

## **Eco-Sufism Ethics in the Thought of Said Nursi: A Critical Response to Contemporary Environmental Exploitation**

Muhammad Diaz Supandi<sup>1\*</sup>, Ishmaelasta Ghafrilla Al Azhmi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Universitas Darussalam Gontor, Ponorogo, Jawa Timur, Indonesia

[\\*muhammaddiazsupandi38@student.iqt.unida.gontor.ac.id](mailto:muhammaddiazsupandi38@student.iqt.unida.gontor.ac.id)

### **Abstract**

This study examines the ethical principles of Eco-Sufism in the thought of Said Nursi as a critical response to contemporary environmental exploitation. The research is motivated by the global ecological crisis, which is rooted in an anthropocentric paradigm that severs the spiritual connection between humans and nature. Through a qualitative approach and textual analysis of Nursi's *Risale-i Nur*, this article identifies key concepts such as *ma'na-i harfi* (nature as divine signs), *khalfah* (human stewardship), and the integration of *tawhid* (divine unity) into ecological ethics. The findings demonstrate that Nursi's Eco-Sufism offers a transformative critique of materialistic worldviews by reorienting humanity toward a theocentric vision where nature is revered as a manifestation of God's attributes (*Asma ul-Husna*). This framework not only deconstructs exploitative attitudes but also provides a spiritual foundation for sustainable practices, emphasizing gratitude (*shukr*), compassion (*rahmah*), and intergenerational responsibility. The study concludes that Nursi's ideas contribute significantly to global environmental ethics by bridging Sufi spirituality with ecological accountability.

**Keywords:** *Eco-Sufism, Said Nursi, environmental ethics, anthropocentrism, spiritual ecology.*

### **Introduction**

The contemporary world is undeniably confronted by an unprecedented ecological crisis, characterized by accelerated climate change, mass biodiversity extinction, deforestation, pervasive pollution, and critical resource depletion. This relentless exploitation of natural systems has pushed planetary boundaries to their limits, fundamentally threatening global ecosystem stability and the survivability of future generations [1]. However, this study posits that the crisis's essence extends beyond mere policy failure or technological insufficiency; it is fundamentally a symptomology of a deeper, underlying rupture in the ethical and spiritual values governing the human-nature relationship [2]. The root of the problem is entrenched in the dominant anthropocentric paradigm, which construes nature as an inert object, existing solely for unlimited human exploitation without regard for its intrinsic worth or transcendental purpose. This secular-materialistic worldview has effectively severed humanity from the cosmos, reducing nature to a mere commodity and resource, thereby eradicating the sense of the sacred and moral responsibility once inherent in our engagement with the natural world.

This root problem is further exacerbated by the utilitarian and instrumentalist approaches to environmental management that dominate global discourse. While the techno-economic solutions proposed within this framework may be necessary, they are ultimately insufficient as they fail to address the core ontological and axiological dimensions of the crisis—namely, how humanity perceives, understands, and values the universe. Such reductive strategies neglect profound philosophical inquiry and, consequently, are incapable of fostering the deep, sustainable ethical commitment required for lasting change.[3] Therefore, a rigorous philosophical and theological investigation is imperative to uncover the axiological roots of this crisis and to propose an alternative ethical framework capable of restoring a harmonious human-nature relationship. It is within this context that religious discourse, with its rich moral and spiritual resources, offers a critically needed

perspective, particularly the Islamic tradition, which possesses a extensive heritage of environmental stewardship (*himā*) [4].

Within this intellectual and ethical vacuum, the thought of Said Nursi (1877-1960), a Kurdish Muslim theologian, mystic, and reformer whose works are compiled in the *Risale-i Nur*, emerges with significant relevance. His work presents a coherent intellectual system that can be categorized as "eco-Sufism," synthesizing a theocentric vision with a profound ecological consciousness [5]. Living during a transition into modernity, Nursi witnessed the nascent effects of the divorce between science, spirituality, and ethics. Consequently, his corpus can be interpreted as a response to the crisis of meaning and value that constitutes the root problem of numerous modern issues, including environmental degradation. His thought provides a robust theological foundation for an environmental ethic that is not only normative but also transformative, centered on the concept that nature is a mirror reflecting divine attributes (*Asma ul-Husna*) [6].

This study specifically aims to address the following fundamental research question: How do the principles of eco-Sufism ethics in Said Nursi's thought form a substantive critique of contemporary environmental exploitation while simultaneously proposing a constructive alternative? This primary inquiry is delineated into three specific objectives: (1) To identify and analyze the key concepts within the *Risale-i Nur* that form the foundation of Nursi's environmental ethic, particularly *kitab al-kaun* (the book of the universe), the mirror of divine names, and *khilafah* (vicegerency). (2) To analyze how these concepts provide a critical challenge to anthropocentric and materialistic worldviews. (3) To elucidate how Nursi's vision of environmental stewardship (*khalifah*) offers a distinct relational paradigm between humans and the natural world.

To achieve these objectives, this research employs a qualitative methodology grounded in library-based research [7]. The researcher will conduct an in-depth textual analysis of key passages within the *Risale-i Nur* that explicitly or implicitly address the relationship between humanity and nature. This primary analysis will be enriched by a thorough review of secondary literature from scholars exploring ecological dimensions within Islamic and Sufi thought, as well as specific studies on Nursi. By integrating primary text analysis with secondary theoretical context, this study strives to present a comprehensive and coherent interpretation of Nursi's eco-theology that is not merely descriptive but also critical and relevant to the contemporary context [8].

This research is significant for its contribution to the growing field of Islamic environmental ethics. While numerous studies have discussed the general Islamic concept of *khalifah*, a deep analysis of Nursi's work offers a distinctive Sufistic nuance that greatly enriches the discourse. The findings are expected to serve as a bridge between religious tradition and modern ecological debates, demonstrating how the spiritual resources of a specific tradition can be mobilized to address global challenges. Beyond the academic community, this study is also relevant for policymakers, environmental activists, and religious leaders seeking value-based alternative perspectives to tackle the ecological crisis.

Overall, this paper will argue that Said Nursi's eco-Sufism offers a powerful critical response to environmental exploitation by identifying and challenging its philosophical root problem—a worldview that divorces the sacred from the profane. Instead of perceiving nature as a dead object, Nursi posits a vision wherein the entire cosmos is a living manifestation of divine signs (*ayat*), calling humanity to recognize its Creator and act as His responsible vicegerent (*khalifah*). The paper will be structured by first tracing the roots of the environmental crisis within the modern paradigm, then explicating Nursi's theological framework, analyzing its core environmental ethical principles, and finally, demonstrating how this framework provides both a critique and a transformative solution for contemporary environmental issues.

## Discussion

### The Foundations of Eco-Sufism in Said Nursi's Ethical Framework

The eco-Sufism thought of Said Nursi is rooted in a theocentric conception that places God at the center of ecological consciousness, a paradigm fundamentally opposed to modern anthropocentric views. In *Risale-i Nur*, Nursi states, "The universe is a grand mosque where all creatures glorify the Creator" (Lem'alar, 15. Note), affirming that all creation exists in a perpetual state of sanctifying its Maker.[9] This perspective radically transforms the materialistic view of nature into a recognition of its existence as a living and meaningful divine manifestation. Every element of the cosmos, from the smallest to the largest, is regarded as cosmic verses (ayat kauniyah) that form the cosmic book (kitab al-kaun), parallel to and inseparable from the sacred scripture. Through this theocentric approach, Nursi establishes a holistic environmental epistemology wherein understanding nature cannot be separated from the knowledge of God's attributes (ma'rifatullah).[10] The ethical consequence of this view fosters a profound respect for all creation, as environmental destruction essentially means damaging the divine "signs" displayed throughout the universe, thereby constituting a denial of the Creator's magnificence.

Nursi develops a unique concept wherein all creation serves as mirrors reflecting divine names and attributes (Asma ul-Husna), providing a strong metaphysical foundation for environmental ethics. In *Sözler*, he explains, "*Every creature is a mirror that reflects one particular divine name*" (Sözler, 32. Word), indicating that each natural entity possesses unique transcendental value and meaning. The sun reflects the name Al-Nur (Light) through its rays that illuminate the universe, rivers demonstrate the name Al-Razzaq (The Sustainer) by flowing water for life, and fruit-bearing trees reflect the name Al-Mun'im (The Bestower of Blessings) through the fruits they produce. This cosmological perspective grants intrinsic value to every element of nature, independent of its instrumental benefits to humans, as each creation carries the status of a divine message. Environmental exploitation thus becomes an ethical violation not only due to its damaging ecological impacts but more fundamentally because it denies the sacredness of each creation as a medium for knowing God. Any environmental damage essentially obscures the mirrors reflecting divine grandeur, thereby diminishing humanity's ability to recognize the Creator through His creation.

The concept of khalifah (stewardship) in Nursi's thought is not merely a mandate for domination but rather a weighty divine trust requiring cosmic responsibility. He asserts, "*Humans are Earth's stewards responsible for maintaining cosmic balance*" (Mesnevî-i Nuriye, 54), positioning humans as God's representatives who must act wisely rather than as arbitrary rulers [11]. This khalifah status requires humans to serve as mediators between God and nature, fulfilling roles as maintainers of ecological justice (al-mizan) and protectors of all creatures (hifz al-bi'ah). Nursi strongly criticizes anthropocentrism that makes humans the center of exploitation, instead offering a theanthropocentric vision where humans become channels of divine mercy for the universe. In their capacity as khalifah, humans are required to emulate divine attributes such as rahmah (compassion) and hikmah (wisdom) in all interactions with nature, making every ecological action a reflection of these divine qualities. This understanding transforms human-nature relations from exploitative to servitude and devotion.

Nursi emphasizes that the root of ecological crisis begins with humanity's spiritual crisis, making his solutions fundamentally transformative from within. In *Lem'alar*, he states, "*Damage on Earth reflects damage in human hearts*" (Lem'alar, 16. Flash), pointing to the reality that external environmental degradation mirrors internal spiritual degradation. His proposed solution is a Sufi approach that invites humans to control greedy desires and consumerism through zuhud (asceticism) and gratitude, thereby giving rise to grounded ecological spirituality. Nursi's ecological spirituality advocates responsible consumption patterns where utilization of natural resources is done moderately and always accompanied by deep gratitude. In this understanding, gratitude is not merely expressed verbally but actualized through active protection and preservation of all divine blessings.[11] This approach transforms ecological awareness from mere compliance with external regulations into

manifestations of worship and devotion to the Creator, making every environmental conservation action spiritually and transcendentally significant.

The concept of tawhid in Nursi's eco-Sufism transcends mere theological dimensions to become an ecological principle unifying the entire cosmos. He explains, "All nature is an organic unity interconnected through the rope of tawhid" (Sözler, 23. Word), affirming that the unity of creation reflects the unity of the Creator. This tawhidic perspective firmly rejects Cartesian dualism that artificially separates the sacred from the profane, the spiritual from the material [12]. Nature is viewed as an integrated complex network where every component, however small, has a role and intrinsic value within the entire cosmic system. Damage to one part disrupts the balance of the whole system, as everything is connected within a intricate divine network. Ecological tawhid teaches that humans must see themselves as integral parts of the web of life, not as separate and superior entities entitled to dominate. This cosmic unity awareness gives birth to an ecological solidarity ethics where human welfare cannot be separated from the welfare of all creation, since all originate from the same Source and return to Him [13].

Nursi develops an ethics of care encompassing all creatures without exception, transcending anthropocentric boundaries. In *Risale-i Nur*, he states, "Compassion is divine light radiating throughout nature" (Mesnevî-i Nuriye, 123), affirming that compassion (rahmah) is a fundamental principle governing the entire universe. Rahmah becomes the foundational basis for interacting with all creation, since all creatures are God's family (ayatullah) possessing rights to respect and protection. This universal ethics demands that humans treat animals, plants, and all natural elements with the same compassion and respect as accorded to fellow humans. Nursi even teaches not to harm even a small ant, as every creature has the right to live and be part of the beautiful cosmic mosaic. This ethics of care constitutes the antithesis of exploitative approaches that view nature as a dead object to be controlled and exploited without limit [14]. Instead, this ethics teaches a symbiotic mutualistic relationship where humans are not nature's masters but rather elder siblings responsible for nurturing all creation.

Nursi's eco-Sufism thought contains a futuristic dimension emphasizing intergenerational responsibility as an integral aspect of faith. In *Sözler*, he reminds, "We are guardians of divine heritage for future generations" (Sözler, 45. Word), affirming that humans are trustees, not owners, of the universe. Each generation has moral and spiritual obligations to bequeath an intact and healthy environment to subsequent generations, since nature is a divine trust (amanah) that must be maintained with full responsibility. This futuristic vision requires sustainable development that always considers long-term impacts on ecosystems, not temporary gains [15]. Nursi strongly criticizes short-term mentality that sacrifices environmental sustainability for temporal economic interests, as this constitutes betrayal of divine trust. Instead, he offers a long-term vision where humans live in harmony with nature, meeting present needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs. Nursi's ecological futurology provides an ethical and spiritual framework for sustainable development based on transcendental awareness and cosmic responsibility.

## **Tension between Anthropocentric Exploitation and Theocentric Stewardship in Environmental Ethics**

The fundamental conflict in contemporary environmental ethics centers on the irreconcilable tension between the anthropocentric paradigm that dominates modern discourse and the theocentric vision offered by spiritual traditions. The anthropocentric paradigm, rooted in the philosophies of Descartes and Bacon, positions humanity as the absolute measure and ruler of the universe, thereby legitimizing the unlimited exploitation of natural resources. In contrast, within the theocentric perspective of Sufism, as articulated by Said Nursi, "*The universe is a grand mosque in which all beings are in prayer and glorification*" (Lem'alar, 15. Note), affirming that nature possesses intrinsic value independent of human utility [11]. This tension is not merely an epistemological divergence

but rather a civilizational clash between materialist-secular and spiritual-religious visions of existence and humanity's responsibility on earth, reflected in fragmented environmental policies oscillating between economic-instrumental and ethical-spiritual approaches.

The Sufi tradition offers a radical critique of anthropocentrism through the concept of *fanā'* (self-effacement), which rejects the human ego as the center of the universe. Ibn 'Arabi, in *Fusūs al-Hikam*, asserts that "*The Perfect Human (al-insān al-kāmil) is a mirror reflecting the entirety of reality, not a sovereign entitled to subjugate nature.*" Said Nursi develops this critique by stating, "*Modern human greed has transformed the wise caliph into a rapacious tyrant*" (*Sözler*, 128. Word), indicating that the ecological crisis stems from an ontological error in positioning humanity as the center of the universe rather than as an integral part of the interconnected cosmic web [16]. The Sufi concept of *takhallī* (self-purification) thus becomes an ethical prerequisite for liberating humanity from the desire for domination and exploitation of nature.

Said Nursi reconstructs the concept of the caliph (*khalīfah*) as a theocentric alternative to anthropocentrism by affirming in *Mesnevî-i Nuriye* that "*The caliph is a mirror reflecting the Divine attributes, not a ruler entitled to oppress*" (*Mesnevî-i Nuriye*, 89). This concept transforms human authority from domination to stewardship, from exploitation to service, emphasizing that "*The task of the caliph is to read the Book of Nature as the manifestation of the Divine Names*" (*Sözler*, 32. Word). Such a framework requires a hermeneutical, rather than exploitative, approach to nature. This resonates with al-Ghazālī's view in *Iḥyā' 'Ulūm al-Dīn* that "*Nature is a sacred text to be read with the eyes of the heart,*" thereby shifting the foundation of human authority from power to responsibility [17].

Sufi epistemology offers a holistic approach to understanding nature in contrast to the reductionism of modern science. Ibn 'Arabi elaborates the concept of *barzakh* (intermediary) by stating that "*The universe is the meeting ground of the Divine and the human*" (*Futūhāt al-Makkiyya*). Nursi reinforces this with his doctrine of *ma'rifatullāh through the cosmic signs (āyāt kawniyyah)*, underscoring that the study of nature must lead to knowledge of God rather than mere material exploitation. He asserts in *Lem'alar* that "*Science without spirituality is blind; spirituality without science is crippled*" (*Lem'alar*, 23. Flash), thereby calling for the integration of scientific and spiritual approaches while rejecting the subject-object dichotomy of modern science in favor of a subject-subject relationship within the cosmic web.

Sufi environmental philosophy advances an ethic of stewardship grounded in the concept of *amānah* (divine trust). Nursi declares in the *Risale-i Nur* that "*The universe is a Divine trust entrusted to humankind, not an inheritance to be consumed*" (*Sözler*, 45. Word).[9] This notion cultivates intergenerational responsibility, necessitating sustainable development. It aligns with Jalaluddin Rumi's warning in the *Mathnawī* that "*You think you rule over nature, but you are merely its temporary guardian,*" thereby demanding *'adl* (ecological justice) in treating all beings and *mīzān* (ecological balance). Unlike utilitarian anthropocentric ethics, which calculate the value of nature in terms of human benefit, Sufi ethics affirms the intrinsic worth of every creature.

Sufi ecological spirituality offers transformative solutions through the concept of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul), wherein Nursi insists that "*Corruption in nature is a reflection of corruption in the human heart*" (*Lem'alar*, 16. Flash). Thus, ecological solutions must begin with spiritual transformation. The Sufi principle of *zuhd* (ascetic simplicity) stands as an antithesis to modern consumerism, while *shukr* (gratitude) provides the ethical basis for the use of natural resources. As 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī counseled in *Ghunyat al-Tālibīn*: "*Whoever does not give thanks for clear water will be made to drink murky water.*" This spirituality transforms ecological consciousness from external obligation into inner calling, from regulatory compliance into spiritual devotion.[8]

Reconciling the anthropocentric and theocentric approaches requires an integrated epistemology that unites modern science with spiritual wisdom. Nursi offers a model of "integrated knowledge" that harmonizes *āyāt qur'āniyyah* (the revealed text) with *āyāt kawniyyah* (the natural signs). In *Sözler*, he asserts that "*Science and religion are two wings that lift humankind toward*

*truth*" (*Sözler*, 203. Word). This integration leads to an *eco-tawhīd*, a vision of the unity of knowledge and the unity of the cosmos. It resonates with Fazlur Rahman's call in *Islam and Modernity* for a "double movement" hermeneutics that interprets the sacred text and modern context dialectically. Thus, this integrative model offers a creative synthesis that transcends paradigmatic tensions, fostering ecological sustainability while fulfilling spiritual needs [3].

### **Eco-Sufism as a Critical Response to Contemporary Environmental Crises**

The contemporary environmental crisis represents the failure of the modern anthropocentric paradigm, which regards nature merely as an object of exploitation and instrumentality. Ecosystem degradation, climate change, and the mass extinction of biodiversity are the logical consequences of an epistemological dissociation between humanity and the cosmos, in which nature is reduced to a collection of resources to be exploited without ethical or spiritual consideration [18]. In this context, the search for solutions cannot be confined to technocratic policies but must extend to philosophical and theological reconstruction that touches the very roots of human perception of reality and its place in the universe.<sup>19</sup> The spiritual world—particularly the Sufi tradition in Islam—offers a rich reservoir of wisdom to formulate a transformative and holistic response, giving rise to a theocentric-ecocentric framework that integrates spiritual consciousness with profound environmental ethics, known as Eco-Sufism [20].

Within this framework, the thought of Said Nursi (1877–1960), a prominent Turkish theologian and Islamic thinker, finds profound relevance. Through his monumental work, the *Risale-i Nur*, Nursi developed an epistemology that integrates reason, revelation, and nature as a response to the crises of modernity, including the desacralization of the natural world. For Nursi, nature is not inert matter operating mechanistically but rather a grand book containing the divine signs (*āyāt*) to be read and understood [9]. Every element of creation, from the smallest to the largest, is a letter or word forming a magnificent sentence that worships and glorifies its Creator. This worldview directly challenges the mechanistic-positivistic narrative dominating modern science by offering a vision of the cosmos as alive, meaningful, and spiritually interconnected [1].

Nursi's central argument, which underpins Eco-Sufism, rests upon his concept of *ma'nā-yi harfī* (meaning that points beyond itself) versus *ma'nā-yi ismī* (meaning that points to itself). To view nature through *ma'nā-yi ismī* is to regard it as an independent entity valued for itself, which, in Nursi's thought, constitutes the root of materialism and boundless exploitation. Conversely, *ma'nā-yi harfī* perceives nature as a "sign" (*āyah*) that continually directs human beings to the Creator, whose ultimate value lies in guiding humanity to God. As Nursi declared: "*The entire universe is a great book that speaks of its Author. Every being is a word or a letter pointing to His essence, attributes, and names.*" This transformative perspective reshapes humanity's relationship with nature from domination to contemplation, from exploitation to reverent respect.

Furthermore, Nursi reinforces his argument by emphasizing the role of humankind as *khalīfah* (vicegerent) on earth—a designation that is not a license for arbitrary power but a trust (*amānah*) carrying immense moral responsibility. The primary duty of this caliphate is to read the "Book of Nature," to grasp its divine messages, and to manage it with justice and compassion. At the core of this reading lies *shukr* (gratitude), through which every blessing humanity receives from nature—air, water, food—is recognized as a divine gift requiring acknowledgment and thankfulness to the Giver [21]. Hence, reckless and destructive exploitation of the environment constitutes *kufr* (ingratitude) toward those blessings and stands in contradiction to the very purpose of creation. Nursi explicitly stated: "*Gratitude is the outcome of the entire creation of the universe... and the purpose of the mission of the prophets.*"

Nursi's vision is not isolated within Islamic intellectual history but is deeply reinforced by the mainstream of classical Sufism, particularly in the works of Ibn 'Arabi (1165–1240) and his doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wujūd* (Unity of Being). Ibn 'Arabi affirmed that all existence is a manifestation (*tajallī*)

of the One Being—Allah—such that the cosmos is a theophany, the divine reality appearing in diverse and multitudinous forms. Within this framework, to harm nature is to dishonor and violate the manifestation of God Himself. In the *Fusūṣ al-Hikam*, Ibn ‘Arabi explained that the Perfect Human (*al-Insān al-Kāmil*) is a mirror reflecting all the divine names and attributes, whose role includes preserving cosmic harmony [16]. This doctrine provides the most radical metaphysical foundation for environmental ethics, asserting that there is no separation between the sacred and the profane, for all creation participates in divine sanctity.

Beyond its profound metaphysical dimension, Sufism is also rich in *akhlaqī* (ethical) dimensions directly applicable to human-environment relations. Thinkers such as al-Ghazālī (1058–1111) emphasized the purification of the heart (*tazkiyat al-nafs*) from vices such as greed, arrogance, and avarice—psychological roots of environmental destruction. A purified heart naturally radiates *rahmah* (compassion) toward all creation, for in the Sufi worldview, all beings are members of God’s family (*al-kawn ‘iyālullāh*). Love for the Creator must thus be expressed through care and responsibility toward His creation. A *hadīth qudsī* frequently cited in Sufi literature declares: “*My mercy precedes My wrath*,” underscoring that divine compassion is the first principle of the universe and, therefore, the guiding principle in human interaction with all beings [22].

The synthesis of Nursi’s thought with the legacy of classical Sufism produces a robust and comprehensive Eco-Sufi paradigm. From Nursi comes a methodology for “reading” nature within a modern context dominated by science, treating science not as an adversary but as a tool to deepen admiration for the divine complexity and beauty inscribed in creation [23]. From Ibn ‘Arabi and other Sufis is inherited a metaphysical depth affirming the essential unity of all things within divine reality. This unique combination yields an approach that is not anti-science but seeks to superimpose a spiritual foundation upon scientific advancement, viewing nature as a complex network governed not only by physical laws (*sunan Allāh al-kawniyyah*) but also imbued with profound teleological meaning and purpose.

At the practical level, Eco-Sufism translates this spiritual and metaphysical awareness into an operational environmental ethic. The Sufi principle of *zuhd* (ascetic simplicity) in consumption becomes a spiritual resistance to consumerist culture that devours and destroys the planet. The protection of animals and plants is no longer seen merely as environmental activism but as an integral act of worship and devotion to the Creator. Practical initiatives such as the development of renewable energy and sustainable agriculture are regarded as concrete fulfillments of the caliphal trust. Every action that preserves the balance (*mīzān*) of nature is an ecological *jihād*—a sacred struggle to maintain the harmony of creation. In this way, Eco-Sufism transcends discourse and becomes a call to spiritual activism rooted in both inner transformation (the heart) and outer transformation (the environment).

From this perspective, Eco-Sufism emerges as a sharp critique of modernity, which promises unlimited material progress while neglecting spiritual and moral dimensions. By separating fact (scientific) from value (moral/spiritual), modernity has generated a crisis of meaning that ultimately culminates in the ecological crisis we now face [24]. As an alternative, Eco-Sufism proposes a profound reunification of science and spirituality, fact and value, material and transcendental. This paradigm invites modern humanity to transform itself from the authoritarian “lord and master” of nature back into its original role as the “servant and beloved,” who nurtures and safeguards cosmic harmony. This is a deeper and more transformative alternative than environmental solutions confined to technological and regulatory measures without addressing the paradigmatic roots of the crisis.

Therefore, it may be concluded that Eco-Sufism—enriched by Said Nursi’s arguments and reinforced by the rich treasury of Sufi thought—offers a profound and holistic critical response to the contemporary environmental crisis. It provides a comprehensive theological, metaphysical, and ethical framework to guide humanity toward a more harmonious and sustainable relationship with the planet. In a fragmented world, the Sufi vision of *tawhīd* (unity) possesses the power to reunite humanity with nature, and the spiritual with the material [25]. Contemporary environmental

movements can draw enduring spiritual depth and motivation from this tradition, transforming ecological protection from a pragmatic necessity for survival into a noble spiritual calling and the highest expression of faith, gratitude, and love for the Creator and all His creation.

## Conclusion

Said Nursi's Eco-Sufi thought offers a critical response to the environmental crisis by shifting the paradigm from anthropocentrism to a radical theocentrism. Through the concept of *ma 'na-i harfī*, Nursi emphasizes that nature is not an autonomous entity but rather a system of signs directing humanity toward the Creator. This perspective deconstructs the roots of modern materialism that treats nature as an object of exploitation, while simultaneously inviting humanity to rediscover its role as *khalīfah*—responsible for maintaining the cosmic balance (*mīzān*). Thus, Nursi's environmental ethics are not merely normative but also transformative, as they begin with a profound reconstruction of spiritual consciousness.

Nursi's Eco-Sufism integrates Sufi spirituality with ecological ethics through the principle of *tawhīd*, which unites the universe as a manifestation of the Divine Names (*Asmā' al-Husnā*). Every element of nature is viewed as a mirror reflecting divine attributes, such that environmental degradation constitutes an obscuring of this sacred reflection. This concept is reinforced by classical Sufi traditions such as Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine of *Wahdat al-Wujūd* (Unity of Being) and al-Ghazālī's ethics of *tazkiyat al-nafs* (purification of the soul), which stress the cleansing of the heart from greed as the foundation of ecological behavior. This integration produces a holistic approach that bridges modern scientific knowledge with spiritual wisdom, framing nature conservation as both an act of worship and an expression of gratitude (*shukr*).

Nursi's vision of Eco-Sufism is not only relevant as a critique of the environmental crisis but also provides a substantive contribution to global ethical discourse. By offering an alternative to reductive technocratic solutions, Nursi calls on the world to restore the sacred relationship between humanity and nature through a spirituality actualized in concrete action. His concept of *khalīfah* underscores intergenerational responsibility and ecological justice (*al-'adl*), aligning with the principles of sustainability in modern development. In this way, Nursi's intellectual legacy becomes an inspirational source for environmental movements, policymakers, and spiritual communities in building an ecological paradigm grounded in justice and dignity.

## References

- [1] M. D. Supandi and M. A. Khoiri, "Konseptualisasi Deep Ecology dalam Tafsir Al-Qur'an: Sebuah Analisis Komparatif Terhadap Pemikiran Mutawalli al-Sya'rawi dan Fazlun Khalid," *Int. Conf. Tradit. Relig. Stud.*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 765–776, 2025.
- [2] N. Ihsan and M. Mudin, "Paradigma Kalam Dalam Konservasi Lingkungan Menurut Said Nursi," *Tasfiyah*, vol. 4, no. 2, p. 27, 2020, doi: 10.21111/tasfiyah.v4i1.4052.
- [3] E. Encep, H. Anwar, and N. A. Febriani, "Ekospiritual: Relasi Alam dan Manusia dalam Pandangan berbagai Agama," *SALAM J. Sos. dan Budaya Syar'i*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 921–950, 2022, doi: 10.15408/sjsbs.v9i3.26465.
- [4] M. Muhammad, "Kajian Ayat-Ayat Al-Quran tentang Pelestarian Lingkungan Hidup," *J. Alwatzikhoebillah Kaji. Islam. Pendidikan, Ekon. Hum.*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 528–540, 2023, doi: 10.37567/alwatzikhoebillah.v9i2.2259.
- [5] M. Riswang, "Etika Lingkungan Dalam Pemikiran Badiuzzaman Said Nursi," UNIVERSITAS ISLAM NEGERI SYARIF HIDAYATULLAH, 2023. [Online]. Available: <https://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/handle/123456789/70796%0Ahttps://repository.uinjkt.ac.id/dspace/bitstream/123456789/70796/1/MUH. RISWANG.pdf>

- [6] W. N. Ardina, “Kontribusi Pemikiran Tasawuf Said Nursi terhadap Kesadaran Ekologis dalam Menghadapi Perubahan Iklim,” *Theofani J. Islam. Stud. Sch. Discourse*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 1–13, 2025.
- [7] P. Sugiyono, *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif Kualitatif dan R&D*. Bandung: ALFABETA, 2019.
- [8] P. Ridwanuddin, “EKOTEOLOGI DALAM PEMIKIRAN BADIUZZAMAN SAID NURSI,” *LENTERA J. Ilmu Dakwah dan Komun.*, vol. 1, no. 5, 2017, doi: 10.21093/lentera.v1i01.832.
- [9] S. Nursi, *From the Risale-i Nur Collection*, New editio. Istanbul, Turkey SE - 8 volumes ; 25 cm: Sözler, 1992. doi: LK - <https://worldcat.org/title/1142098251>.
- [10] M. I. Mudin, H. F. Zarkasyi, and A. K. Riyadi, “Prinsip Ekologis Untuk Kehidupan Berkelanjutan Perspektif Teologi Islam: Kajian Atas Kitab Rasail al-Nur Sa’id Nursi,” *Fikr. J. Ilmu Aqidah dan Stud. Keagamaan*, vol. 9, no. 1, p. 45, 2021, doi: 10.21043/fikrah.v9i1.9018.
- [11] S. Nursi, *Lem’alar*. Istanbul, Turkey: Şahdamar Yayınları, 2014.
- [12] D. Romagni, “Cartesian sensory perception, agreeability, and the puzzle of aesthetic pleasure,” *Br. J. Hist. Philos.*, vol. 30, pp. 1–22, 2021, doi: 10.1080/09608788.2021.2002262.
- [13] B. S. Nursi, “al-Kalimat,” 2011, *Sozler Publication, Istanbul, Turkey*.
- [14] B. S. Nursi, *Al-Matsnawī Al-’Arabī Al-Nūrī*. Mesir: Daar Soezlar Publications, 2014.
- [15] S. Nursi, *Isharat al-i’jaz fi mazan al-ijaz*. Istanbul, Turkey: Sozler Yayinev, 1974.
- [16] I. Arabi, “Fusus al Hikam,” 1995, *Dar al-Kutub al-’Ilmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon*.
- [17] A. H. Al-Ghazzali, “Iḥyā’ ‘Ulūm al-Dīn,” 1995, *Dar al-Kutub al-’Ilmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon*.
- [18] Fakhrijal Ali Azhar, “Etika Lingkungan Dalam Tafsir Al-Sya’Rawi,” UIN WALISONGO SEMARANG, 2022.
- [19] S. A. Ragozina, “Environmentalism in Modern Islamic Philosophy,” *Rudn J. Philos.*, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 233–250, 2023, doi: 10.22363/2313-2302-2023-27-2-233-250.
- [20] F. Khalid, “Islam and the Environment – Ethics and Practice an Assessment,” *Relig. Compass*, vol. 4, no. 11, p. 1o, 2010, doi: 10.1111/j.1749-8171.2010.00249.x.
- [21] E. Finnegan, “Islam and Ecology,” *Environ. Ethics*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 101–104, 2005, doi: 10.5840/enviroethics200527145.
- [22] Larousse, *Al-Idārah: Īrāniyā Būrīdāl*. lebanon: Daruwayāt li al-Nashr wa al-Ṭibā’ah, 2006.
- [23] A. S. Keraf, *Filsafat Lingkungan Hidup: Alam sebagai Sebuah Sistem Kehidupan Bersama Fritjof Capra*. Yogyakarta: PT Kanisius, 2014. [Online]. Available: <https://books.google.co.id/books?id=fnzMEAAAQBAJ>
- [24] M. R. Fitri, “THE PRINCIPLE OF ECOCENTRISM IN AL- QUR’ĀN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ASY- SYA’RAWI THE PRINCIPLE OF ECOCENTRISM IN AL- QUR’ĀN FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ASY- SYA’RAWI,” UNIVERSITY OF DARUSSALAM GONTOR, 2025.
- [25] C. Gallien, “Tawḥīd and the Theological Structure of Islamic Knowledge,” *Islam. Stud. J.*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 3–24, 2024, doi: 10.1163/29502276-20240016.