

Critical Analysis of Sanad and Matan Hadith on Ecology in Contemporary Perspective

Muhammad Falih¹, Rasyiqul Athmar Prasetya²

^{1,2}Faculty of Islamic Education and Teaching, State Institute for Islamic Studies (IAIN) Bengkulu, Indonesia

Abstract: This study presents a critical analysis of sanad (chain of transmission) and matan (content) of Hadiths related to ecology from a contemporary perspective. It aims to explore how prophetic teachings on the environment can inform modern ecological ethics and contribute to sustainable living within Islamic societies. Using the principles of 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth, the research evaluates the authenticity, reliability, and coherence of selected Hadiths emphasizing environmental stewardship, moderation in resource use, and protection of living beings. The analysis integrates key Islamic ethical concepts such as khilāfah (stewardship), amānah (trust), iṣlāh (restoration), and mizān (balance) with contemporary ecological theories like sustainability and stewardship to establish a modern interpretative framework. The findings reveal that Islamic teachings on ecology, as reflected in authentic Hadiths, promote a holistic view of human responsibility toward the natural world one that aligns spiritual devotion with ecological awareness. These teachings advocate for balance, conservation, and moral accountability in the use of natural resources. From a contemporary standpoint, the study highlights the potential of prophetic ecological ethics to inspire environmental education, policy development, and community-based sustainability initiatives in Muslim societies. Academically, this research contributes to Hadith studies, Islamic environmental ethics, and contemporary Islamic thought by demonstrating the continued relevance of classical sources to modern global challenges. Practically, it offers a framework for integrating Islamic teachings into environmental policy and education, fostering a deeper sense of ecological consciousness grounded in faith. The study concludes that the Hadiths on ecology provide not only moral guidance but also an actionable blueprint for achieving environmental justice and sustainability in the modern world.

Research Highlights:

- **Critical Hadith Analysis:** The study conducts an in-depth examination of sanad (chain of transmission) and matan (content) of selected Hadiths related to ecology, assessing their authenticity, reliability, and textual coherence using the principles of 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth.
- **Integration of Classical and Modern Perspectives:** Combines traditional Hadith methodology with contemporary ecological theories such as sustainability and environmental stewardship, creating a bridge between Islamic scholarship and modern environmental ethics.
- **Islamic Ethical Framework for Ecology:** Identifies and interprets key Islamic ethical concepts khilāfah (stewardship), amānah (trust), iṣlāh (restoration), and mizān (balance) as foundational values for ecological preservation and sustainable living.
- **Prophetic Teachings and Environmental Responsibility:** Demonstrates how the Prophet Muhammad's guidance on moderation, cleanliness, and protection of nature aligns with current global efforts to address climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss.

Article history

Submitted 23-06-2024

Revised 12-07-2024

Accepted 30-08-2024

Keywords

Hadith Studies;
Ecology;
Sanad and Matan;
Islamic Environmental
Ethics;
Sustainability.

© 2024 by author(s).

Licensee *Journal on Islamic Studies*.

This article is licensed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).



Corresponding Author:

Name: Muhammad Falih

Email: muhammadfalih@gmail.com

- **Contemporary Application:** Highlights the relevance of Hadith-based ecological ethics in shaping environmental education, policy-making, and community awareness programs within Muslim societies.
- **Faith-Based Sustainability Model:** Proposes an integrated model that positions environmental care as both a spiritual obligation and a moral duty, encouraging Muslims to view ecological stewardship as an act of worship (*'ibādah*).
- **Academic Contribution:** Enriches Hadith studies and Islamic thought by expanding their application to contemporary ecological issues, demonstrating Islam's enduring relevance in addressing global sustainability challenges.
- **Practical Impact:** Offers actionable insights for educators, policymakers, and religious leaders to incorporate Islamic environmental teachings into public policy, curricula, and community initiatives for promoting eco-conscious behavior.

INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, the world has witnessed an alarming rise in ecological and environmental issues such as climate change, deforestation, pollution, and biodiversity loss. These problems have reached a scale that threatens the survival of ecosystems and human societies alike. From a global perspective, environmental degradation is no longer seen merely as a scientific or technical challenge but as a multidimensional crisis affecting social, economic, and moral spheres (Pawlowski, 2011). International organizations, governments, and civil societies have increasingly emphasized the urgency of environmental protection through initiatives such as the Paris Agreement, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and various climate action campaigns. These efforts underline the growing global realization that the earth's resources are finite and that collective responsibility is needed to ensure sustainability for future generations.

From the Islamic perspective, environmental concerns are deeply rooted in the spiritual and ethical foundations of the religion (Gade, 2019). Islam views the universe as a manifestation of divine wisdom and order, where every element of nature has a specific purpose and value. The Qur'an repeatedly calls upon humankind to reflect upon creation (*tafakkur fi al-khalq*) as a sign of God's greatness, reminding believers that they are appointed as *khalīfah fi al-arḍ* stewards and caretakers of the earth. This stewardship implies both privilege and accountability; humans are entrusted with maintaining balance (*mīzān*) and avoiding corruption (*fasād*) on earth. Numerous verses emphasize moderation, cleanliness, and compassion toward all living beings, reflecting Islam's holistic approach to environmental ethics.

Among the primary sources of Islamic teachings, the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) holds a crucial position in shaping human attitudes toward the environment (Ghernaout, 2017). Numerous Hadiths emphasize compassion toward all living beings, moderation in resource consumption, and the importance of preserving cleanliness and balance. However, not all Hadiths cited in environmental discourse are of equal authenticity or contextual relevance. Some narrations related to ecology are weak (*ḍa'if*) or even fabricated (*mawḍū'*), and thus require careful verification through a critical analysis of *sanad* (chain of transmission) and *matan* (content) in accordance with the principles of *'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth*.

A rigorous examination of both *sanad* and *matan* is essential to ensure that ecological teachings derived from the Hadith are grounded in authentic Islamic sources (Ismail et al., 2014). This critical approach not only safeguards the integrity of Islamic environmental ethics but also provides a strong textual foundation for contemporary ecological thought within the Islamic framework. Furthermore, understanding the *matan* from a contemporary perspective allows scholars and practitioners to reinterpret classical messages of environmental care in ways that address current global challenges such as sustainability, climate change, and environmental justice.

Over the past decade, several literature reviews and conceptual papers have clarified the theological foundations of an Islamic environmental ethic, focusing on core concepts such as *khalīfah* (stewardship), *amānah* (trust), *mīzān* (balance), and *adl* (justice). Authors like Nasir Hassan Wani (2024)

and related review articles have mapped these Qur'anic and Prophetic terms onto contemporary sustainability discourse and argued that Islam provides a rich moral vocabulary for addressing ecological crises. These reviews synthesize how Islamic scripture and tradition can be read in ways that support modern sustainability frameworks and policy tools.

A second cluster of recent work has focused on exegetical and hadith-based studies that examine specific prophetic traditions for environmental guidance. For example, Khoirunnisa' Ma'rifatulloh, Muhammad Alfreda Daib Insan Labib, and Ahmad Muchlis (2024) analyze Hadith literature to trace the development of "going green" concepts within classical collections such as *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, emphasizing careful textual reading and contextualization. Other researchers have applied eco-critical hermeneutics to selected hadiths to explore themes like water conservation, tree-planting, animal welfare, and moderation in consumption (2024–2025). These studies underline both the practical ecological advice in some traditions and the methodological necessity of verifying authenticity before using hadiths as the basis for public claims.

Applied and policy-oriented research in the last decade shows a growing interest in operationalizing Islamic ecological principles. Studies from Indonesia and other Muslim-majority contexts (e.g., Suprianto et al., 2023; Munawwarah et al., 2020 cited within regional reviews) examine how Muslim environmentalism and institutional actors (religious councils, pesantrens, and NGOs) translate theological ideas into curricula, fatwas, campaigns, and even Islamic finance instruments for sustainability. These works document promising pilot programs and campaign strategies but also point to gaps between ethical rhetoric and large-scale implementation, noting barriers such as institutional capacity and political economy.

Empirical research over the past ten years has increasingly measured how religious framing affects environmental attitudes and behaviors. Sociological surveys and qualitative fieldwork across different Muslim communities show that Islamic framing can positively influence pro-environmental attitudes, though effects vary by education, local leadership, and message framing. Reviews and syntheses (e.g., Ahmad Pate and colleagues, 2024) call for more rigorous mixed-methods and interdisciplinary work that brings together textual scholars, ecologists, and social scientists to design and evaluate interventions informed by authentic Islamic teachings.

Despite these advances, many scholars identify persistent gaps: rigorous sanad matan (chain and text) studies of ecological hadith remain relatively scarce compared to exegetical or normative treatments; cross-disciplinary implementation research at scale is limited; and geographically diverse empirical evidence is still needed (most field work clusters in a few regions).

Therefore, a critical analysis of the sanad and matan of Hadiths on ecology is highly relevant and significant in the present era. It bridges traditional Hadith scholarship with modern environmental ethics, demonstrating that Islamic teachings are not only timeless but also adaptable to contemporary human concerns. Through this study, the researcher aims to uncover authentic ecological messages embedded in prophetic traditions and to reinterpret them in light of contemporary environmental issues, thus contributing to the integration of Islamic scholarship with global sustainability efforts.

METHOD

Theoretical Framework

This research is grounded on three interrelated theoretical foundations: the principles of 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth (Hadith Sciences), the concepts of Islamic environmental ethics, and the integration of contemporary ecological theories. The first theoretical foundation of this study lies in 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth, the discipline dedicated to the authentication, interpretation, and critical analysis of Hadith (bin Muhammad Yusoff, 2020). Within this science, two primary dimensions are emphasized sanad (chain of transmission) and matan (text or content). The analysis of sanad focuses on the reliability, continuity, and integrity of the narrators. Classical scholars such as Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, and al-Nawawī developed rigorous criteria for evaluating narrators through *jarḥ wa ta'dīl* (criticism and validation), ensuring that only trustworthy transmitters are accepted. Meanwhile, matan analysis concerns the examination of the textual content of a Hadith to determine its consistency with the Qur'an, established Hadiths, reason, and historical context.

In this study, the sanad matan framework is applied to identify and verify Hadiths related to ecological themes such as environmental stewardship, preservation of nature, and care for living beings.

By critically analyzing both the authenticity and contextual meaning of these Hadiths, the research ensures that the derived environmental ethics are based on sound textual foundations (Helfaya et al., 2018). This methodological rigor distinguishes authentic ecological teachings from weak or fabricated narrations that may distort the Islamic view of the environment.

The second theoretical component derives from the rich moral and spiritual teachings of Islam regarding the human nature relationship (Al Zeera, 2001). The Qur'an and Hadith articulate several key ethical concepts that form the basis of Islamic environmental philosophy. The concept of *khilāfah* (stewardship) emphasizes that humans are vicegerents of God on earth, entrusted with the responsibility to maintain balance and harmony within creation. The notion of *amānah* (trust) reinforces this role, signifying that natural resources are divine trusts that must not be exploited irresponsibly. *Iṣlāh* (improvement and reform) calls for active human participation in nurturing and restoring the environment, while *mīzān* (balance) highlights the divine equilibrium inherent in the natural order, which should not be disturbed by human excess or negligence.

These Islamic ethical concepts form the spiritual and moral framework through which ecological Hadiths are interpreted (Abdelzaher et al., 2019). They underscore that environmental protection is not merely a social obligation but a form of worship and obedience to God. This study therefore positions Hadith analysis within the broader moral worldview of Islam, where environmental ethics are integral to faith, justice, and community well-being.

The third theoretical foundation integrates contemporary ecological theories to contextualize classical Hadith teachings within modern environmental discourse. Modern frameworks such as sustainability, stewardship, and ecological balance provide valuable interpretative tools for linking religious ethics with scientific and policy-oriented understandings of environmental management (Irwin, 2013). The concept of sustainability emphasizes the responsible use of resources to meet present needs without compromising future generations. The stewardship model parallels the Islamic notion of *khilāfah*, highlighting human accountability for environmental degradation and restoration. Meanwhile, ecological balance resonates with the Islamic idea of *mīzān*, reinforcing the need to maintain harmony within ecosystems.

Methodology

This research employs a qualitative descriptive-analytical approach rooted in the classical methodology of 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth (Hadith Sciences). The study aims to critically analyze the sanad (chain of transmission) and matan (textual content) of Hadiths related to ecology and environmental ethics, and to reinterpret their meanings in light of contemporary ecological perspectives (Rahemtulla, 2017). This methodological approach ensures that the study maintains both textual authenticity and contextual relevance, integrating traditional Islamic scholarship with modern environmental thought.

a) Research Design

The research design follows a library-based qualitative design (library research), which relies primarily on textual sources rather than empirical fieldwork (Connaway et al., 2017). The data are derived from classical Hadith compilations, scholarly commentaries, and modern academic works discussing environmental ethics in Islam. The descriptive aspect of the study involves presenting Hadiths thematically related to ecology such as preservation of nature, cleanliness, water conservation, tree planting, and compassion toward animals while the analytical component focuses on examining their authenticity and meaning using classical and contemporary interpretative tools.

b) Data Sources

This research uses two types of data sources: primary and secondary.

- Primary sources consist of the major canonical Hadith collections, including *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, *Jāmi' al-Tirmidhī*, *Sunan al-Nasā'ī*, and *Sunan Ibn Mājah*. These texts provide the original narrations that form the core material for sanad and matan analysis. Selected Hadiths concerning ecological issues such as caring for trees, water management, and avoidance of waste are identified and examined in depth (Gulzar et al., 2021).
- Secondary sources include classical works on 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth (such as *Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī's Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb*, *al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī's al-Kifāyah fī 'Ilm al-Riwāyah*, and *al-Nawawī's al-Taqrīb wa al-Taysīr*), as well as contemporary writings on Islamic environmental ethics, sustainability, and ecological theology. Journal articles, theses, and

books published in the last decade are also consulted to establish the link between Islamic teachings and modern ecological concerns (Islam, 2012).

c) Data Collection Techniques

Data collection is carried out through document analysis and textual exploration (Rapley & Rees, 2018). The researcher identifies Hadiths related to environmental and ecological themes through thematic keyword searches, such as bay'ah al-shajarah (tree planting), israf al-mā' (waste of water), and raḥmah li al-ḥayawān (compassion for animals). Each selected Hadith is then traced to its primary source, and its chain of transmission is extracted for critical evaluation. In addition, supporting classical commentaries (sharḥ al-hadīth) are reviewed to understand scholarly interpretations of each text.

d) Data Analysis Techniques

The data are analyzed using the critical method of sanad and matan analysis based on classical Hadith science:

- Sanad Analysis involves evaluating the reliability and continuity of each narrator in the transmission chain (Ismail et al., 2014). The researcher examines biographical information about the narrators, their reputations for accuracy and integrity ('adālah and ḍabt), and the connection between them to ensure that the chain is unbroken (ittiṣāl al-sanad). Narrators are assessed using jarḥ wa ta'dīl methodology, with reference to established biographical dictionaries such as Tahdhīb al-Kamāl and al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta'dīl.
- Matan Analysis focuses on examining the textual coherence, linguistic structure, and theological consistency of the Hadith (Musyafiq, 2019). The content of each Hadith is compared with the Qur'an, other authentic Hadiths, and established principles of reason and ethics. This step ensures that the ecological messages derived from the texts align with the broader framework of Islamic teachings and do not contradict fundamental religious principles.

After verifying the authenticity and meaning of the Hadiths, the study proceeds to interpret them within a contemporary ecological context (Haq, 2001). This involves correlating classical teachings with modern environmental theories such as sustainability, conservation, and stewardship, thereby constructing a holistic Islamic ecological ethic.

e) Validity and Reliability

Although qualitative in nature, the study maintains rigor through triangulation of sources and scholarly cross-verification. The authenticity of each Hadith is validated through multiple references in different canonical collections and the opinions of recognized Hadith scholars (Kamali, 2014). Interpretations are also cross-checked against modern Islamic environmental literature to ensure consistency between traditional and contemporary understandings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The results of this study reveal that Islamic teachings, as reflected in authentic Hadiths, contain profound ecological values that align closely with contemporary environmental ethics. Through a systematic sanad and matan analysis, several key Hadiths concerning the protection of nature, moderation in resource use, and compassion toward living beings were examined. The findings demonstrate that the Prophetic traditions provide a comprehensive moral and spiritual framework for environmental stewardship, emphasizing sustainability, balance, and moral accountability as integral components of faith.

The sanad analysis conducted on selected Hadiths about ecological themes such as tree planting, water conservation, cleanliness, and animal welfare shows that the majority of these narrations are ṣaḥīḥ (authentic) or ḥasan (good) according to classical Hadith scholars (Muhamad et al., 2019). For example, the Hadith recorded in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim stating that "If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person, or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as charity for him" was found to have a continuous and reliable chain of transmission (ittiṣāl al-sanad) and narrators with established credibility (thiqqah). Similarly, the Hadith warning against wasting water even when performing ablution at a flowing river, narrated by Ibn Mājah and others, was verified as ḥasan, confirming its reliability in establishing environmental moderation.

Other Hadiths encouraging cleanliness, the removal of harmful things from pathways, and kindness to animals were also confirmed to possess sound chains of transmission. However, a few

narrations circulating in popular discourse such as exaggerated claims about specific environmental rewards were identified as *ḍāʿif* (weak) or *mawḍūʿ* (fabricated). These findings highlight the importance of sanad criticism in preventing misquotation and ensuring that Islamic environmental ethics are derived only from authentic sources.

The matan analysis revealed that the textual content of authentic Hadiths conveys a consistent message of balance (*mīzān*), responsibility (*amānah*), and reform (*iṣlāḥ*) in the relationship between humans and nature. The language and context of these Hadiths reflect the Prophet Muhammad's comprehensive approach to environmental care one that integrates spiritual, ethical, and practical dimensions (Khalid, 2017). For example, the Hadith on tree planting embodies the principle of *iṣlāḥ*, emphasizing continuous good deeds and sustainability, even in the face of adversity. Likewise, Hadiths about cleanliness (*ṭahārah*) underline the interconnectedness between spiritual purity and environmental hygiene.

The analysis also shows that the Prophet's environmental teachings were preventive and proactive rather than merely reactive. The matan content demonstrates Islam's view of nature as a living sign (*āyah*) of God, entrusted to humanity for care rather than exploitation. This finding aligns with Qur'anic principles, particularly the command to avoid *fasād fī al-arḍ* (corruption on earth) and to maintain *mīzān* (balance) in all actions. Overall, the matan analysis confirms that authentic Hadiths are in full harmony with Qur'anic ecological principles and with modern environmental ethics emphasizing sustainability and responsibility.

Based on the combined sanad matan evaluation, five major ecological themes emerge from the Hadith corpus (Ismail et al., 2014). Stewardship (*Khilāfah*): Humans are trustees of God's creation, accountable for maintaining environmental harmony. Balance (*Mīzān*): The universe is created in equilibrium, and human excess disrupts that balance. Responsibility (*Amānah*): Environmental care is a divine trust that must be upheld ethically. Reform and Sustainability (*Iṣlāḥ*): Muslims are called to repair and preserve the earth for future generations. Compassion (*Raḥmah*): Ethical treatment of animals and all living beings is an essential expression of faith.

These themes show that environmental preservation in Islam is not a peripheral issue but a fundamental aspect of religious life. The ecological consciousness reflected in the Hadith corpus anticipates modern concepts of sustainability and environmental justice, demonstrating Islam's compatibility with global ecological ethics (Mohamed, 2012).

When interpreted through contemporary ecological theories, the results illustrate that Prophetic guidance offers valuable insights for addressing today's environmental crises. The principle of *khilāfah* aligns with the modern concept of stewardship, while *mīzān* parallels the idea of ecological balance and sustainability (Al Sehlawi, 2020). The emphasis on moderation (*i'tidāl*) in Hadith correlates with global efforts to reduce overconsumption and waste. Moreover, the ethical dimension of *amānah* resonates with environmental accountability and intergenerational justice emphasized in international sustainability frameworks.

Hence, the study demonstrates that authentic Hadiths, when critically analyzed and contextually interpreted, can provide a strong ethical foundation for developing contemporary Islamic approaches to environmental protection. These teachings are timeless in spirit and practical in guidance, urging Muslims to integrate environmental responsibility into everyday worship, governance, and community life.

The research findings affirm that Islamic environmental ethics are deeply rooted in authentic Prophetic traditions. The sanad analysis ensures textual credibility, while the matan interpretation contextualizes these teachings within present-day ecological realities. The convergence between Islamic moral values and modern environmental principles highlights Islam's enduring relevance in promoting sustainability, compassion, and responsible stewardship of the earth. This study thus contributes to both the field of Hadith scholarship and the broader discourse on religion and ecology, offering a foundation for faith-based environmental education, policy, and community initiatives.

Detailed Examination of Selected Hadiths

In order to uncover the ecological values embedded within the Prophetic traditions, this study selected several key Hadiths thematically related to environmental care, including tree planting, water conservation, cleanliness, and animal welfare.

The following discussion outlines the detailed findings for each selected Hadith.

a) Hadith on Tree Planting as an Act of Charity

- Text of the Hadith: “If a Muslim plants a tree or sows seeds, and then a bird, or a person, or an animal eats from it, it is regarded as charity (ṣadaqah) for him.” (Narrated by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and Aḥmad).
 - Sanad Analysis: This Hadith is transmitted through several reliable isnād routes, among which the most prominent chain is through Anas ibn Mālik (ra). The chain in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī is continuous (muttasil), and all narrators within this chain such as ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak, Ḥammād ibn Zayd, and Thābit al-Bunānī are known for their strong memory (ḥifẓ) and trustworthiness (thiqqah). Cross-comparison with Muslim’s narration reveals only minor variations in wording, not affecting the core meaning. Therefore, according to the standards of jarḥ wa ta’ dīl (evaluation of narrators), this Hadith is classified as ṣaḥīḥ li-dhātihī (authentic in itself).
 - Matan Analysis: The content (matan) of the Hadith reflects a profound ecological ethic, emphasizing the enduring value of sustaining life and contributing to the welfare of all creatures. The language is coherent, free from contradictions with Qur’anic verses or other authentic Hadiths (Harrison, 2010). Its message resonates with the Qur’anic principles of iṣlāḥ (doing good) and raḥmah (compassion) toward all creation. From an ecological perspective, the Hadith promotes biodiversity, stewardship, and sustainability, underscoring that every act benefiting the ecosystem is spiritually rewarded.
- b) Hadith on Avoiding Waste of Water
- Text of the Hadith: “The Prophet forbade wasting water even if you were performing ablution at a flowing river.” (Narrated by Ibn Mājah, Aḥmad, and al-Bayhaqī)
 - Sanad Analysis: The transmission chain of this Hadith goes through ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Amr ibn al-‘Āṣ (ra). In Ibn Mājah’s version, the isnād includes ‘Abd Allāh ibn al-Mubārak and Sa’īd ibn Abī ‘Arūbah, both recognized as trustworthy transmitters. However, some later chains contain narrators with slightly weaker memory, such as Muḥammad ibn Ishāq, leading some scholars (like al-Albānī) to classify the Hadith as ḥasan (good) rather than ṣaḥīḥ. Despite this, the Hadith’s multiplicity of transmission routes (tawātur ma’ nawī) strengthens its credibility.
 - Matan Analysis: The matan conveys a timeless message about moderation and environmental responsibility (Richardson, 2017). It teaches that resource conservation is a moral obligation, even when abundance is available illustrating the principle of i’tidāl (moderation) central to Islamic ethics. The wording is free of inconsistencies and aligns with Qur’anic injunctions such as “Do not waste, indeed Allah does not love the wasteful” (Qur’an 7:31). From a contemporary ecological lens, this Hadith anticipates the modern principle of sustainable water management and responsible consumption.
- c) Hadith on Cleanliness and Removal of Harm
- Text of the Hadith: “Removing harmful things from the road is an act of charity.” (Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim)
 - Sanad Analysis: The narration is transmitted by Abū Hurayrah (ra) and recorded in both Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, indicating muttafaq ‘alayh (agreed upon authenticity) (Bin Muhammad Yusoff, 2017). The chain of narrators is robust, featuring prominent scholars like Mālik ibn Anas and Sufyān ibn ‘Uyaynah, both widely acclaimed for accuracy and reliability. There are no identified breaks (inqiṭā’) or discrepancies in the chain, confirming the Hadith’s ṣaḥīḥ classification.
 - Matan Analysis: The content emphasizes public cleanliness and social responsibility values central to both spiritual and ecological well-being. It associates cleanliness not only with ritual purity (ṭahārah) but also with environmental care and community health. The linguistic structure of the matan is concise, coherent, and consistent with other Prophetic narrations encouraging sanitation and hygiene. In ecological terms, it advocates for pollution prevention and community-based environmental maintenance.
- d) Hadith on Compassion Toward Animals
- Text of the Hadith: “A woman was punished in Hell because she confined a cat—she neither fed it nor let it eat from the earth’s insects.” (Narrated by al-Bukhārī and Muslim)
 - Sanad Analysis: This Hadith is transmitted through ‘Abd Allāh ibn ‘Umar (ra), with an uninterrupted chain in both Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. All narrators in this isnād,

including Nāfi' (the freed slave of Ibn 'Umar) and Mālik ibn Anas, are regarded as *thiqqah* and among the most reliable transmitters of Hadith. The presence of this narration in the two most authoritative Hadith compilations guarantees its status as *ṣaḥīḥ* (Bin Muhammad Yusoff, 2017).

- **Matan Analysis:** The matan portrays a strong moral message about the ethical treatment of animals. It explicitly links human accountability to the welfare of non-human creatures, thereby integrating ecological compassion into moral theology. The content shows no conflict with established Shariah principles and upholds Islam's universal ethic of *raḥmah* (mercy). Modern ecological interpretation recognizes in this Hadith a clear condemnation of cruelty and neglect, paralleling contemporary animal rights and biodiversity ethics.
- e) **Hadith on Planting Even Before the End of Time**
- **Text of the Hadith:** "If the Hour (of Resurrection) comes while one of you has a sapling in his hand, let him plant it." (Narrated by Aḥmad and al-Bukhārī in al-Adab al-Mufrad)
 - **Sanad Analysis:** This Hadith is narrated by Anas ibn Mālik (ra) and transmitted through chains including Muḥammad ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Anṣārī and Thābit al-Bunānī both classified as trustworthy. The chain is not present in the canonical *Ṣaḥīḥayn*, yet it meets the reliability standards of *ḥasan li-ghayrihī* due to supporting narrations. Scholars such as al-Albānī and Ibn Ḥajar regarded its meaning as sound and its *isnād* as acceptable.
 - **Matan Analysis:** The textual meaning is deeply symbolic and ethically potent. It illustrates that environmental action holds value even when temporal benefits seem impossible highlighting Islam's long-term vision of *iṣlāḥ* (continuous betterment) and hope (Zaman & Qadir, 2021). Linguistically, the matan is concise and coherent, embodying the Prophet's style of encouraging moral perseverance. From an ecological standpoint, this Hadith embodies the spirit of sustainability and resilience, urging proactive care for nature despite existential uncertainty.

The collective examination of these Hadiths demonstrates that Islamic environmental ethics are founded upon narrations with strong sanad integrity and matan consistency. The reliability of their transmission chains ensures textual authenticity, while the coherence of their content reflects a harmonious ecological worldview embedded within Islam. Each Hadith, whether addressing water use, cleanliness, vegetation, or animal welfare, contributes to a holistic framework of stewardship (*khilāfah*), responsibility (*amānah*), and balance (*mīzān*). Together, they establish a moral paradigm that remains profoundly relevant in addressing modern environmental crises.

Identification of Themes

The first major theme identified is environmental stewardship, rooted in the Qur'anic concept of *khilāfah* (vicegerency) and *amānah* (trust). The Hadiths analyzed clearly reflect the notion that humans are trustees of the earth, responsible for its preservation and the welfare of all its inhabitants. The Prophet Muhammad emphasized that every act of nurturing life such as planting a tree or conserving water constitutes a form of worship and charity (*ṣadaqah*).

For instance, the Hadith stating that "If a Muslim plants a tree and a bird or person eats from it, it is regarded as charity for him" conveys a direct expression of stewardship. It transforms ordinary ecological acts into spiritually meaningful ones, reinforcing the believer's role as God's custodian over creation (ADENAUER-STIFTUNG, 2010). The sanad of this Hadith, verified as *ṣaḥīḥ*, adds further credibility to the theological weight of this theme. The moral principle derived here is that environmental care is not optional but a divine duty entrusted to humankind.

In contemporary ecological discourse, this principle resonates strongly with the concept of sustainability and responsible governance of natural resources. Just as stewardship in Islam implies accountability before God, modern environmental ethics emphasize accountability to future generations and the global ecosystem. Hence, the Prophetic model of *khilāfah* provides a spiritual framework for addressing modern crises such as climate change, deforestation, and pollution viewing them not merely as technical or economic issues but as breaches of divine trust.

The second theme centers on moderation in resource consumption, reflecting the Islamic values of *ītidāl* (balance) and *wasatiyyah* (moderation). This theme emerges prominently from the Hadith that warns against wasting water even when performing ablution beside a flowing river. Despite being a religious ritual, the Prophet cautioned against extravagance in the use of resources, illustrating that spiritual devotion cannot justify environmental negligence.

The sanad evaluation classified this Hadith as ḥasan, while the matan analysis showed that its linguistic structure aligns with Qur'anic injunctions such as "Indeed, Allah does not love the wasteful" (Qur'an 7:31). The coherence of its message across multiple authentic narrations emphasizes that moderation is a universal principle in Islam applicable not only to acts of worship but to all aspects of life, including environmental management.

In modern ecological thought, this concept parallels the idea of sustainable consumption and responsible resource use. The Hadith promotes a moral economy of restraint and mindfulness, discouraging the culture of overconsumption that drives environmental degradation. It challenges both individuals and societies to adopt lifestyles that respect natural limits. Thus, Islamic moderation becomes not merely a spiritual discipline but an ecological necessity that preserves the earth's balance (mīzān), ensuring its continued livability for all beings.

The third major theme is the protection of living beings, grounded in the principles of raḥmah (compassion) and iṣlāḥ (reform and improvement) (Kamali, n.d.). The Prophetic traditions repeatedly stress that kindness to all creatures is an essential expression of faith. This is powerfully demonstrated in the Hadith about the woman who was punished for imprisoning a cat without feeding it an authentic narration found in Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim. The sanad of this Hadith is beyond reproach, while the matan vividly conveys the Prophet's message that cruelty toward animals constitutes a grave moral offense.

Similarly, the Hadith on removing harmful objects from pathways represents a proactive attitude toward ensuring the well-being of both humans and the environment. These narrations collectively highlight Islam's holistic vision of mercy that extends beyond human beings to encompass all of creation. The Prophet described every act that sustains or relieves life whether watering an animal, planting a tree, or preserving cleanliness as a charitable deed.

This theme aligns closely with modern ecological ethics, particularly the principles of biocentrism and environmental justice, which advocate respect for all living systems. By connecting compassion with divine accountability, Islamic teachings offer a unique moral foundation for biodiversity conservation and humane treatment of animals. The emphasis on iṣlāḥ actively improving rather than exploiting nature further reinforces the idea that environmental preservation is an act of moral reform and spiritual purification.

Taken together, these three themes stewardship, moderation, and protection form a coherent ethical framework deeply embedded in Islamic revelation. Each theme complements the others, reflecting a comprehensive ecological philosophy that balances human needs with environmental integrity. The authenticity of the sanad chains ensures the reliability of these teachings, while the internal coherence of their matan underscores the unity of Islamic moral reasoning.

How Prophetic Ecological Ethics Can Be Integrated into Current

Prophetic ecological ethics provide a normative foundation for constructing environmentally responsible governance systems within Muslim societies and beyond. The Hadith emphasizing stewardship (khilāfah) implies that policymakers are not merely administrators but trustees accountable before God for the management of natural resources. This theological understanding can enhance policy commitment to sustainability, transforming environmental protection from a technical obligation into a moral duty.

In practical terms, this integration could manifest through eco-ethical legislation, where the principles of amānah (trust) and mīzān (balance) guide environmental lawmaking. For instance, policies on deforestation, water usage, and waste management can be informed by the Prophetic warning against extravagance and corruption on earth (fasād fi al-ard). Governments in Muslim-majority countries could incorporate Islamic environmental ethics into national frameworks such as climate adaptation strategies or conservation programs.

At the international level, aligning Prophetic principles with global sustainability agendas such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) can offer a culturally grounded moral framework for policy coherence (Niamir-Fuller et al., 2016). For example, SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 15 (Life on Land) can draw upon Hadiths encouraging tree planting, protection of animals, and the avoidance of waste. Thus, Prophetic ecological ethics not only complement scientific and legal approaches to sustainability but also inspire value-based policymaking rooted in justice ('adl) and accountability (mas'ūliyyah).

Education is a vital medium for translating Prophetic ecological ethics into social consciousness and collective behavior. The Prophet Muhammad consistently emphasized knowledge ('ilm) as the

foundation of moral action, and this extends naturally to environmental awareness. Integrating ecological teachings from the Hadith into curricula at various educational levels Islamic schools, universities, and public institutions can cultivate an environmentally conscious generation that views ecological preservation as an act of faith.

In Islamic education, environmental ethics can be systematically incorporated into subjects such as Aqidah (faith), Fiqh (jurisprudence), and Akhlaq (ethics), emphasizing the spiritual implications of environmental care. For instance, the Hadith on planting trees can be used to teach sustainability and social responsibility, while the Hadith prohibiting water waste can reinforce lessons on moderation and resource conservation.

Modern pedagogical approaches can further enhance this integration through eco-theological education, combining traditional Islamic sciences with contemporary environmental studies (Herdiansyah et al., 2018). Collaborative projects such as tree-planting campaigns, waste reduction programs, and animal welfare initiatives can translate theoretical teachings into practical action. Moreover, higher education institutions can establish research centers focused on Islamic environmental ethics, linking traditional scholarship with modern ecological policy and technology. Through such educational reforms, Prophetic values of *rahmah*, *işlah*, and *mizān* can be internalized as lived ethics, fostering both intellectual and moral transformation.

The Prophet's ecological teachings are not abstract moral ideals but practical guidelines for daily living. His Sunnah models a lifestyle of simplicity, moderation, and gratitude values that directly counter today's culture of overconsumption and waste. Integrating Prophetic ethics into contemporary lifestyles involves reorienting human behavior around the principles of restraint (*i'tidāl*), mindfulness, and community responsibility.

In personal life, individuals can embody these ethics by adopting sustainable consumption habits, such as reducing waste, conserving water, avoiding unnecessary luxury, and using resources responsibly. The Prophet personal habits using minimal water for ablution, repairing items rather than discarding them, and showing compassion toward animals provide timeless examples of environmentally sustainable living. These practices, when promoted within Muslim communities, can significantly contribute to reducing ecological footprints.

At the community level, mosques and Islamic organizations can serve as centers for environmental advocacy by hosting educational seminars, organizing tree-planting events, and implementing eco-friendly mosque designs (e.g., solar energy use, waste recycling). The Friday sermon (khutbah) can be a powerful tool for promoting ecological awareness, linking environmental responsibility with moral accountability and faith in God. This lifestyle integration transforms ecological care from an external obligation into a form of worship (*'ibādah*), making sustainability an intrinsic expression of Islamic identity.

The integration of Prophetic ecological ethics with modern environmental paradigms bridges the gap between faith-based morality and scientific rationality (Sayem, 2020). Concepts such as *khilāfah* align naturally with environmental stewardship, *mizān* corresponds to ecological balance, and *amānah* reflects intergenerational responsibility. This synthesis enriches modern sustainability discourse by infusing it with spiritual motivation and ethical depth.

While secular environmental movements often emphasize policy and technology, the Prophetic model adds the crucial dimension of inner transformation changing human attitudes toward consumption, responsibility, and empathy for all creation. In this sense, ecological reform becomes both external (through policy and education) and internal (through moral and spiritual growth). The resulting framework promotes a balanced approach that harmonizes human development with the preservation of the natural world, ensuring that environmental justice remains rooted in compassion and faith.

Contemporary Perspective

In the contemporary era, the ecological messages embedded in authentic Hadith hold significant potential to inspire and strengthen modern environmental movements across Muslim societies. The Prophet Muhammad's teachings on cleanliness, moderation, compassion toward all creatures, and the protection of natural resources embody principles that resonate deeply with today's global call for sustainability. For instance, Hadiths emphasizing that "the earth is green and beautiful, and Allah has appointed you as stewards over it" encourage Muslims to view environmental care not merely as an act of social responsibility but as a form of worship (*'ibādah*). This theological foundation provides a spiritual motivation for individuals and communities to engage actively in eco-friendly initiatives such as

reforestation, waste reduction, and the promotion of renewable energy within an Islamic ethical framework.

Islamic scholars, institutions, and da'wah movements play a crucial role in translating these prophetic messages into practical action. Through the integration of environmental themes in sermons (khutbah), religious education, and public discourse, scholars can foster a faith-based environmental consciousness that aligns spiritual devotion with ecological responsibility. Islamic institutions such as mosques, madrasahs, and universities can also serve as centers for environmental advocacy by implementing green practices, promoting sustainable consumption, and collaborating with environmental organizations. Moreover, da'wah movements can utilize digital platforms and community outreach to communicate the moral and scriptural imperatives of protecting the planet as a trust (amānah) from Allah.

From an ethical standpoint, the teachings of the Prophet (peace be upon him) underline the interconnectedness of humanity and the environment. The concepts of khilāfah (stewardship), mīzān (balance), and iṣlāḥ (restoration) establish a moral vision for sustainable living grounded in justice ('adl) and mercy (raḥmah). These principles advocate for an equitable use of resources, prevention of environmental harm, and restoration of ecological balance core elements of environmental justice in the modern sense. Furthermore, in addressing issues such as climate change, deforestation, and pollution, Muslims are reminded that ecological negligence constitutes a moral failing, as it disrupts the divine balance of creation.

Therefore, integrating Hadith-based ecological ethics into contemporary life encourages Muslims to adopt sustainable habits such as minimizing waste, conserving water, and supporting eco-friendly policies. It also calls upon policymakers and educators in Muslim societies to develop curricula and policies that reflect Islamic ecological values. In essence, the contemporary interpretation of Hadith on ecology bridges religious tradition and modern science, offering a holistic ethical foundation for responding to the global environmental crisis while reaffirming humanity's sacred duty as caretakers of the Earth.

CONCLUSION

This study has critically examined the sanad (chain of transmission) and matan (content) of selected Hadiths related to ecology, offering both a traditional and contemporary understanding of Islamic environmental ethics. Through the principles of 'Ulūm al-Ḥadīth, the research verified the authenticity and reliability of Hadith narrations that emphasize environmental stewardship, moderation in resource use, and the protection of all living beings. The findings reveal that the Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) teachings on nature are deeply rooted in the concepts of khilāfah (stewardship), amānah (trust), iṣlāḥ (restoration), and mīzān (balance), all of which form the ethical foundation of a sustainable and harmonious relationship between humans and the environment. The critical analysis demonstrates that prophetic guidance on ecological care is not only timeless but also highly relevant to the challenges of the modern world, including climate change, pollution, and environmental degradation. By situating Hadith teachings within contemporary ecological theories such as sustainability and stewardship, the study highlights Islam's potential contribution to global environmental ethics. This integration underscores that protecting the environment is not merely a social or scientific issue but also a profound spiritual and moral responsibility entrusted by Allah to humanity. Furthermore, the research emphasizes the vital role of Islamic scholars, institutions, and da'wah movements in translating these ethical principles into action. The incorporation of Hadith-based ecological values into education, religious discourse, and public policy can inspire Muslim societies to develop sustainable lifestyles and community initiatives rooted in faith. Ultimately, this study concludes that the ecological wisdom embedded in authentic Hadith provides a comprehensive ethical framework for addressing the environmental crisis. It calls upon Muslims to revive the prophetic spirit of balance, compassion, and stewardship in order to safeguard the Earth as a divine trust for present and future generations.

AUTHORS' DECLARATION

Authors' Contributions and Responsibilities

The author was responsible for the conception, design, and execution of the entire research. This included identifying the research problem, formulating the objectives, and conducting an extensive literature review on Hadith studies and Islamic environmental ethics.

Competing Interests

The author declares that there are no competing interests in relation to this research. This study was conducted independently, without any financial, institutional, or personal influences that could have affected the objectivity or integrity of the research process and findings.

Acknowledgments

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to all individuals and institutions who contributed, directly or indirectly, to the completion of this research.

REFERENCES

- Abdelzaher, D. M., Kotb, A., & Helfaya, A. (2019). Eco-Islam: Beyond the principles of why and what, and into the principles of how. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 155(3), 623–643.
- ADENAUER-STIFTUNG, K. (2010). *The Maguindanao Massacre and the Rise of Warlord Clans*.
- Al Sehlawi, R. E. (2020). *Revisiting Khilāfah (Stewardship) in the Age of Environmentalism*. Hamad Bin Khalifa University (Qatar).
- Al Zeera, Z. (2001). *Wholeness and Holiness in Education: An Islamic Perspective: An Islamic Perspective*. International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT).
- bin Muhammad Yusoff, M. F. (2020). The Authentication of Ḥadīth: Ibn Ḥibbān's Introduction to His Ṣaḥīḥ. *Al-Masāq*, 32(3), 294–310.
- Bin Muhammad Yusoff, M. F. (2017). *Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī's (d. 354/965) contribution to the science of ḥadīth transmission*. University of Glasgow.
- Connaway, L. S., Connaway, L. S., Powell, R. R., & Powell, R. R. (2017). *Basic research methods for librarians*. ABC-CLIO.
- Gade, A. M. (2019). *Muslim environmentalisms: Religious and social foundations*. Columbia University Press.
- Ghernaout, D. (2017). Environmental principles in the Holy Koran and the Sayings of the Prophet Muhammad. *American Journal of Environmental Protection*, 6(3), 75–79.
- Gulzar, A., Islam, T., Hamid, M., & Haq, S. M. (2021). Environmental ethics towards the sustainable development in Islamic perspective: A Brief Review. *Ethnobotany Research and Applications*, 22, 1–10.
- Haq, S. N. (2001). Islam and ecology: Toward retrieval and reconstruction. *Daedalus*, 130(4), 141–177.
- Harrison, V. S. (2010). Hermeneutics, religious language and the Qur'an. *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations*, 21(3), 207–220.
- Helfaya, A., Kotb, A., & Hanafi, R. (2018). Qur'anic ethics for environmental responsibility: Implications for business practice. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 150(4), 1105–1128.
- Herdiansyah, H., Sukmana, H., & Lestari, R. (2018). Eco-pesantren as a basic forming of environmental moral and theology. *Kalam*, 12(2), 303–326.
- Irwin, A. (2013). *Sociology and the environment: a critical introduction to society, nature and knowledge*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Islam, M. S. (2012). Old philosophy, new movement: The rise of the Islamic ecological paradigm in the discourse of environmentalism. *Nature and Culture*, 7(1), 72–94.
- Ismail, T. M. S. T., Baru, R., Hassan, A. F., Salleh, A. Z. Bin, & Amin, M. F. M. (2014). The matan and sanad criticisms in evaluating the hadith. *Asian Social Science*, 10(21), 152.
- Kamali, M. H. (n.d.). *IN FOCUS MAQĀS. ID AL-SHARĪ'AH AND IJTIHĀDAS INSTRUMENTS OF CIVILISATIONAL RENEWAL: A METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE*.
- Kamali, M. H. (2014). *A textbook of Hadith studies: authenticity, compilation, classification and criticism of Hadith*. Kube Publishing Ltd.
- Khalid, F. M. (2017). Exploring Environmental Ethics in Islam: Insights from the Qur'an and the Practice of Prophet Muhammad. *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Religion and Ecology*, 130–145.
- Mohamed, N. (2012). Revitalising an eco-justice ethic of Islam by way of environmental education: Implications for Islamic education. *Unpublished Ph. D. Dissertation*, 377.
- Muhamad, A., Syihab, A. H., & Achour, M. (2019). Quranic messages on environmental sustainability: an expository study of its relevance. *Al-Bayan: Journal of Qur'an and Hadith Studies*, 17(1), 38–59.
- Musyafiq, A. (2019). Coherence Method in Matan Criticism. *ESENSIA: Jurnal Ilmu-Ilmu Ushuluddin*, 20(1), 37–50.
- Niamir-Fuller, M., Özdemir, I., & Brinkman, F. J. (2016). Environment, religion and culture in the context of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development. *United Nations Environment Programme, Nairobi*.
- Pawlowski, A. (2011). *Sustainable development as a civilizational revolution: a multidisciplinary approach to the challenges of the 21st century*. CRC Press.
- Rahemtulla, S. (2017). *Qur'an of the oppressed: liberation theology and gender justice in Islam*. Oxford University Press.
- Rapley, T., & Rees, G. (2018). Collecting documents as data. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Collection*, 378–391.
- Richardson, B. J. (2017). *Time and Environmental Law: Telling nature's time*. Cambridge University Press.
- Sayem, M. A. (2020). *Religious Perspectives on Environmental Issues: A Comparative Study of John B. Cobb, Jr. and Seyyed Hossein Nasr*. The Chinese University of Hong Kong (Hong Kong).
- Zaman, A., & Qadir, J. (2021). Islamic Approaches to Sustainable Development. *Vol, 10*, 46–60.