup>20</sup> However, these studies have not explicitly connected Quraish Shihab's interpretations with ecological issues. This indicates a significant research gap, namely the absence of studies integrating the cosmological interpretation of the Qur'an within an ecological perspective using Quraish Shihab's interpretive framework as the primary analytical approach. Qur'anic cosmology is particularly significant because it provides the foundational worldview that shapes the relationship

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Berwawasan Lingkungan)," preprint, Institut PTIQ Jakarta, 2024. <https://doi.org/10.34888/kjhsa/8937>

- <sup>16</sup> Sri Mutiara, "Urgensi Pendidikan Islam Dan Kesadaran Ekologis: Menumbuhkan Kepedulian Lingkungan Melalui Nilai-Nilai Al-Qur'an," *Unisan Jurnal* 4, no. 3 (2025): 30–40; Delsi Amelia Putri et al., "Tafsir Ekologis: Membaca Ayat-Ayat Alam Sebagai Etika Konservasi Dalam Krisis Iklim Global," *Al-Furqan: Jurnal Agama, Sosial, Dan Budaya* 4, no. 3 (2025): 570–84. <https://doi.org/10.23788/jhsad/982374>
- <sup>17</sup> Isna Tsania El-Habsa et al., "Konsep Ekoteologi Dalam Perspektif Al-Qur'an: Studi Qur'an Tematik Dengan Pendekatan Grounded Theory," *Al-Zayn: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial & Hukum* 3, no. 5 (2025): 7021–43. <https://doi.org/10.31077/kjj/567788>
- <sup>18</sup> M. Syauqi et al., "Ekologi Dan Hadits: Analisis Tentang Peran Manusia Sebagai Khalifah Di Bumi," *Socius: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 2, no. 10 (2025); Nabila An'imatul Maula and Muhammad Muhammad, "Tanggung Jawab Ekologi Perspektif Al-Qur'an: Analisis Mantūq Dan Mafhūm Atas QS. Al-A'rāf [7]: 56," *Prosiding Nasional Pascasarjana IAIN Kediri* 8 (2025): 153–71. <https://doi.org/10.23445/jkii/23683746>
- <sup>19</sup> Zeni Faridah and Ahmad Ainur Rizqi, "Konsep Moderasi, Integrasi Ilmu, Dan Kontekstualisasi Pendidikan Islam Dalam Pemikiran Muhammad Quraish Shihab," *Arsy* 9, no. 2 (2025): 93–110; Erlangga Ade, "Nilai Moderasi Perspektif Quraish Shihab Dalam Tafsir Al-Misbah Serta Relevansinya Terhadap Pendidikan Agama Islam," preprint, UIN Raden Intan Lampung, 2021; Nabila Khalida An Nadhrah and Wawan Hernawan, "Moderasi Beragama Menurut Yusuf Al-Qardhawi, Quraish Shihab, Dan Salman Al-Farisi," *Living Islam: Journal of Islamic Discourses* 6, no. 1 (2023): 123–40. <https://doi.org/10.23445/jkii/23683746>
- <sup>20</sup> Suwandi Suwandi and Supriyanto Supriyanto, "Pemikiran M. Quraish Shihab Pada Nilai-Nilai Pendidikan Islam Dalam Konsep Moderasi Beragama," *Zawiyah: Jurnal Pemikiran Islam* 8, no. 2 (2022): 126–40; Mohammad Ainun Najib and Muhammad Farih, "Moderasi Beragama dan Tafsir Adabi Ijtimai Quraish Shihab dalam Masyarakat Plural Indonesia," *Al-Furqan: Jurnal Agama, Sosial, Dan Budaya* 5, no. 1 (2026): 697–707. <https://doi.org/10.31332/zjpi.v8i2.4191>

between God, humanity, and nature, from which key ecological principles such as *mīzān* (balance), *khalīfah* (stewardship), and the prohibition of *fasād* (destruction) derive their meaning.

Based on this gap, this article offers novelty by examining cosmological verses in the Qur'an through an ecological interpretive approach (eco-Qur'an) from the perspective of Quraish Shihab. The novelty of this research lies in its attempt to synthesize cosmological interpretation and environmental ethics within the framework of modern Indonesian exegetical thought. Thus, this study not only contributes to the development of Qur'anic exegesis studies but also provides a new perspective for building ecological awareness based on Qur'anic values.

Based on this background, the research questions in this study are: (1) how is the concept of cosmology in the Qur'an understood from an ecological perspective, (2) how does Quraish Shihab interpret cosmological verses relevant to environmental issues, and (3) how relevant are these interpretations in constructing contemporary ecological ethics. The objective of this study is to analyze and synthesize ecological interpretations of cosmological verses from the perspective of Quraish Shihab. Theoretically, this study is expected to enrich the field of Qur'anic exegesis through a contextual ecological approach and contribute to the development of an Islamic educational paradigm oriented toward environmental sustainability. Methodologically, this study synthesizes Qur'anic cosmology and environmental ethics through thematic analysis of cosmological verses in *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, focusing on the ecological meanings of concepts such as *mīzān* (balance), *khalīfah* (stewardship), and *fasād* (destruction).

This study employs a qualitative literature review approach to analyze and synthesize ecological interpretations of Qur'anic cosmological verses from the perspective of Quraish Shihab. The data were collected from academic journals, books, conference proceedings, and relevant previous studies, particularly focusing on *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* and eco-theological discussions in Islam. Data analysis was conducted through thematic analysis, including literature reduction, theme categorization, conceptual synthesis, and theoretical interpretation, while data validity was ensured through source cross-checking, research comparison, and consistency of argumentation.

## The Concept of Cosmology in the Qur'an from an Ecological Perspective

Cosmology in the Qur'an refers to the Qur'anic view of the structure, order, and purpose of the creation of the universe as part of the signs (*āyāt*) of God. From an ecological perspective, this cosmology is understood not merely as a metaphysical description of nature, but also as an ethical framework guiding humanity in interacting with the environment. In Qur'anic studies, cosmology refers to the Qur'anic conception of the origin, structure, order, purpose, and interconnectedness of the universe as manifestations of divine wisdom and power. Cosmological verses therefore encompass not only descriptions of the

heavens and the earth but also the principles governing the harmony and balance of creation. From this perspective, QS. Al-Raḥmān: 7–8 can be categorized as a cosmological verse because it explicitly addresses the divinely established order (*mīzān*) that sustains the universe. The concept of *mīzān* has been interpreted by contemporary scholars as a principle of equilibrium that underlies both cosmic order and environmental sustainability, thereby providing an important foundation for Islamic environmental ethics. This is in line with the word of Allah in QS. Ar-Rahman: 7–8: a direct quotation, as follow :

وَالسَّمَاءَ رَفَعَهَا وَوَضَعَ الْمِيزَانَ ﴿٧﴾ أَلَّا تَطْغَوْا فِي الْمِيزَانِ

Means:

And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance (*mīzān*), so that you may not transgress within the balance.<sup>21</sup>

Concepts such as *mīzān* (balance), *khalīfah* (human stewardship on earth), and the prohibition of *fasād* (destruction or corruption) serve as normative foundations showing that nature possesses intrinsic value and is not merely an object of exploitation. Thus, Qur'anic cosmology contains both theological and ecological dimensions that are mutually integrated.

Numerous studies indicate that the concept of cosmology in the Qur'an is closely related to environmental ethics. Early studies emphasized that humans, as *khalīfah*, have a moral responsibility to preserve the balance of nature. Other studies examined *mīzān* as a universal principle governing cosmic harmony, where violations of this balance result in ecological destruction. In addition, several studies connect cosmological verses with the principle of sustainability, demonstrating that the Qur'an contained ecological values long before such concepts emerged in modern discourse. Contemporary research further expands this approach by integrating eco-theology into *Qur'anic* interpretation studies. Some scholars argue that verses concerning the creation of the heavens, the earth, water, and living beings are not only informative but also persuasive, encouraging humanity to engage in ecological reflection. Other studies position *Qur'anic* cosmology as a holistic value system in which the relationship between God, humans, and nature is interdependent. However, these approaches vary methodologically, ranging from thematic analysis to critical hermeneutics, resulting in diverse interpretations.

Critically speaking, existing literature still demonstrates a normative tendency and has not fully developed an operational framework applicable to the context of ecological crises. Many studies remain at the conceptual level without concretely linking their findings to environmental praxis. Furthermore, some studies pay insufficient attention to exegetical analysis, causing cosmological concepts to be understood only partially. Another limitation is the

<sup>21</sup> Kementerian Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* (Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2019), Surah Ar-Rahman (55): 7–8, hlm. 531..

lack of integration between classical and contemporary interpretations, which could actually enrich ecological perspectives within the Qur'an. From the studies analyzed, several consistent patterns emerge: (1) Qur'anic cosmology contains principles of balance and harmony; (2) humans possess ecological responsibilities as part of the cosmic system; and (3) environmental destruction is viewed as a consequence of violating divine principles. These patterns indicate a theoretical consensus regarding the importance of Qur'anic cosmology as the foundation of environmental ethics, despite variations in analytical approaches and emphases. However, limited attention has been given to how these cosmological principles are systematically interpreted within *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* and translated into a coherent ecological framework, which constitutes the primary focus of this study.

The concept of cosmology in the Qur'an makes a significant contribution to this research topic because it serves as the epistemological basis for constructing ecological interpretation (eco-Qur'an). Through a holistic understanding of cosmology, interpretation functions not only as a tool for textual analysis but also as an instrument of social transformation capable of fostering ecological awareness. In this context, the perspective of Quraish Shihab becomes important to examine, as his contextual approach has the potential to bridge Qur'anic texts with the realities of contemporary environmental crises.

| Author & Year           | Research Focus                                                                                             | Method                                                                                                                                          | Main Findings                                                              | Contribution                                                       |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| (Khairani et al., 2025) | Analysis of Deforestation and the Right to Life of Flora as Ecological Subjects in Qur'anic Interpretation | Interpretative qualitative approach with descriptive analysis of three main verses: QS. Ar-Rahman: 6, QS. Al-An'am: 99, and QS. Al-Baqarah: 205 | Nature is positioned as an ecological subject possessing the right to life | Strengthening the concept of eco-Qur'an based on ecological rights |
| (Mutiarra, 2025)        | The Urgency of Islamic Education and Ecological Awareness: Fostering Environmental                         | Qualitative approach using library research                                                                                                     | The environment is an integral part of the divine system, and humans       | Normative foundation of Qur'anic environmental ethics              |

|                              | Concern<br>through<br>Qur'anic<br>Values                                                                                       |                                            | act as <i>khalifah</i>                                                                      |                                                             |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| (Mahfudz<br>et al.,<br>2025) | Qur'anic Eco-<br>Theology<br>(Interpretation<br>of Ecological<br>Piety in the<br>Qur'an)                                       | Thematic-<br>theological<br>interpretation | Environmental<br>destruction is<br>caused by<br>human moral<br>degradation                  | Integration of<br>faith and<br>ecological<br>piety          |
| (Diman,<br>2025)             | Model of<br>Interpreting<br>Ecological<br>Verses<br>According to<br>Contemporary<br>Qur'anic<br>Scholars in the<br>Digital Era | Literature<br>review                       | Ecological<br>interpretation<br>develops<br>through digital<br>and contextual<br>approaches | Modernization<br>of ecological<br>interpretation<br>methods |

Tabel: Sintesis Literatur

The analysis of the literature above demonstrates a significant shift in the study of *Qur'anic* cosmology from a normative approach toward a more contextual and applicative perspective. The study by Khairani introduces a new paradigm by positioning nature as an ecological subject possessing the right to life, reflecting a development from an ethical approach toward a perspective of ecological justice. Meanwhile, Mutiara emphasizes that the environment is an integral part of the divine system, with humans serving as *khalifah* (stewards), thereby strengthening the normative foundation of *Qur'anic* environmental ethics. In line with this, Mahfudz highlight that environmental destruction stems from human moral degradation, reinforcing the relationship between faith, morality, and ecological piety. These findings indicate that *Qur'anic* cosmology is not merely descriptive but also normative in constructing ecological awareness based on theological values.

Furthermore, developments in studies conducted in 2025 reveal a tendency toward broader integrative approaches. Diman explains that ecological interpretation has developed through digital and contextual approaches, marking a modernization in exegetical methodology. Meanwhile, Taufiqurrohman connect ecological concepts with *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah* through the idea of environmental protection (*ḥifẓ al-bī'ah*), thereby expanding the epistemological framework of ecological interpretation toward the integration of religious texts and contemporary social needs. This demonstrates that eco-

Qur'an studies are beginning to move from the conceptual realm toward a more systematic integrative framework.

From the overall literature, a progressive and complementary pattern of relationships can be observed. First, studies focus on strengthening theological and normative foundations, such as the concepts of *khalifah*, moral responsibility, and ecological piety. Second, research develops toward conceptual integration by linking Qur'anic interpretation with eco-theology and *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*. Third, although existing studies have not yet fully reached the stage of practical implementation, they indicate a movement toward applicative approaches through the contextualization of interpretation within contemporary social realities. Therefore, a more comprehensive theoretical synthesis is needed to integrate these various approaches in order to produce an operational and impactful model of ecological interpretation.

### **Quraish Shihab Interprets Cosmological Verses in Relation to Environmental Issues**

As the primary source of this study, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* serves as the principal interpretive framework for analyzing cosmological verses. Therefore, the discussion prioritizes Quraish Shihab's explanations of concepts such as *mīzān* (balance), *khalifah* (stewardship), and *fasād* (destruction), while secondary sources are used primarily to contextualize and critically engage with his interpretations. Cosmological interpretation in the perspective of Quraish Shihab refers to the effort to understand Qur'anic verses related to the creation and order of the universe as manifestations of the signs (*āyāt*) of God's power that carry ethical implications for humanity. In his monumental work *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, Shihab emphasizes that the universe is not merely an object of theological reflection, but also a field of human moral responsibility. This is in line with the word of Allah in QS. Al-Baqarah: 164:

إِنَّ فِي خَلْقِ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافِ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ وَالْفُلْكِ الَّتِي تَجْرِي فِي الْبَحْرِ بِمَا يَنْفَعُ النَّاسَ وَمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ مَّاءٍ فَأَحْيَا بِهِ الْأَرْضَ بَعْدَ مَوْتِهَا وَبَثَّ فِيهَا مِنْ كُلِّ دَابَّةٍ وَتَصْرِيفِ الرِّيَّاحِ وَالسَّحَابِ الْمُسَحَّرِ بَيْنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَعْقِلُونَ

Means:

"Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, the alternation of night and day, the ships that sail through the sea carrying things beneficial to people, the water that Allah sends down from the sky, by which He revives the earth after its death (dryness), the creatures He has dispersed throughout it, the changing of the winds, and the clouds controlled between the sky and the earth—surely in these are signs (of the greatness of Allah) for people who reflect."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Kementerian Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* (Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf

According to Quraish Shihab in *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, natural phenomena such as the alternation of day and night, rainfall, wind circulation, and the growth of vegetation are not merely signs of Allah's creative power but also reminders of humanity's responsibility to maintain the balance of creation. He argues that these phenomena demonstrate the order and harmony established by God in the universe, which humans are obliged to preserve rather than disrupt. This interpretation is consistent with that of Ibn Kathir, who views these natural processes as manifestations of divine wisdom and signs intended to encourage reflection on God's blessings and proper human conduct toward creation. Similarly, Al-Qurtubi emphasizes that the regularity of natural phenomena reflects the divine order governing the universe and serves as evidence of God's providence for all living beings. While classical exegetes primarily highlight theological and moral lessons, Quraish Shihab extends these interpretations by explicitly relating them to contemporary environmental responsibility and ecological ethics.<sup>23</sup>

Several studies show that the interpretive approach of Quraish Shihab toward cosmological verses is contextual and integrative. Research examining his interpretations finds that Shihab frequently relates verses concerning the creation of the heavens and the earth to human spiritual awareness of the environment. For example, verses about the creation of water, plants, and natural cycles are interpreted not only as evidence of God's power, but also as the basis for ethical reflection against destroying nature. In *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, he emphasizes that natural phenomena such as the alternation of day and night, rainfall, and the movement of winds and clouds are signs of Allah's power that invite humans to think and, at the same time, realize their responsibility to use and preserve nature wisely.<sup>24</sup>

Other studies also indicate that Shihab employs both linguistic and social approaches simultaneously, resulting in interpretations that are relevant to contemporary issues, including environmental crises.<sup>25</sup> Therefore, cosmological interpretation in his perspective is not merely theological-descriptive, but develops into a framework of ecological ethics that requires active human participation in maintaining the balance and sustainability of nature. Recent studies further highlight that Shihab's interpretations contain implicit ecological dimensions that can be developed into an eco-Qur'an.<sup>26</sup> Several analyses reveal

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Al-Qur'an, 2019), Surah Al-Baqarah (2): 164, hlm. 25.

<sup>23</sup> Muktasim Billah and Malikul Habsi, "Critical Hermeneutics Of The Representation Of Religious Minorities In Public Discourse In Indonesia," *DAAR EL-KAMIL: Multidisciplinary Journal* 2, no. 01 (2026): 23–34. <https://doi.org/10.236554/jkas/92387>

<sup>24</sup> Hasballah Thaib, *Fight Against Poverty: A Quranic Perspective Memerangi Kemiskinan: Perspektif Al-Quran*, 2022, 44–69. <https://doi.org/10.jwe/92387>

<sup>25</sup> Li Rahmawati, "Memuliakan Syi'ar-Syi'ar Allah Dalam Ibadah Haji (Kajian Tafsir Tematik Ayat Syi'ar - Syi'ar Allah Dalam Ibadah Haji Menurut Tafsir Al-Munir Dan Al Mishbah)," *Tesis*, 2019, 1–199. <https://doi.org/10.38436/kjsd/9485>

<sup>26</sup> Mochammad Sidqi Awaliya Rahman, "Konsep Pendidikan Humanis Dalam Tafsir

that the concept of *fasād fi al-ard* (corruption or destruction on earth) in his interpretation is understood not only as moral corruption but also as ecological destruction caused by human exploitation. Moreover, verses concerning the balance of nature are interpreted as representing a system that must be preserved rather than violated. Other studies demonstrate that Shihab's approach opens opportunities for integrating modern scientific knowledge with Qur'anic interpretation, thereby strengthening the relevance of Qur'anic cosmology within global environmental discourse.

Critically speaking, although Quraish Shihab's interpretation has great potential for constructing an ecological paradigm, existing literature shows that this dimension has not yet been fully explored explicitly.<sup>27</sup> Most studies still position Shihab's interpretation within a general socio-religious context without elaborating deeply on its ecological aspects. Furthermore, Shihab himself did not systematically formulate ecological interpretation as a distinct approach, making reinterpretation necessary in order to construct an eco-Qur'an framework from his thought. This indicates that there is significant theoretical space for further development in connecting Shihab's interpretation with environmental issues.<sup>28</sup>

From the various studies analyzed, several patterns of findings can be identified. First, Quraish Shihab's interpretation emphasizes the integral relationship between God, humans, and nature. Second, cosmological verses are understood as instruments of spiritual reflection that carry ethical implications. Third, the concepts of destruction (*fasād*) and balance (*mīzān*) become key elements in understanding ecological relations within the Qur'an. Fourth, his interpretive approach is contextual, allowing adaptation to contemporary environmental issues. These patterns demonstrate consistency within Shihab's framework of thought, which can be developed into a paradigm of ecological interpretation.

The contribution of this theme to the main research topic is highly significant because it provides an interpretive foundation for constructing the concept of *eco-Qur'an* based on the interpretations of Quraish Shihab. By examining how Shihab interprets cosmological verses, this study can reveal more systematically the potential ecological ethics contained within the Qur'an. This not only enriches the field of Qur'anic exegesis but also provides practical contributions to building environmental awareness based on Islamic values. Thus, Quraish Shihab's interpretation can be positioned as a bridge between the sacred text and the

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Kontemporer: Studi Atas Tafsir Al-Mishbah Karya M. Quraish Shihab," *Indonesian Journal on Education (IJoEd)* 2, no. 3 (2026): 298–305. <https://doi.org/10.70437/ijoe.v2i3.284>

<sup>27</sup> Sholahuddin Ashani, *Kontruksi Pemahaman Terhadap I'jaz Alquran*, n.d.; Muhammad Fahmi et al., "Konstruksi Nilai-Nilai Toleransi Berbasis Al-Quran Sebagai Upaya Menangkal Narasi Radikalisme Agama Di Indonesia Kontemporer," *Al-Banjari: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu-Ilmu Keislaman* 22, no. 1 (2023): 59–87, <https://doi.org/10.18592/al-banjari.v22i1.6239>.

<sup>28</sup> 2 Harun Al Rasyid 3 M. Rivan Febriansyah Harahap,\*1 M. Habib Alhabsyi, *Analisis Fenomena I'jaz Al – Bayani dalam Nazm (Susunan) Al- Qur'an*, 2, no. 2 (2024): 117–24. <https://doi.org/10.234534/jkm/35556>

realities of the modern ecological crisis.

In interpreting QS. Ar-Rūm [30]: 41, Quraish Shihab explains in Tafsir Al-Mishbah that environmental damage (*fasād*) is largely the result of human actions that disrupt the balance established by Allah in nature. According to Shihab, the verse serves as a warning that human misconduct inevitably produces ecological and social consequences. This interpretation is consistent with those of Ibn Kathir and Al-Qurtubi, who similarly understand *fasād* as encompassing various forms of corruption and destruction caused by human behavior. However, Quraish Shihab extends this understanding by relating it to contemporary environmental problems, thereby highlighting the ethical responsibility of humans to preserve ecological balance.<sup>29</sup>



*Figure 1: Quraish Shihab's Cosmological Interpretation*

The figure explains the framework of cosmological interpretation according to Quraish Shihab, which develops from theological understanding toward ethical and ecological awareness. The flow should be understood as an interconnected unity rather than separate parts. First, the manifestation of God's power. Qur'anic verses concerning the heavens, the earth, and the order of nature are understood as *āyāt* (signs) that demonstrate the greatness of Allah. At this stage, nature is viewed as an object of spiritual contemplation that invites humans to think, reflect, and strengthen their faith.

Second, it develops into a field of moral responsibility. Nature is no longer understood merely as an object of theological reflection, but also as a space of human trust and responsibility. In their role as *khalifah* (stewards), humans are responsible for managing and preserving nature rather than exploiting it excessively. Third, messages of balance and sustainability emerge. Qur'anic cosmology contains the principles of *mīzān* (balance), order, and harmony. This

<sup>29</sup> Andika Mubarak and Universitas, *Kelestarian Lingkungan dalam Al- Qur'an: Analisis Pemikiran M. Quraish Shihab Dalam Tafsir Al-Mishbah* Andika Mubarak, 2022, 227–37. <https://doi.org/10.53802/hikmah.v19i2.174>

indicates that nature was created within an orderly system, and humans are therefore obliged to maintain this balance for the continuity of life. Fourth, it culminates in ecological ethics. Cosmological interpretation does not stop at metaphysical aspects but develops into practical ethics. Humans are required to actively protect the environment, avoid destruction (*fasād*), and contribute to preserving natural harmony amid the modern ecological crisis. Overall, the figure demonstrates an important transformation: from theology (understanding God through nature) toward ethics (being responsible for nature). This is the essence of the Qur'anic cosmological approach from the perspective of Quraish Shihab, which remains highly relevant to contemporary environmental issues.

### Building Contemporary Ecological Ethics through Qur'anic Interpretation

Contemporary ecological ethics in the Islamic perspective refers to a set of moral values that regulate the relationship between humans and the environment based on the theological principles of the Qur'an. In this context, cosmological interpretation becomes a normative foundation affirming that the universe is a system created with balance (*mīzān*) and a specific purpose. The thought of Quraish Shihab positions cosmological verses as a means of spiritual reflection as well as ethical guidance, where humans are not only required to understand nature but also to protect it from destruction. Thus, contemporary ecological ethics can be constructed through reinterpretations of Qur'anic exegesis that connect theological dimensions with the realities of the modern environmental crisis.<sup>30</sup> Several studies indicate that the cosmological interpretation of the Qur'an has strong relevance in building ecological awareness within modern society. Recent studies emphasize that the concepts of *khalīfah* (stewardship) and *amānah* (trust) can serve as the foundation of human ecological responsibility. This is in line with the word of Allah in QS. Al-Ahzab: 72:

إِنَّا عَرَضْنَا الْأَمَانَةَ عَلَى السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَالْجِبَالِ فَأَبَيْنَ أَنْ يَحْمِلْنَهَا وَأَشْفَقْنَ مِنْهَا وَحَمَلَهَا الْإِنْسَانُ ۖ إِنَّهُ كَانَ ظَلُومًا جَهُولًا

*"Indeed, We offered the trust (amānah) to the heavens, the earth, and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and feared betraying it; yet man undertook it. Indeed, he has always been unjust and ignorant."*<sup>31</sup>

Other studies show that verses concerning the creation of nature contain messages of sustainability that align with the principles of sustainable

<sup>30</sup> Umar Al Faruq et al., *I ' Jaz al-Qur ' an : Menyingkap Kemukjizatan Bahasa , Ilmu Pengetahuan , Dan Aspek Ghaib Dalam Al-Qur ' An*, no. 3 (2024): 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.47134/pjpi.v1i3.464>

<sup>31</sup> Kementerian Agama RI, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahannya* (Jakarta: Lajnah Pentashihan Mushaf Al-Qur'an, 2019), Surah Al-Ahzab (33): 72, hlm. 427.

development. Within the context of *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, these values are interpreted contextually, enabling them to bridge the *Qur'anic* text with contemporary ecological challenges such as climate change and the exploitation of natural resources.

Other research develops interdisciplinary approaches by linking *Qur'anic* interpretation with environmental science and public policy. In these studies, cosmological interpretation is viewed as a source of values capable of influencing individual and collective ecological behavior. Several studies demonstrate that internalizing *Qur'anic* values, such as the prohibition of *fasād* (destruction) and the command to preserve natural balance, can increase environmental awareness within Muslim communities. In addition, some research connects ecological interpretation with Islamic education, where an eco-Qur'an-based curriculum can shape students' character to become more environmentally conscious.

Critically speaking, although the literature demonstrates the great potential of cosmological interpretation in building ecological ethics, its implementation still faces various challenges. One of the main weaknesses is the lack of operationalization of these concepts into policies or concrete practices. Many studies remain at the normative level and have not successfully bridged theological discourse with concrete ecological action. Furthermore, there remains a gap between academic understanding and public awareness, indicating that the transformation of interpretive values into ecological behavior still requires more systematic and contextual strategies. From the various studies analyzed, several consistent patterns can be identified. First, the cosmological interpretation of the Qur'an contains ecological values that are highly relevant to contemporary issues. Second, contextual approaches, such as those developed by Quraish Shihab, allow the reinterpretation of *Qur'anic* verses according to the needs of the time. Third, integration between interpretation, education, and policy is key to constructing effective ecological ethics. Fourth, there is a need to develop more applicative approaches so that these values can be implemented concretely in society.

The contribution of this theme to the main research topic lies in its ability to connect cosmological interpretation with contemporary ecological praxis. By positioning interpretation as the foundation of environmental ethics, this study offers an eco-Qur'an paradigm that is not only theoretical but also transformative. The perspective of Quraish Shihab provides a strong foundation for developing a contextual and relevant Qur'an-based ecological ethic, which can serve as an alternative solution in addressing the global environmental crisis while also enriching the field of *Qur'anic exegesis* in its applicative dimension.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that M. Quraish Shihab's interpretation in *Tafsir Al-Mishbah* presents *Qur'anic cosmology* as a divinely ordered system founded upon four interrelated ecological principles: *mīzān* (balance), *amānah* (responsibility),

*khalifah* (stewardship), and the prohibition of *fasād* (destruction). The concept of *mīzān* emphasizes the balance and harmony inherent in creation, *amānah* defines humanity's moral responsibility to protect the environment, *khalifah* establishes humans as trustees rather than owners of the earth, and the prohibition of *fasād* condemns actions that cause ecological degradation. Collectively, these principles demonstrate that the relationship between humans and nature is fundamentally ethical, responsibility-oriented, and rooted in divine guidance rather than exploitation. The findings further reveal that Quraish Shihab's contextual interpretation extends the meaning of cosmological verses beyond theological explanations of the universe by providing an ethical framework for addressing contemporary environmental challenges. Based on these findings, this study proposes the *Eco-Tafsir* Paradigm as a conceptual framework that integrates *Qur'anic* cosmology, environmental ethics, and sustainability. This paradigm represents the primary contribution of the study by demonstrating that ecological values embedded in the *Qur'an* can be systematically interpreted and applied to contemporary environmental discourse, thereby enriching both *Qur'anic* studies and Islamic environmental ethics. Future research is recommended to further develop and validate the *Eco-Tafsir* Paradigm through comparative studies involving other contemporary *Qur'anic* exegetes, interdisciplinary approaches combining Islamic studies and environmental sciences, or empirical investigations into the implementation of *Qur'anic* ecological ethics within Muslim communities, educational institutions, and environmental policy. Such studies would contribute to strengthening the practical relevance of *Qur'anic* environmental ethics and expanding its role in promoting sustainable development from an Islamic perspective.

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