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Agro-Ecotheology in Qur'anic Interpretation: An Analysis of Surah Al-A'raf Verse 58 in Al-Misbah Tafsir Using Sustainable Eco farming Theory

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Abstract: The environmental crisis currently affecting the globe is not merely a technical and ecological problem, but also affects the spiritual and moral dimensions of humanity universally. This research elaborates on the interrelation between humans, God, and nature in the agricultural world based on insights from the concept of agriculture in the Qur'an, using thematic interpretation analysis. These insights emerge from the degradation of farmers' (anthropogenic) activities that are environmentally unfriendly, exploitative-egocentric, and the loss of spirituality with God in agriculture. The novelty of this research lies in the concept of *agro-ecotheology*, which focuses on how to internalize the role and relationship between humans, God, and agriculture to achieve balance in the universe. This study explores the concept of land mapping (mapping of the ground) in Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 58 as a research object with a thematic interpretation approach. The concept represents the relationship between three significant and interrelated entities: God, humans, and nature, in preserving the agricultural ecology from destruction. From this understanding, the concept of "*Agro-ecotheology*" is introduced as a solution to environmental degradation issues in agriculture within a theological framework aimed at achieving sustainable agricultural development. This research is a qualitative library research study using the *maudhû'i* interpretation method. This method is used to explore the concept of agriculture in the Qur'an through thematic interpretation with an *Eco farming* sustainable theory approach. The combination of agricultural concepts with sustainable eco-farming based on the Qur'an is a combination of the relationship between: God, humans, and nature. In the Qur'an, all are subjects of God's creatures who have the same rights and obligations, so nature is not an object but a facility given by God. A misguided understanding of religion considers that protecting the agricultural environment is not a form of worship, so it is neglected and does not even have a place in religion. This causes humans to be indifferent because it is not a command from God and is not part of their beliefs. Therefore, an ecological concept of agriculture through sustainable eco-farming based on the Qur'an is needed to maintain stability and relevance between nature, plants, and humans.

Keywords: Agroecotheology; Al-Misbah Tafsir; Agricultural ecological crisis; sustainable eco farming; Thematic interpretation

Introduction

The various dynamics and complexities of problems in agricultural ecology are empirically dominated by farmers' activities *(anthropogenic)* that are not environmentally friendly. Thus, the threat of damage has an impact on the fulfillment of human food needs. Kristiyanto (2018) explains that the decline in the quantity and quality of agricultural yields is caused by massive environmentally unfriendly management[1] , which causes the land to become continuously degraded, rendering it critical or unproductive. On the other hand, weather and climate fluctuations pose a separate challenge , resulting in a decline or failure of harvests in terms of both quantity and quality.

Baidi (2023) further states that fundamental ecological damage is caused by environmentally unfriendly agricultural activities[2] , such as the excessive use of chemical fertilizers and the

[1] Kristiyanto, *et.al.*, "Ecology-Based Agricultural Land Conservation in the Dieng Wonosobo Highlands," in *Edusaintek National Seminar,* FMIPA UNIMUS, 2018, p. 108

[2] Ribut Baidi, *et.al.*, "The Green Revolution Movement in Islamic Boarding Schools to Prevent Ecological Damage," in *Journal of Islamic Thought, Education and Research,* Vol. 9 No. 2 Year 2023, p. 51

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disproportionate use of water sources through irrigation systems, which actually damage the water sources themselves. The proportion of human involvement in agricultural activities dominates as the main cause that determines the sustainability of the agricultural system. Human dominance has opportunities that are partially beneficial to humans, but on the other hand, it has a negative impact on agricultural ecology if we do not understand the essence and substance of the relationship between humans and agriculture.

An agricultural system that implements the theological values in the Qur'an through a *sustainable eco-farming* approach harmonizes the linearity of all His creations. An agricultural system that internalizes His attributes *of mercy* and *compassion* in the form of goodness for the universe to all His creatures, such as plants or crops. Environmentally friendly agriculture is in harmony with the purpose of life without intimidating other creatures. The concept *of agroecotheology* was born as a response to the agricultural environmental crisis that continues to erode with each passing era and faces *pressure* from various polemical issues. *Agroecotheology* is a solution amid the dynamics of sustainable agriculture by promoting the principles of God, the principles of the Qur'an, and environmentally friendly balance in realizing *sustainable agricultural development.*

Agroecology can be defined as the science that studies the interaction between agricultural ecosystems and the natural environment and its impact on the sustainability of agriculture in the future. Meanwhile, theology is a religious belief and understanding of the relationship between humans and God or spiritual reality. In the context *of agroecotheology,* it focuses on understanding and practicing agriculture that is in harmony with religious and ecological values. This includes ethical considerations in agriculture, human responsibility for creation, and the role of religion in guiding how we interact with nature and natural resources. *Agroecotheology* can be the basis for developing ecologically and morally sustainable agriculture, taking into account the impact of agriculture on nature, the environment, and society. The concept *of agroecotheology* aims to build awareness and commitment to sustainable agriculture that has a positive impact on ecosystems and society as a whole.

Materials and Methods

1. How is the Concept of Agroecotheology Interpreted in the Qur'an (Analysis of QS. Al-'Araf Verse 58 in Tafsir Al-Misbah)
2. How is *agroecotheology* relevant to modern agricultural systems?

Literature Review

The Concept of Agroecotheology

Agroecology can be defined as the science that studies the interaction between agricultural ecosystems and the natural environment and its impact on the sustainability of agriculture in the future. Meanwhile, theology is a religious belief and understanding of the relationship between humans and God or spiritual reality. In the context *of agroecotheology,* the focus is on understanding and practicing agriculture in harmony with religious and ecological values. This includes ethical considerations in agriculture, human responsibility for creation, and the role of religion in guiding how we interact with nature and natural resources. *Agroecotheology* can be the basis for developing ecologically and morally sustainable agriculture, taking into account the impact of agriculture on nature, the environment, and society. The concept *of agroecotheology* aims to build awareness and commitment to sustainable agriculture that has a positive impact on ecosystems and society as a whole.

Research on sustainable agriculture or nature-friendly farming systems provides evidence that sustainable agriculture can increase productivity more than conventional agriculture, which is influenced by agricultural mechanization. A *study* of 286 sustainable agriculture projects in 57 developing countries in Africa, Asia, and the Americas in 1999 and 2000 showed an average yield increase of up to 79%. These systems apply more efficient water use techniques, the use of organic materials in the soil and carbon sequestration, and

the control of pests, weeds and plant diseases using integrated pest management techniques. In that year, 12.6 million farmers adopted sustainable agricultural practices on an area of 37 million hectares, equivalent to 3% of the arable land in Africa, Asia, and Latin America.[3] Therefore, in order to restore an agricultural system that can meet human needs and environmental needs, we must return to an environmentally friendly agricultural system. Allah SWT created the agricultural environment as a facility to sustain life in a sustainable manner.

Environmentally friendly agriculture through the theory *of sustainable eco-farming* has various benefits, both for the environment, the farming community, and society in general, such as: reduced pollution, balanced nutrient cycles, improved soil health, higher quality agricultural products, improved food security, the welfare of the farming community, the preservation of biodiversity, and the preservation of natural resources. Environmentally friendly agriculture through *sustainable eco-farming* theory creates *a win-win situation* where the environment, agricultural communities, and the wider community can reap the benefits. By maintaining agricultural sustainability, we can maintain the sustainability of the agricultural system and ensure that natural resources and food are available for future generations.

An agricultural system that implements the theological values in the Qur'an through a *sustainable eco-farming* approach harmonizes the linearity of all His creations. An agricultural system that internalizes His attributes *of mercy* and *compassion* in the form of goodness for the universe to all His creatures, such as plants or crops. Environmentally friendly agriculture is in harmony with the purpose of life without intimidating other creatures. The concept *of agroecotheology* was born as a response to the agricultural environmental crisis that continues to erode with each passing era and faces *pressure* from various polemical issues. *Agroecotheology* is a solution amid the dynamics of sustainable agriculture by promoting the principles of God, the principles of the Qur'an, and environmentally friendly balance in realizing *sustainable agricultural development.*

b. Review of Ecological Concepts in the Context of Religion

The interaction between humans, the environment, and agriculture has interrelated relationships and causality. Patterns of social change in society with an increase in population have an indirect effect on agricultural land. An increase in population means an increase in settlements and a decrease in agricultural land. On the other hand, agricultural land that was originally used as productive agricultural land is now being replaced by non-agricultural businesses. Changes in the use of natural resources lead to changes in land use.[4]

Ecofarming is a combination of two words, namely eco and *farming.* Eco is a manifestation of the term ecology, which refers to all reciprocal relationships between living things and the environment. Agroecology is a combination of three words, namely *agro*, which means agriculture, *eco,* which means environment, and *logos,* which means science. Simply put, agroecology is defined as the science of the agricultural environment.[5] Agricultural ecology, commonly referred to as agroecology, is defined as the science that studies the agricultural environment. In general, the definition of agricultural ecology is the science that studies the relationship between biotic and abiotic factors in agriculture or the science that studies living things and their habitats. Tola defines agriculture as an activity carried out in farming or growing plants in an environment that has undergone succession and is related to other agricultural activities.

Ecological systems are formed as a result of mutualistic symbiotic interactions or mutually beneficial processes between living things and their environment. According to Susanto, in agricultural ecology, biotic and abiotic systems are components that can be regulated in such a way as to be beneficial. The functional and ecological unit is the

[3] Rukmana, *et.al., Sustainable Agriculture: Why, What and Important Lessons from Other Countries,* Makassar: Faculty of Agriculture, Hasanuddin University, 2012, p. 4

[4] Yeni Widowaty, *Law Enforcement Against the Conversion of Food Agricultural Land for Housing,* Yogyakarta: UMY Press, 2020, p. 3

[5] Bargumuno, *Agricultural Ecology,* Yogyakarta: Leutika Pro, 2012, p. 1

ecosystem, which includes organisms and the abiotic environment, each of which influences the characteristics of the other. The biotic system is a component of the ecosystem, which is classified as a biotic system in the form of living things such as insects, humans, clang, and other types of living things, where each forms a food chain. Usually, in a biotic ecosystem, a community will form.[6]

Tobias Lanslor states in his book *History of Agriculture* that the development of sustainable global food supplies has an impact on the long-term survival of species, so care must be taken to ensure that agricultural methods remain in harmony with the environment. The history of agriculture is the story of human development and the improvement of processes for producing food, feed, fiber, fuel, and other goods by systematically cultivating plants and raising animals.

The development of modern agricultural systems has had a significant impact on the loss of ecological foundations. In response to environmental degradation, a term has emerged that combines the principles of agriculture with the environment, better known as eco-friendly agriculture *or ecofarming.* The goal of ecological agricultural systems is to refocus attention on the importance of ecological foundations and existing agricultural land conditions. The development of ecological production methods is particularly important for regions that rely primarily on agriculture. This is due to the conditions in tropical and subtropical regions, which are not easily altered by humans. Therefore, it is necessary to develop forms of management that can maintain and improve the condition of agricultural land.[7]

In agricultural environmental management, the process of natural balance must be prioritized so that it can encourage the functioning of natural control mechanisms such as the use of natural enemies, cultivation of healthy plants, and use of resistant varieties. In a balanced state, pest populations can be suppressed and maintained at levels that are not harmful. As a result, pest control efforts in such a stable environment can proceed naturally and will lead to the creation of a pattern of environmental sustainability in agriculture. The study of ecology is the understanding of the structure, function, and interaction of living things in a unity with all the objects around them.[8]

Afrasiabi, in his work *Towards an Islamic Ecotheology,* explains the relationship between Islam, religion, and the environment. In religious studies, ecology has become a central concept as a movement for the preservation and protection of nature, including the environment. The *religious* meaning *of ecological conservatism* is a militant movement for intellectual religious scholars in the use of nature for modern civilization in the future. Then Ozdemir, in his work *The Ethical Dimension of Human Attitude,* analyzes the Islamic ethical treasure trove regarding the environment that can be implemented by humans. Sharia sources (the Qur'an and hadith) form the basis of human argumentation and ethical attitudes in their interaction with nature[9] .

c. Biography and Interpretation of M. Quraish Shihab

Muhammad Quraish Shihab was born in Sindenreng Rappang Regency (Sindrap),[10] , South Sulawesi Province on February 16, 1944. Muhammad Quraish Shihab came from a fairly modest family that strongly adhered to religious principles, so it can be said that M. Quraish Shihab grew up and developed in a religious family. He was born to a father named Habib Abdurrahman Shihab (1905-1986), a scholar of Tafsir, who was the rector (chancellor) of the Alaudin Ujung Pandang State Islamic Institute (IAIN) in South Sulawesi Province (1972-1977), and the founder of UMI (Indonesian Muslim University) located in Ujung

[6] Kiki Kristiandi, *et.al., Agricultural Ecology,* Medan: Kita Menulis Foundation, 2021, p. 15

[7] This argument is found in the introduction to the book by Joachim Metzner and N Daljhoeni. *Ekofarming, Bertani Selaras Alam (Ecofarming, Farming in Harmony with Nature),* Jakarta: PT Karya Unipress Jakarta, first edition March 1987, p. 27.

[8] Rosma Hasibuan. *Agricultural Ecology: Plant Protection,* Bandar Lampung, Lampung: CV Aura Lampung, 2017, pp. 106-107.

[9] Husni Thamrin, "Reconstruction of Eco-Religio-Culture Ethical Values," in *National Seminar on Environmental Preservation (SENPLING),* 2018, p. 4.

[10] The capital of this district is Pangkajene, located 183 km from Makassar, the capital of South Sulawesi Province. It covers an area of 1,883.25 km2, with 11 subdistricts, 38 urban villages, and 65 villages.

Pandang (1959-1965).[11] M. Quraish Shihab studied Al-Qur'an and tafsir at Al-Azhar As-Syarif University, Cairo, Egypt in 1967 and obtained his Lc degree, while he obtained his Master's degree (MA) from the same university in 1969. After completing his master's degree in Qur'anic studies and interpretation, he returned to Indonesia and served as a lecturer and vice rector for academic and student affairs at Alauddin University in Ujung Pandang.

d. Interpretation Methods

Tafsir al-Misbah is a book of Indonesian tafsir written by Prof. M. Quraish Shihab. M. Quraish Shihab is one of Indonesia's most popular mufasir (exegetes) and is still alive today. Tafsir Al-Mishbah is a complete 30-juz tafsir that uses the tahlili method in its writing, as is common in tartib mushafi tafsir. The tahlili method of exegesis by Baqir al-Shadr, referred to as tajzi'i, is a method of exegesis that pays attention to the sequence of verses in the Qur'an as they appear in the Qur'anic mushaf. Although this method is considered very comprehensive, it does not cover a single topic exhaustively, as each topic is discussed in the following section.[12] According to al-Farmawi in his book al-Bidâyah fî al-Tafsîr al-Maudhû`i, he divides the methods of interpretation into four parts. First, the tahlili (analytical) method, which is an interpretation that attempts to describe all aspects contained in the verses being interpreted in accordance with the tartib mushafi sequence in the Uthmani Qur'an mushaf. Examples of this method are Tafsir al-Kabir by Fahruddin al-Razi, Tafsir Al-Qur'an al-Karim by Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Manar by M. Abduh and M. Rasyid Ridha, and Tafsir al-Azhar by Hamka.[13]

M. Quraish Shihab demonstrates an awareness of the relative nature of interpretation, which then prompts him to propose a model of reading based on a linguistic approach. For Shihab, the linguistic approach plays a very important role in the process of interpreting the Qur'an. On the one hand, this approach has the potential to reduce various speculations of meaning and bind interpretations to defined semantic boundaries. On the other hand, the absence of elaboration on linguistic meaning will make an interpreter unable to understand the essence of the Qur'anic text properly. Therefore, this approach is seriously applied by Quraish Shihab in the compilation of Tafsir al-Misbah, where the linguistic approach is one of the main characteristics of the interpretation.

In practice, Quraish Shihab always begins his analysis by presenting several in-depth linguistic discussions, including an exploration of key terms in each verse. In addition, he also often mentions *asbab an-nuzul,* as well as tracing the roots of words to find the original meanings of these terms. The purpose of this approach is to provide readers with a basic understanding of a verse before they move on to a deeper understanding of the relationship or significance of that verse in the context of the Qur'an as a whole.

Although Shihab places strong emphasis on linguistic analysis, he also stresses the importance of contextual reading. This is done to avoid interpreters becoming trapped in interpretations that refer only to textual meanings. For him, rigidly worshipping the text will only hinder the potential of these meanings and make them inapplicable in real life. Therefore, a contextual approach is key to ensuring that the messages of the Qur'an can be properly applied in the context of society. Quraish Shihab uses this approach in an effort to prove that the Qur'an as the book of Allah remains relevant and capable of adapting to the times.[14]

Quraish Shihab's style of interpretation is understood to be moderate in his choice of words, always prioritizing balance. His educational background at Al-Azhar University has shaped him into a figure who supports Islam *washatiyyah*. He explains that diversity, both religious diversity and differences of opinion within a religion, must be treated with tolerance and moderation, as well as behavior that upholds the value of brotherhood. This religious attitude always upholds the principles of dialogue in resolving issues. Therefore, it is not acceptable to judge or accuse someone of

[11] Muhd Najib Abdul Kadir, Mazlan Ibrahim, 2009, Critical Study of Al-Misbah Interpretation, UKM Publisher, p.1

[12] Zainul Arifin, Characteristics of Al-Misbah Interpretation, in *Al-Ifkar Journal,* Vol. 7 No. 1 Year 2020. p. 16

[13] M. Quraish Shihab. et.*al,*. History and Ulumul Qur`an, Jakarta: Pustaka Firdaus, 1999, pp. 30-37

[14] Farid Hasan, Map of M. Quraish Shihab's Thought, in *Journal of Discourse on Qur'anic Studies in Indonesia,* Vol. 17 No. 34 Year 2021, p. 17

being an infidel, apostate, or heretic without first conducting an investigation or interview. With a moderate attitude, all aspects of human life can become a blessing for the universe.[15]

Discussion

a. **The Concept *of Maping of Ground* (Agricultural Land Mapping)**

Agriculture is one of the main sectors in the national sustainable development index. National development relies on agrarian or agricultural sectors as the main basis for sustaining life, both now and in the future. This is a commitment of every country to pay attention to *sustainable development* in order to achieve national prosperity by considering aspects of economic, ecological, and social sustainability.[16] In realizing the nation's ideals, the agrarian system must receive serious attention amid the threat of various problems. The problems that arise are not only in one sector but are multi-sectoral and must be resolved. Several sectors are affected, as stated by Salim (2011), namely that the exploitation of natural resources exceeds their ecological *carrying capacity,* causing various impacts such as economic, social, ecological, cultural, and even health impacts. To support sustainable development through the agricultural system, the focus should not only be on how to fulfill the economic sector by increasing production factors. However, the problem for the future and the long term is the degradation of the agricultural environment, in this case, the destruction of soil ecology. In fact, one of the pillars in increasing production factors is good and fertile soil conditions. Islam pays close attention to the concept of how fertile soil can produce abundant yields over a long period of time for the benefit of mankind. This can be found in Surah al-'Araf/7: 58

وَٱلْبَلَدُ ٱلطَّيِّبُ يَخْرُجُ نَبَاتُهُۥ بِإِذْنِ رَبِّهِۦ ۖ وَٱلَّذِى خَبُثَ لَا يَخْرُجُ إِلَّا نَكِدًا ۚ كَذَٰلِكَ نُصَرِّفُ ٱلْءَايَٰتِ for a people who are grateful.

And the good land, its plants grow lush with Allah's permission; and the barren land, its plants only grow withered. Thus We repeat the signs of (Our) greatness for those who are grateful .(QS. al-'Araf/7: 58)[17]

Surah al-'Araf means high places with various meanings contained therein. Surah al-'Araf consists of 206 verses which were revealed in Mecca before the Prophet migrated to Medina. Shihab said that this surah was revealed as a warning of the severity of worldly and spiritual punishment for those who turn away from the call of the Prophets. The call and message of the Prophet and messengers include: belief in monotheism, *the Day of Resurrection,* certainty, and loyalty.[18]

In verse 7:58 of Surah al-A'raf, Allah describes how good soil will produce lush vegetation, while poor and barren soil will produce stunted vegetation. The Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs explains that there are various types of soil on earth, both fertile and infertile. Although rain falls and waters the earth equally, soil has varying levels of fertility. Some soil can grow various types of plants and produce food, while other soil cannot.[19] From a religious perspective, this is *a parable (*analogy) of how barren and arid land can be brought to life by Allah, just as Allah has decreed that *the Day of Resurrection* will come.

According to M. Quraish Shihab verse , this means that the soil on earth has two categories: good and fertile soil, and soil that is not good. Good and fertile soil, even if it receives only a little rain, can grow various kinds of plants well. Meanwhile, soil that is not good or barren, even if it receives heavy rain, will produce plants that wither and yield nothing in accordance with where they grow. Plants grow abundantly in fertile soil because they receive special blessings from Allah SWT and are permitted to become the best. This is different from plants that do not grow in barren or arid soil and do not receive blessings and permission from Allah SWT, so they cannot grow well. This is then used as a parable for the nature of humans, namely that there are those who possess good qualities and those who possess bad qualities. Humans who are good receive special treatment from Allah SWT, namely those

[15] Farid Hasan, Map of M. Quraish Shihab's Thought,…. pp. 18

[16] Dahuri, "Sustainable Agricultural Development: From an Economic, Social, and Ecological Perspective." *Agrimedia Journal*, Vol. 4 No. 1 Year 1998, p. 23

[17] QS. al-'Araf/7: 58

[18] M. Quraish Shihab, *The Qur'an and Its Meaning*, Tangerang: Lentera Hati, 2013, p. 36

[19]Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, *Al-Qur'an and Its Interpretation*, Jakarta: Al-Qur'an Printing Institute of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2009, p. 159.

who have a pure heart and strive to draw themselves closer to Allah SWT through religious obligations and His Sunnah. This means that they have received permission from Allah SWT to use the blessings from Allah SWT properly.[20] However, on the contrary, people who possess bad traits do not receive the blessing of guidance from Allah SWT, but instead face calamities and punishment from Allah SWT.

Based on ecology, soil is classified into three constituent groups, namely living material or biotic factors such as microorganisms, non-living or abiotic factors such as organic matter, and abiotic factors such as sand, dust, and clay.[21] According to Sari, soil fertility is a condition in which the state and ability of the soil can stimulate and support good soil growth with various components within it, such as chemical, biological, and physical components. Fertile soil has the following criteria:

1. Has a thick humus layer
2. Has a neutral pH
3. Has a clay texture
4. Rich in soil biota or microorganisms[22]

Fertile soil is soil that contains a variety of nutrients and minerals that are good for plants. It is important to map the soil so that plants grow well. If soil mapping and improvement are not carried out, plants will grow in vain or be unproductive. In addition, each plant also requires different nutrients and minerals.

The causes of infertile soil can be influenced by the introduction of substances or chemicals that are not compatible with the soil's ecology. Another cause is excessive doses of drugs or pesticides, which can damage the soil structure. Not only does this have an impact on the environment, but pesticides also have a residual impact on agriculture. It is important to realize that these negative impacts need to be minimized in order to achieve *sustainable agriculture.* The agricultural system in Indonesia, for example, measures the success of agriculture only in terms of crop yield, without considering other aspects that can affect the agricultural system in the long term.[23]

The word for "land" in the Qur'an is mentioned in various forms, such as: **بلد** in Surah al-'Araf/7: 58, Surah Ibrahim/14: 35, Surah an-Nahl/16: 7, Surah Fatir/35: 9, the name of a specific surah, namely *al-Balad* in the first verse, and Surah at-Tin/93: 3. Then another form of the word **بلد** is بلدا in Surah al-Baqarah/2: 126, بلدة in Surah al-Furqân/25: 49.[24] There are two mentions in the Qur'an of good and bad land, namely the word **ٱلْبَلَدُ ٱلطَّيِّب** , which means good or fertile land, while bad, infertile land, or land that cannot grow crops is referred to in the Qur'an with the word **بَلَدٍ مَّيْتٍ** which means dead land.

Land mapping is also found in Surah ar-Ra'du/13: 4

وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قِطَعٌ مُّتَجٰوِرٰتٌ وَجَنّٰتٌ مِنْ أَعْنٰبٍ وَزَرْعٍ وَنَخِيلٌ صِنْوَانٌ وَغَيْرُ صِنْوَانٍ يُسْقَى بِمَاءٍ وَحِدٍ

And We detail some of them over others in terms of food. Indeed, in that is a sign for a people who understand

And on this earth are tracts, one next to another, and vineyards, and fields of crops, and palm trees, some of them growing in clusters and some of them not, all watered with the same water. We make some of them excel others in taste. Indeed, in that are signs for a people who think.[25]

Implicitly, Allah SWT gives a hint that there are different parts and layers of soil on the earth. The phrase **وَفِي الْأَرْضِ قِطَعٌ مُّتَجٰوِرٰتٌ**(And on the earth are adjacent parts). Ibn Kathir interprets this sentence as "on earth there are parts of soil that are adjacent to one another but are different.[26] Good soil is characterized by its ability to grow plants that are useful to humans, while poor soil is unable to grow even a single tree.

Indonesian exegete Quraish Shihab interprets this verse in relation to soil science, geophysics, geology, and environmental sciences, and how they

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[20] M . Quraish Shihab, *Grounding the Qur'an: The Function of the Qur'an and the Role of Revelation in Society,* Bandung: PT Mizan Pustaka, 2013, p. 124.

[21] Hanafiah Kemas, *Fundamentals of Soil Science.* Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2005, p. 17

[22] Anggun Zuhaida, "Scientific Description of the Influence of Soil on Plant Growth: A Study of QS. Al A'raf Verse 58," in *Thabiea: Journal of Natural Science Teaching,* Vol. 1 No. 2 Year 2018, pp. 64-65

[23] Elfin Efendi. "Implementation of Sustainable Agricultural Systems in Supporting Agricultural Production." In *Warta Dharmawangsa Scientific Journal,* ed. 47, 2016, pp. 3-5.

[24] Abdul Baqi, *Mu'jam Mufahras lî ahfadzil Qur'an,* Egypt: Dâr al Ma'rifah, 2022, pp. 305-306.

[25] Surah ar-Ra'du/13: 4

[26] Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir Ibn Kathir,* Volume IV, Jakarta: Pustaka Imam Asy-Syafi'i, 2013, p. 103

affect on plant growth and characteristics.[27] It is also explained that scientifically, soil consists of various types of mineral particles and components such as organic substances (through photosynthesis), human activity, air, and water from rain. Shihab explains that there are millions of microscopic living creatures in the soil, varying in number and form in every gram of agricultural soil. All of Allah SWT's creations are signs of His power, increasing a servant's awe and wonder of Allah SWT. This is also true in the creation of soil with all its types and forms, whether biological, physical, or chemical.

Modern science has revealed that good soil is soil with high nitrogen content, so that there are many living creatures in it that serve to fertilize plants. Bacteria living in the soil play a role in decomposing materials that serve to create a good ecology for the soil. From the explanation and description in Surah ar-Ra'du/13: 4, in order to obtain a good, economical, and ecological agricultural system to achieve *sustainable agriculture* and *sustainable development through* effective and efficient management, the following is formulated:

1. *Mapping treatment*, by implementing a soil planning system based on soil type, crops, and season
2. Continuously conserving the soil
3. Implementing crop rotation according to the season and crop type
4. Making nutrients readily available by using organic fertilizers based on needs
5. Implementing agricultural processes from upstream to downstream based on fairness for humans, plants, animals, the environment, and agriculture.
6. Implementing agricultural systems with environmentally friendly technology to assist and facilitate agricultural systems in achieving food sovereignty.

b. The Concept of Agriculture in the Context of *Agroecology*

1. *Agroecotheology* as an Answer to the Ecological Crisis in Agriculture

The Qur'an provides guidelines and instructions regarding the management of the universe with all its natural resources. In the history of human civilization, Allah SWT has entrusted us with natural resources. The management of the universe is based on the principle of benefit and prevention of harm (*lâ dharâra walâ dhirâra).* Human ecological characteristics must grow based on the principle of linearity between humans and the environment. One of the resources that humans depend on as capital for obtaining food is agriculture.

Agriculture is a part of nature that was created in an orderly and harmonious manner.[28] Humans, as caliphs on earth, have the authority to utilize agriculture to obtain food. With this authority, humans have a great responsibility in managing the agricultural system from the preparation process to the harvesting process. With technological advances, all processes are created instantly to obtain results in a short time. With all these conveniences, agricultural ecology has been neglected, which has led to degradation and damage.

Agroecotheology can be seen as a holistic approach to addressing ecological crises related to agriculture. Agricultural ecological crises include various problems, such as soil erosion, land degradation, environmental damage due to excessive use of pesticides and chemical fertilizers, and issues of inequality in access to agricultural resources. Here are some ways in which agroecotheology can be the answer to the ecological crisis in agriculture. First, a holistic approach that emphasizes the importance of treating agriculture as an integral part of a larger ecosystem. This means considering the long-term consequences of agricultural practices on biodiversity, ecosystem balance, and soil health.

Second, respect for resource constraints to encourage more prudent agriculture in the use of natural resources such as water, land, and energy. This includes practices such as efficient water management, the application of soil conservation techniques, and the use of renewable energy to reduce the environmental footprint. Third, ethics and social responsibility that combine ethical aspects in agriculture with attention to social justice, ensuring fair access to agricultural resources for all, and paying attention to the welfare of farmers and

[27] M. Quraish Shihab. *Al-Lubab; Meaning, Purpose, and Lessons from the Surahs of* the Qur'an. Tangerang: Lentera hati, 2012, 43

[28] M. Qurasih Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbah: Messages, Impressions, and*, Volume 11, ... pp. 501-502.

rural communities. Fourth, education and awareness by providing farmers and communities with a better understanding of the importance of protecting the environment, introducing environmentally friendly agricultural techniques, and encouraging a more prudent attitude towards the use of natural resources.

Through the integration of spiritual and religious values with sustainable and ethical agricultural practices, agroecotheology can become the foundation for a paradigm shift in agriculture towards a more environmentally friendly and sustainable system. This can be a way to overcome some of the problems faced by modern agriculture, by respecting and appreciating the diversity of nature and the role of humans in caring for the earth.

2. *Hifdzul Bi'ah Az-Dzirâ'ah* as a Manifestation *of* Agroecotheology

Preserving the environment or *hidzul bi'ah* is a manifestation of one's faith. This is because preserving the environment is a priority and is considered *fardu kifayah (*a collective obligation) for every human being. Preserving the agricultural environment is a preventive method in tackling the ongoing food crisis. Islam, as an environmentally friendly religion or *green religion,* views the environment as a mediator in implementing forms *of worship* by creating benefits. Husein al-Munawwar in al-Zarqa says that preserving the spirit of Islam and the noble values contained therein in the form of fiqh law includes: maintaining the benefits of preserving the environment ([29]), avoiding harm by paying attention to the actual situation and conditions that occur.

The concept of preserving the agricultural environment can be formulated in a *theological fiqh* study based on the principles *of Maqasid Syaria'ah.* Preserving the environment or agricultural ecology has an impact on human survival. Preserving human life (*Hifdz an Nafs)* is part of the objectives of Sharia as stated by al-Syatibi in *al-Muawafaqat*.[30] One way of preserving human life is by avoiding anything that can directly or indirectly cause death. Direct forms of harm that can take human life include war, murder, and other acts of physical violence. Meanwhile, indirect forms of harm that can threaten human life include food crises. One of the causes of food crises is agricultural environmental crises, which lead to crop failure or reduced productivity. It can be concluded that preserving human life is equivalent to preserving the agricultural ecology that supports human life itself, thus having equal importance.

In maintaining sustainable agricultural ecology, conservation is an alternative in preventing and minimizing damage that will occur. The most influential factor is the pattern of human interaction with the environment. The relationship between humans and agriculture is carried out almost every day and on an ongoing basis. Humans can continuously influence agricultural ecology either by managing or exploiting it, depending on their motives and objectives. Conversely, nature or agricultural ecology can influence humans through all forms of change and technological advances. Julian Steward believes that adaptive human behavior can be described by understanding the mechanisms and technologies used in the interaction between humans and the environment. However, this relationship is not direct, but rather mediated by values, knowledge, and beliefs that form a cultural pattern.[31]

Ali Yafie, in his work, Menggagas Fiqh Lingkungan Hidup (Conceptualizing Environmental Fiqh), explains that *hifz al-bi'ah* falls into the category of urgent matters in *kulliyat* issues, making *hidz al-bi'ah* part of *Maqasid Syariah*.[32] Concepts in the realm of preserving agricultural ecology that lead to the concept *of hifdzul al-bi'ah* are part of the implementation of faith. As stated in the verses of the Qur'an, the Sharia law of preserving or conserving ecology in general and in particular is a definitive argument. Likewise, the prohibition of causing damage, the threat to perpetrators of destruction, the existence of nature and humans, and the pattern of their relationship are clearly described in the Qur'an.

[29] Said Agil Husin Al-Munawwar, "Al-Qawa'id a]-Fiqhiyyah in the perspective of Islamic Law", in *al-ldmi'ah: journal of Islamic Studies,* No. 62, Yogyakarta, IAIN Sunan Kalijaga, 1998, p. 97.

[30] al-Syathibi, *al-Muwafaqat,* Volume 1, Juz 2, Beirut: Dâr al-Kitâb 'Ilmîyyah, 2003, p. 15.

[31] Laksono, *et.al., The Arfak Community and the Concept of Conservation,* Yogyakarta: UGM Asia Pacific Study Center, 2001, p. 17

[32] M. Ali Yafie, *Proposing Environmental Ethics,* Bandung: Mizan, 1994, pp. 223-225.

Hifdzul Bi'ah Az-Dzirâ'ah is a concept that means "protecting and caring for the agricultural environment" or "agricultural environmental conservation." This term reflects the concept in Islam that encourages Muslims to preserve, care for, and protect nature and natural resources as a manifestation of their faith. It is based on religious principles that emphasize the responsibility of humans as khalifah (stewards or caretakers) on earth. The importance of "*Hifdzul Bi'ah Az-Dzirâ'ah"* as a manifestation of faith can be explained as follows:

1. Obedience to Allah SWT's mandate. In Islam, humans are considered khalifah on earth, and Allah has given them the mandate (amanat) to care for and protect nature and create balance in His creation. Therefore, protecting nature is a duty and responsibility for humans as part of their obedience to Allah.
2. The wisdom in utilizing natural resources. This means that Islam teaches its followers to utilize natural resources, but wisely and not excessively. This concept reflects an appreciation for the goodness of nature and an understanding that neglect or excessive exploitation will damage the natural environment and harm future generations.
3. Concern for the welfare of other creatures. Islam teaches us to treat other creatures well, including plants, animals, and nature as a whole. Caring for nature is a way to ensure the welfare of these creatures, reflecting a sincere sense of concern and love for Allah's creation.
4. Environmental preservation for future generations. Preserving nature is a form of long-term investment for future generations. Islam encourages its followers to leave a good legacy for their descendants, and preserving nature is an important part of that legacy.

The meaning *of Hifdzul Bi'ah Az-Dzirâ'ah* in the context of Islam is an action that reflects faith and awareness of moral responsibility towards agricultural ecology. It is a tangible manifestation of environmental ethics in Islam and underlines the importance of protecting and caring for nature as a duty carried out with respect for the creation of Allah SWT.

Conclusions

The concept *of agroecotheology* is an elaboration of three entities, namely God, humans, and nature in the agricultural sphere by reducing agricultural concepts. First, land mapping in relation to agroecotheology highlights the important role of religion in guiding the sustainable use of agricultural land. Through religion-based land mapping, farmers or agricultural practitioners are guided to understand that land management must be in line with religious teachings and ecological principles to maintain soil fertility and sustainability. Second, water mapping in *agroecotheology* not only highlights the physical and technical aspects of water management in agriculture, but also incorporates spiritual and religious dimensions into wise and sustainable management for the sake of human and nature's survival. Third, the concept of balance in *agroecotheology* is an effort to achieve harmony between human agricultural activities, natural ecosystems, and spiritual values upheld by religious teachings, with the hope of realizing prosperity for humans and sustainability for the environment. Fourth, Prophet Yusuf As can be interpreted as an action that reflects the principles of sustainability in natural resource management to ensure long-term food security. This concept teaches the importance of planning, management, and wisdom in agricultural management in line with the spiritual values reflected in religious teachings. *Agroecotheology* can be the basis for developing ecologically and morally sustainable agriculture, taking into account the impact of agriculture on nature, the environment, and society. The concept *of agroecotheology* aims to build awareness and commitment to sustainable agriculture that has a positive impact on ecosystems and society as a whole.

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