

**Ecological sufism concepts in the thought of Seyyed Hossein Nasr**  
**Conceitos de sufismo ecológico no pensamento de Seyyed Hossein Nasr**  
**Conceptos de sufismo ecológico en el pensamiento de Seyyed Hossein Nasr**

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**Abstract**

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, one of the Islamic thinkers who have a serious concern and deep concern over the occurrence of the ecological crisis. Forest destruction, pollution, water, and air are clear examples that can be seen in life today. According to him, the root of the problem lies in humans as actors, who have lost their sense of awe and concern for themselves and the universe. Such a state is the result of eroding the awareness of the holy. So that for him the ecological crisis is the result of a spiritual crisis. Therefore, the question arises, what is Nasr's attitude about the ecological crisis and his spirituality? How is the concept of ecological Sufism in his thinking? By examining his thoughts, and his works, researchers will analyze with a philosophical approach to answer these problems. This study states, as a result of its findings, that the concept of ecological Sufism is the relationship between Sufism and ecological values by looking at problems in the environmental crisis. Awareness of Sufism-spirituality has an important role in addressing the ecological crisis. The concept of ecological

Sufism is an alternative thought to answer the problem of the ecological crisis and the spiritual crisis in modern humans.

**Keywords:** Sufism; Ecology; Spirituality; Environment; Ecological crisis.

### **Resumo**

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, um dos pensadores islâmicos que tem séria e profunda preocupação com a ocorrência da crise ecológica. Destruição florestal, poluição, água e ar são exemplos claros que podem ser vistos na vida hoje. Segundo ele, a raiz do problema está nos seres humanos como atores, que perderam o senso de admiração e preocupação com si mesmos e com o universo. Tal estado é o resultado da erosão da consciência do sagrado. De modo que para ele a crise ecológica é o resultado de uma crise espiritual. Portanto, surge a pergunta: qual é a atitude de Nasr sobre a crise ecológica e sua espiritualidade? Como está o conceito de sufismo ecológico em seu pensamento? Ao examinar seus pensamentos e suas obras, os pesquisadores analisarão com uma abordagem filosófica para responder a esses problemas. Este estudo afirma, como resultado de suas descobertas, que o conceito de sufismo ecológico é a relação entre o sufismo e os valores ecológicos, olhando para os problemas da crise ambiental. A consciência do Sufismo-espiritualidade tem um papel importante no tratamento da crise ecológica. O conceito de sufismo ecológico é um pensamento alternativo para responder ao problema da crise ecológica e da crise espiritual nos humanos modernos.

**Palavras-chave:** Sufismo; Ecologia; Espiritualidade; Meio ambiente; Crise ecológica.

### **Resumen**

Seyyed Hossein Nasr, uno de los pensadores islámicos que tiene una gran preocupación y profunda preocupación por la ocurrencia de la crisis ecológica. La destrucción de los bosques, la contaminación, el agua y el aire son claros ejemplos que se pueden ver en la vida actual. Según él, la raíz del problema radica en los humanos como actores, que han perdido el sentido de asombro y preocupación por ellos mismos y el universo. Tal estado es el resultado de erosionar la conciencia del Santo. De modo que para él la crisis ecológica es el resultado de una crisis espiritual. Por tanto, surge la pregunta, ¿cuál es la actitud de Nasr ante la crisis ecológica y su espiritualidad? ¿Cómo está el concepto de sufismo ecológico en su pensamiento? Al examinar sus pensamientos y sus obras, los investigadores analizarán con un enfoque filosófico para responder a estos problemas. Este estudio afirma, como resultado de sus hallazgos, que el concepto de sufismo ecológico es la relación entre los valores sufistas y ecológicos al mirar los problemas de la crisis ambiental. La conciencia de la espiritualidad

sufí tiene un papel importante a la hora de abordar la crisis ecológica. El concepto de sufime ecológico es un pensamiento alternativo para responder al problema de la crisis ecológica y la crisis espiritual en los humanos modernos.

**Palabras clave:** Sufismo; Ecología; Espiritualidad; Medio ambiente; Crisis ecológica.

## 1. Introduction

The intention of saving the environment continues to get wider attention, in line with the continued destruction of the environment by humans until it has resulted in anxiety and worries about threatening human survival, as well as the loss of balance in nature. Awareness of the importance of global action to save the environment from damage has become a common agenda for all nations.

The environmental crisis has unified the nations of the world to face it with mutual policies. The concerns of various groups, such as scientists, religious leaders, and environmentalists have been going on for a long time and have become a long discussion in the context of involvement in saving the environment (Soemarwoto, 1997:2).

Starting from the book Rachel Carson, 1962, entitled *The Silent Spring* is the first book that opens human consciousness to remind and invite all circles to take serious attention to environmental issues through fundamental changes in human behavior in all fields to save the environment. Since then, concern for environmental issues has been intensively carried out and has become a concern of the world, especially developed countries.

The occurrence of an ecological crisis is caused more by human behavior that destroys and exploits nature excessively and continuously exhausts itself so that it is no longer powerless to sustain its life. The opening of this view of modern human behavior was initiated by Rene Descartes (1596-1650), by seeing humans as the center of the universe and only humans have value, while nature and everything in it is just a tool for satisfying human interests and needs (Capra, 2001:33). Therefore, Arne Naes sees that the environmental crisis can only be overcome by changing the way humans perceive and behave towards nature fundamentally and radically (Naes,1993:3). Instilling deep ecology awareness by providing philosophical ideals and a spiritual basis for a lifestyle that is aware of the environment and environmental activities (Shabecoff, 1996:23). Environmentalism as a view of the environment has developed into a movement to protect and protect the environment, against destruction and pollution that make nature unhealthy and endanger life (Hardjani, 1997: 76).

Religious involvement in the environmental movement has come more recently. Be referred to as the membership of the major world religions at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Since that time, only ideas about ecology based on religion or spirituality have emerged, which have become the subject of discussion by religious leaders or theologians (Hadiwardoyo, 2015: 40).

In the beginning, the problem of ecology was separated from the attention of the classical or medieval theological society because the environment at that time had not yet had a crisis, nature was still friendly and had full support for human life and other creatures. Meanwhile, in modern times, the environment is now a big problem and a serious concern globally (Mujiono, 2001: 23). So that ecological problems cannot just be separated from religion. Religion has a role as a bond and a form of shared awareness, which influences human behavior in adapting and protecting the environment (Berger, 2003: 140). Dependence of humans on the natural environment, resulting in humans unable to release themselves as part of the ecosystem, either intentionally or unintentionally, human activities can change the natural environment, related to human efforts to meet their needs to survive (Ellen, 1982: 14).

The role of religion is of course very strategic, especially in formulating its views on nature and the environment, as well as in creating new perspectives regarding the role of humans in the natural environment. A review of religiosity is very important to analyze the roots of the ecological crisis and to solve the problem as a countermeasure action in overcoming the ecological crisis. The assumption above is in accordance with the opinion of Mery Evelin Tucker, that religion is needed to be involved in overcoming ecological problems and to emphasize alternative human action models in dealing with the ecological crises (Tucker, 1994:8). Scientists, such as Roger S. Gottlieb, in his book, "This Sacred Earth: Religion, Nature, Environment" (1996), and also Richard C. Foltz with his book "Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust" (2003), have the opinion that the beliefs, values, and knowledge possessed by religion have actively contributed in establishing the ecological concept that saves nature in action and praxis. The religion contributes as a source of human ideas in responding to the environment, and religion provides a foundation in the form of doctrinal teachings and their application for efforts to save the environment (Wasim, 2005: 87).

According to Lynn White, there is a spiritual element at the root of environmental problems, so there is a critical need to recognize and overcome spiritual dynamics at the root cause of the ecological crisis. According to Algre that the main cause of the global environmental crisis is due to a spiritual crisis. Humans misunderstand their position and position in creation and ecosystems so that when they want to overcome the ecological crisis,

the spiritual factor cannot be left. Hence, religious spirituality is the most appropriate source of ethical guidance for human civilization (Alгоре, 1992: 251-252). Alгоре even more emphatically says that religion plays a role as the source of all reality, beauty, the goodness of all God's creations in this universe. Alгоре mentions Islam as an example that offers the concept of tauhid (unity), Khalifah (trusteeship), and Akhirah (accountability) function as the spiritual pillars of Islamic ecology (Alгоре, 1992: 269). One Muslim thinker, Ziauddin Sadar, emphasized that the environmental crisis is not an independent crisis. However, the environmental crisis is the result of a human moral and spiritual crisis. This crisis also includes a human crisis, which includes physical and psychological crises, as well as the values that support his view of life (Sadar, 1985: 218). If this moral and spiritual crisis afflicts humans then it is dangerous for life as a whole. A humanitarian crisis morally and spiritually will lead to an environmental crisis with all its components. Humans are at the forefront of their environment, so humans become a determinant who can damage and protect their environment depending on the values held by humans themselves.

The essence of the ecological crisis should be understood through the deepest consciousness by seeing the root of the ecological crisis as a substantial part of the human being, namely spirituality. Seyyed Hossein Nasr argues that the environmental crisis has the meaning of the erosion of human spiritual-existential wisdom, which results in the bluntness of self-awareness as a creature of God. (Nasr, 1984: 32). According to Toshihiko Izutsu, in Islamic literature, a spiritual crisis can be equated with a crisis of faith, a crisis of faith in its form manifested by the unconsciousness of God and all creation (Izutsu, 1966: 19). Spirituality in the Islamic world is in line with the teachings of Sufism, and Sufism refers to the spiritual aspect of Islam (Gill, 2013: 199). According to Sangidu, Sufism is a form of spiritual Islam (Sangidu, 2003: 4). According to Schimmel that Sufism is a recognized component of Islam. The meaning of Sufism is awareness of a single reality, which can be said to be wisdom, light, love, or nothing. Sufism teaches people to be wise in all things and teaches ethics as the essence of religion (Schimmel, 2003: 2). A new tendency towards Sufism was born among modern society. Sufism, which at first tended to be egotistical, was changed to take into account and have an impact on ecological and personal or issues of social safety (Suwito, 2011: 33-40). This change, to borrow Fazlur Rahman's term as neo-Sufism or renewed Sufism. Sufism tends to pay attention to the social-moral reconstruction of Islamic society as a form of criticism of Sufism tends to be individualistic and only hereafter oriented, which seems passive and is said to have been depriving of the Koran (Rahman, 1985: 78).

The above opinion was denied by Nasr, that Sufism his doctrine could not be in line with the objectives of the Koran. The Koran is what teaches humans about something that can be known and becomes a guide towards the goal of its creation (Nasr, 1980: 9). In principle, the teachings of Sufism are to provide a way through which to find the highest human consciousness. Thus, Sufi actors (sâlik) can become wiser in their lives, including in dealing with the issue of ecological crises (Sukarni, 2011:222). As mentioned above, the environmental damage that is currently occurring is at a dangerous level, almost all environmental components, including the natural environment, the social environment, and the cultural environment have been degrading. Therefore, the expansion of Sufism studies is fundamental, especially on ecological issues. The damage that occurred was mostly caused by human hands, who exploited natural resources excessively. Herein, this paper reveals the title "the concept of Sufism-ecology in Seyyed Hossein Nasr's thought" with the reason that he wants to find new alternatives in addressing the problems of environmental damage currently facing the world today.

## **2. Methodology**

This study used qualitative research methods. Qualitative research has a holistic nature because it allows the interpretation of data from various aspects (Kaelan, 2005: 4-5). This research uses library research type. According to Kaelan (2005: 138), library research is to study the object of research in the form of philosophical works. The primary data source of this research is the works written by Seyyed Hossein Nasr, writings that have been raised by this figure, whether published in books, papers, journals, or manuscripts used as a reference in this study to focus more on aspects of ecological Sufism. Besides using primary data, this study uses secondary data. Secondary data sources in this study are books or other people's writings about Seyyed Hossein Nasr, both in the form of support and indications that criticism is a secondary source. The secondary source in this research is to get a more holistic understanding of Seyyed Hossein Nasr's thoughts.

The analysis in this study is to use the hermeneutic and heuristic methods (Kaelan. 2005: 171-176). The analysis process is to understand the meaning contained in the concepts and thoughts of Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Hermeneutic methods are relevant for interpreting various symptoms, events, symbols, values contained in language or other cultural expressions. The purpose of hermeneutics is to seek and find the meaning contained in the object of research in the form of human life phenomena. The heuristic method is an attempt to

find new avenues, solutions and new thinking innovations. The analysis is carried out thoroughly so that the relationship between its philosophical elements can be explained (Kaelan, 2005:80).

Conceptually, the word ecological Sufism consists of two words strung together, each of which has its original meaning, namely Sufism and ecology. It's just that after being put together in a group of words a new meaning is born. The process of forming word groups can be explained as follows; Etymologically, Sufism comes from the Arabic word shafa-yashfu-shafwan, shafaa'an which means clean, clear (clear). The word Sufism in Western orientalist terms is specifically used for Islamic mysticism. Sufism is not used for the mysticism of other religions. Sufism, like mysticism outside of Islam, has a direct and conscious relationship with God, so that one is fully aware that a person is in God's presence. The essence of mysticism, including Sufism, is the awareness of the existence of communication and dialogue between the human spirit and God, through seclusion and contemplation. The awareness of being close to God can take the form of ittihad (unity with God) (Nasution, 2014: 43).

Meanwhile, the word ecology comes from two Greek syllables, Oikos means household, and logos means knowledge. So in terms of ecology is the science of the reciprocal relationship between living things and the (conditions) surrounding nature (environment) (Bagus, 2000: 182). According to Anton Bakker (1995: 34), Ecology is plural or interdisciplinary science. Because ecology concerns the human environment, its object includes the objects of many sciences that study the human environment from various angles, such as physical, biotic, psychological, aesthetic, and so on. According to Eugene P. Odum (1971: 3), ecology is the study of the structure and function of natural ecosystems in which humans are part of nature.

Based on the combination of the two words suffice and ecology, the term ecological Sufism or eco-Sufism is formed as one of the dimensions of mystical philosophy in the Islamic world, which examines the nature of man and nature as a way to approach and unite oneself with God. he term ecological Sufism is close to the meaning of spiritual ecology, ecological spirituality, greening religion, and green spirituality (Suwito. 2011: 5-15). Seyyed Hossein Nasr's analysis of the concept of ecological Sufism in this study is a new perspective that examines the relationship between religion, spirituality, and ecology. Ecological Sufism emphasizes the pattern of ethical and aesthetic relations between man and God, as well as man and nature. This new view is built through the unification of consciousness between environmental and divine consciousness with two main principles, namely 1) environmental

awareness is an inseparable part of spiritual awareness. 2) efforts to transform the process from spiritual awareness to ecological awareness with the aim of harmony in the universe and harmony between Sufi and God's behavior.

### **3. Result and Discussion**

#### **A. Ecological Sufism and Environmental Crisis**

The ecological crisis is an undeniable reality for today's global society. These problems are mostly caused by human actions that are no longer friendly to nature. This behavior is an anthropocentric behavior which has the view that humans are the center of the universe so that humans consider only themselves to have value, while nature and everything in it are limited to an economic-instrument that is used as a means of satisfying the interests and needs of human life. Such a human view is a partial understanding that reduces the reality of values that exist in nature, namely spiritual values. This is very much influenced by the secular view that separates the non-physical dimension which is spiritual in nature from the physical world which is sensory.

Separation of material aspects from spiritual aspects will lead to human behavior that tends to be exploitative and destructive so that it can harm and damage nature and the environment. So as an effort to overcome the ecological crisis, it is necessary to change the paradigm of science is not only mechanistic-reductionistic but must be holistic. In connection with these conditions, Sufism is a flow of institutionalism in Islam that focuses heavily on the morality of human consciousness from material and spiritual characteristics. Not only the value of individual piety but also social godliness contained in Sufism, and is closely related to the ecological crisis rests on the crisis of human spirituality.

Humans seem to have the right to do whatever they want for the sake of satisfying their needs and only their desires. Humans must return to self-reflection on their true identity when given the mandate by God as a khalifa. When society begins to show symptoms of alienation or alienation due to the swift currents of modernization and technology, then at that time humans need spiritual guidance and guidance to restore their identity (Syukur, 2012: 140). Through the Sufism approach, Islam offers a way of life that is balanced and in harmony with nature. From this Sufism doctrine, the term ecological Sufism emerges, which has the meaning of a way of seeing and living attitudes in treating nature and the environment more broadly and contextually.



The ecology Sufism is a combination of two concepts, namely Sufism and ecology. Sufism means the spiritual dimension in Islam, while ecology is defining as the environment, habitat, or home. More specifically, ecology, according to Eugene P. Odum, is the study of the relationship of organisms to the environment, or the science of the reciprocal relationship between living organisms and their environment (Odum, 1993: 3).

There are two important things in ecological Sufism, first, ecological Sufism is environmental morality that is built through the wisdom of Sufism by using the patterns of takhalli, tahalli, and tajalli. The term takhalli is the process of getting rid of the bad qualities in humans. Whereas tahalli means the process of filling oneself with goodness, and finally tajalli, namely the manifestation, or application and practice of that goodness, so that it radiates out around him. So ecological Sufism is ecology which is interpreted as the practice of Sufism. Sufism, which tends to be selfish, is changed to have an impact on the environment and personal safety or communality (Suwito, 2011: 33-40). The understanding, knowledge, and love of God and nature and their relationships that have been discussed by the Sufis have become the moral basis for the environment. Second, ecological sufism means learning about wisdom through ecological media, namely spiritual awareness obtained by interpreting interactions between systems of existence, especially in the surrounding environment.

Ecological Sufism is one of the mystical philosophies in Islam, which examines the nature of man and nature as a way to approach and unite oneself with God. This term is close to the meaning of spiritual ecology, ecological spirituality, and greening religion, as well as green spirituality. The concept of ecological Sufism is a new Sufism concept which is built on the unification of consciousness between ecological and divine consciousness. This awareness is built with the assumption that ecological consciousness is an inseparable part of spiritual consciousness. Loving the universe is part of loving God. While loving what belongs to God is also a part of loving God. This equalization of awareness is an effort to transform the spiritual consciousness into ecological awareness, which lies at the level of implementation of the ecological movement. Functionally, the goal of ecological Sufism is harmony in nature, and harmony between Sufi actors and God.

Ecological Sufism can also be interpreted in two ways, namely first, using nature as the medium. Second, protecting nature based on Sufism. In this perspective, the understanding of nature in the Sufi tradition functions as a verse (a sign of God's greatness), a medium to get closer to, and be grateful for all God's blessings that exist, as well as learn to gain wisdom, and include fulfillment of needs (consumption). Nature becomes the starting and ending point in determining one's oneness with God. If humans treat nature well, then the

human relationship with God is also good. Vice versa, if humans treat nature badly, the possibility of human relations with God is also bad.

## **B. The Life History of Seyyed Hossein Nasr and His Thought**

Seyyed Hossein Nasr was born on April 7, 1933, in Tehran Iran. He grew and developed in a respectable family and a family that paid great attention to education and science. His father, Seyyed Valiallah, was a scholar, doctor, educator, and literary scholar. Seyyed Valiallah also served as minister of education in the cabinet of the Reza Pahlevi government, and like his grandfather's previous work, his father Seyyed Valillah was a doctor of the Iranian royal family. Nasr also has Sufi blood from his mother.

Since childhood, Nasr had planted a vast and rich intellectual heritage that was typical of Persia in his family. Nasr's formal education was pursued in Tehran and Qum according to the Persian curriculum. Nasr received lessons in philosophy, the science of kalam, Sufism, and fiqh (Esposito, 1995: 230). Apart from that, Nasr also studied Islamic sciences and Christianity at home, as well as additional lessons, French. Nasr was also very familiar with the poems of leading poets, such as Sa'di and Hafiz.

At the age of 12, Nasr began to have frequent discussions with his father on philosophical and theological issues, mainly because he had access to a lot of literature. Frequently discussing various problems with his father was quite influential in shaping Nasr's character and intellectuality. Then, Nasr went to the United States to improve his knowledge by studying English, science, American history, Western culture, and Christianity at The Paddie school, Hightstown New Jersey for four years and graduated in 1950.

In 1956 Nasr earned a Master's degree at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in geology with a focus on geophysics. Nasr is looking for a new tutor. He received further guidance from three professors, namely Bernard Cohen, Hamilton Gibb, and Harry Wolfson. His dissertation was entitled *Conceptions of Nature in Islamic Thought*, which was published by Harvard University Press in 1964 with the title "An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines" Nasr received his Philosophy of Doctor (Ph.D.) degree at the young age of 25, to be precise in 1958.

After completing his education in the United States, Nasr chose to return to Iran. Then exactly five years later, at the age of 30, Nasr got the position of Associate Professor in philosophy and history of science at the Faculty of Letters, University of Tehran. Nasr became the youngest professor at the university. From 1969-1972, Nasr served as dean of the

faculty, as well as assistant chancellor in academics. At his university, Nasr developed humanities and philosophy programs. After serving as dean, in 1972, Nasr was appointed by the Shah of Iran to become the leader of Arymehr to develop to be like MIT based on Iranian cultural roots. As a program, Nasr initiated the study of philosophy based on Islamic philosophy. One year later, Nasr was appointed by the Queen of Iran to head a center for philosophical studies known as the Imperial Iranian Philosophy Academy.

An important part of Nasr's life journey, upon his return to Iran in 1958, was to continue learning about Islamic philosophy directly from his teachers such as Muhammad Kazim Assar, Muhammad Husayn Thabathaba'i, and Abu al-Hasan Qazwini. Through these teachers, Nasr received references to the classical books he read, such as *Al-Asfarul Arbaa'ah* by Mulla Sadra, and *Syarahi Manumah*, by Sabziwari, thereby increasing his knowledge of his reading of these books. When the Iranian revolution occurred, Nasr and his family were forced to move to the United States, this move was caused by Iranian revolutionaries who strongly opposed the Shah, while Nasr himself had worked as the head of a research institute financed by the Shah's government during his time in power.

Nasr's life and intellectual journey illustrate the ideal Muslim intellectuals and intellectual figure, which is to combine both the Eastern and Western educational traditions so that Nasr has the authority to discuss the contact between East and West as well as tradition and modernity. Nasr provided his knowledge by writing many books that were so critical and sharp. Nasr's works are usually in Persian and English, often in French and Arabic. Nasr's book, entitled *An Introduction to Islamic Cosmological Doctrines*, is a book that originates from his dissertation by presenting a critical edition of the philosophical thinkers Khwan al-Shafa, al-Biruni, and Ibn Sina. Nasr also wrote the book "Three Muslim Sages" a book derived from three lectures delivered by Nasr in his capacity as a visiting professor at Harvard University's Center for World Religious Studies (1962). Islam. Nasr also wrote a book entitled *Science and Civilization in Islam*, an article that started when Nasr was still studying at Harvard. Another Nasr book is entitled *Ideal and Realities of Islam*, a book drawn from the first six of fifteen lectures Nasr gave at the American University in Beirut (1964-1965) as Aga Khan's professor of Islamic studies. At the same time, Nasr also produced a work entitled *Islamic Studies*, which is a book containing fundamental aspects of the Islamic tradition, which was later developed into *Islamic Life and Thought*.

Furthermore, Nasr also wrote a book entitled *Man and Nature: The Crisis of Modern Man* (1968), this book is Nasr's first book to show his attention to the spiritual crisis of modern humans. This book presents predictions of environmental damage at that time due to

the environmental crisis. In its initial edition the book was entitled *The Encounter of Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man*. After the book was published the next book entitled, *Islam and Tea Plight of Modern Man, Sufi Essays or Living Sufism* (1980). Then the book entitled *The Transcendent Theosophy of Sadr al-Din Shirazi*.

Nasr was also involved in the project to compile *the Encyclopedia of World Spirituality* (1989), with Ewert Cousins, Nasr became the editor and filled volume 19-20 with writings on Islamic Spirituality. This encyclopedia consists of 25 volumes and covers all world spiritual traditions to the phenomenon of contemporary spirituality. Subsequently, in 1994, Nasr was invited to give a Cadbury lecture at the University of Birmingham, the paper he delivered was later published in a book entitled *Religion and The Order of Nature*. Continuing in 1995, Nasr with Oliver Leaman, edited and published a book entitled *History of Islamic Philosophy*, this book contains articles on Islamic philosophy written by leading scholars of Islamic and Jewish philosophy in the world. There are still many other Nasr books that the researchers did not include in this writing, such as those contained in speech papers and other international journals.

Furthermore, mapping Nasr's thoughts, as a great thinker, Nasr certainly did not build his thoughts at the same time, but through step by step until his position was established as the leading Muslim intellectual in the world. Basically Nasr's flow of thought can be analyzed into two groups of fields of study, which are the agenda of his thoughts, namely, firstly Nasr's view of the history and philosophy of science, with a focus on criticism of modern science. both the study of world religions, and a view on Islamic studies that focuses on philosophy, Sufism, and Islamic science and art. Of the two groups, basically to facilitate the mapping of Nasr's thoughts with a very strict division. Here is a map of Nasr's mind.

First, Nasr's critique of modern science. His criticism of modern science is basically the starting point of his concern for various ecological damage that threatens the continuity of human life on earth. This problem is rooted in sins and technology as its application. For Nasr, science has stepped out of its proper role, function and application, so that it has had a tremendous negative impact. All of this, as a result of the breaking up of science and technology with knowledge at a higher level as its parent, as well as the destruction of the value and spiritual nature of nature (Nasr, 1984: 14). Apart from having an impact on ecology, modern science also has an impact on human crises. As a result, human relations are cut off from a higher reality, humans do not understand who they really are (the self). Modern humans have a higher consciousness, so that the view of humans only focuses on the physical dimension.

The paradigm of modern science is a problem for Nasr, because it has caused massive desacralization of nature. Moreover, in its development, modern science has transformed into scientism, which is a new belief that is considered absolute and rejects other truths. For Nasr, science with his method is expected not to give up the basic view of nature by continuing to work through the umbrella of traditional metaphysics, so that the spiritual meaning of nature can be read (Nasr, 1993: 119). So that nature can be seen properly and the knowledge obtained by humans is not for mastering, but for interaction and communication, which will produce wisdom.

Second, Nasr's criticism of the study of religion and Islam. Nasr's concern about religious studies departs from seeing the academic mistakes made by modern humans so far, on the understanding of religion which is oriented towards the West. Meanwhile, in the West itself, the study of religion is trapped in historicism, where religion is conceived as a mere historical phenomenon. For Nasr, this issue is a serious and important issue to address, because religion is reduced and loses its essential meaning. According to him, religious studies that do not pay much attention to the metaphoric dimension understand the religious reality as religion, and holy forms as holy reality. This approach is not so bad, but it cannot do justice to the exclusion of the transcendental dimension which is the essence of religion itself. Nasr's view on religious studies was influenced by Frithjof Schuon, a perennialist as the foundation of the exoteric and esoteric understanding of Islam. Nasr highly praised Schuon's work entitled *Islam and Perennial Philosophy*. According to Nasr, perennial philosophy is very instrumental in laying down certain keys, as a tool to open the shackles of modern humans in understanding religion. The perennial approach is considered very useful for the benefit of a more complete religious study and harmony of pluralist religions. Nasr's consistency in using the perennial approach is based on the belief that perennial philosophy is capable of presenting essential truth, such as his criticism of western science. Such an approach can provide the possibility to develop a comparative religious theology that is more just in the midst of a plurality of religions. Religious differences are limited to the level of their historical manifestation, while at the original transcendental and transhistorical level, all religions originate from one source.

Furthermore, Nasr's criticism of Islamic studies. According to Nasr's view, the existing studies of Islam have reduced Islam in its true meaning. Western intellectuals and modernist Muslims were accused of being the perpetrators. This reduction is due to the poverty perspective which is able to present the unity of various Islamic phenomena. Several studies conducted using historical and analytical methods in the modern era can only talk

about Islam in phenomena, so that Islam is present in a more historical nuance and is a dimension behind it (Nasr,1981: 2). Nasr has always emphasized that Islam as a religion cannot be reduced to a mere historical phenomenon, although he also acknowledges that it has a historical dimension. This is because Islam is considered as eternal foundations and non-temporal sacred forms (Nasr, 1967: 1). Islam like this is what is called traditional Islam which is eternal and universal.

### **C. Ecological Sufism in Thought Seyyed Hossein Nasr**

Sufism was at the heart of Nasr's thought which spread and influenced his thinking in other fields, and colored his studies on various problems. Sufism is an esoteric dimension of Islam, which in Western terms is equated with mysticism (Nasr, 1996: 459). Nasr Sufism, combining philosophical and Sunni Sufism (Aziz, 1998: 89). The mapping of this study in the world of Sufism is to distinguish between Sufism that comes from the Qur'an and hadith, with Sufism which presents philosophical explanations. A figure like al-Ghazali represents a figure representing Sunni Sufism, while Ibn 'Arabi is a figure in the philosophical Sufism school. In the field of Sufis, Nasr is also known to unite practical Sufis and theoretical Sufis. these practical sufisms are the practical methods used in the sufistic wanderings. Meanwhile, theoretical Sufis are theoretical explanations of the teachings related to Sufism.

As mentioned above, Nasr's Sufism holds on to the Qur'an as its foundation. His statement which clearly states that no spirituality is possible without being in line with the aims of the Qur'an. Because, the al-Qur'an is what teaches humans about something that can be done and becomes a guide towards the goal of its creation (Nasr, 1980: 9). So it is very clear that there is no Sufism that is not based on the Koran or apart from Islam.

According to Nasr, Sufism aims to free humans from the prison of pluralistic pseudo-reality, cleanse them from hypocrisy, and make them become whole, so that they become holy as they were originally created (fitrah). a person who succeeds in achieving this goal will become a universal human being (al-insan al- kamil) (Nasr, 1991: 43-44). Humans have the potential to achieve it and reunite with the origin, because he is the most perfect and complete manifestation of God. The unification of oneself and awareness of the unity of all the various realities is the realization of the teachings of tawheed which is the ultimate message of Islam (Nasr, 1980: xvi). This position can be achieved, if humans can penetrate the esoteric dimension of religion through a bridge of religious practices and doctrines.

The linking of Sufism to ecological problems occurs, because in Sufism there are very constructive aspects to the wisdom of Sufis on ecological salvation. The expansion of the capacity of Sufism in ecological issues is something fundamental, considering that as already mentioned above, the environmental damage that is currently occurring is already at a dangerous level, where almost all components of the environment, both the natural environment, the social environment and the cultural environment have been degraded. which is worrying. The damage that occurred was mostly caused by human hands, who exploited natural resources excessively.

If the concern for ecology on the basis of Sufism is able to answer the problem of the environmental crisis. Sufism is not only understood as "serving" God, but its application should be expanded into a Sufism teaching that cares for the environment. This does not mean that the environment (nature) is divine pantheism, but Sufism must be returned to its original function, namely as a balance (tawazun) between material and spiritual life. It is a rule for building the ideal relationship between man and God and the environment around him. Sufism is not only fulfilling spiritual needs, but more than that it is able to produce results (applicative) for the rescue and protection of the earth where humans live today. Therefore, ecological spirituality based on Sufism becomes an option to address environmental damage that requires intuitive awareness and plural spiritual faith from all walks of life.

There are several important concepts to build an understanding of ecological sufism according to Nasr's view, which is then expected to provide a good view of the relationship between humans and the environment in relation to natural balance, which of course will also create an ethical value for a sufistic environment. This understanding is based on the principles of ecological sufism, as follows:

### **1. Relationship between God, Man and Nature**

In the Sufi tradition, the discourse about God and nature is a hot topic of discussion. There are at least four theories about the occurrence of nature, namely: 1) illumination theory (Isyraqi), 2) manifestation theory (tajalli), 3) muta'alliyah wisdom theory, and 4) al-Ghazali atomistic theory (Suwito, 2011: 47) . The first is the theory of illumination (Isyraqi), a theory coined by Suhrawardi. This theory is categorized under Sufism because according to him, it is necessary to show the truth that lies in the heart as revealed by God (Aminrazafi, 2003: 2-3). The principle of Isyraqiyah philosophy is to get the truth through intuitive experience, then elaborate and verify it logically rationally, in other words, knowing is the same as gaining an experience, a direct-intuition of what is known. Only after being reached in a total, intuitive,

and immediate manner, this knowledge is analyzed, namely discursively-demonstrationally (Bagir, 2017: 79).

This theory says that God is light, as the only true reality. Nature according to this theory is emanating from God (Suwito, 2011: 48). God's light is radiating, there are two kinds of emission, namely; 1) long / high or longitudinal (thuli), i.e. radiating from God vertically through a series of lights from the closest to the farthest first light. 2) a broad or latitudinal beam (ardh), which is a kind of prototype for creatures in the physical realm (Nasr, 2014: 130). Suhrawardi calls nature as al-Faqir (who needs) God for its existence. Since nature is possible by nature (mumkin al-wujud), it is impossible to organize or organize itself. On this basis, Suhrawardi called God al-Ghani (Who does not need anything). Without God whose existence as an agent is necessary (Wajib al-wujud), nature would not exist. The fact that nature is in front of humans shows that God must exist from the beginning (Kartanegara, 2007: 3).

Second, the theory of manifestation (tajalli) is widely known as wahdatul wujud. This tajalli theory is a theory from Ibn 'Arabi which he uses to refer to the self-manifestation of god (Nicholson, 1993: 125). This theory says that all forms are one (wihdat al-wujud, unity of being). There are different definitions that underlie the understanding of the term "Being" (Being, al-Wujuud), 1) being as a concept: the idea of "Being" of existence (Wujuud bil ma'na al-Masdari), 2) it can mean having a form, namely those that exist or subsists, (wujuud bi Ma'na Maujuud), so the term "Absolute Being" is to denote the reality which is the culmination of all that exists, so that God is absolute form (Allah Hua al -wujuud al-Haqq) (Afifi, 1989: 13).

Thus, man is the most perfect form of God, because he is a microcosm that collects all the essence of being, a microcosm where all the perfection of the macrocosm is reflected in the mirror of his being (Afifi, 1989: 118). The various realms are manifestations of one entity. The analogy of the relationship between nature and existence is depicted by means of a "face" with a "picture" of the face in several mirrors. That one face can be reflected through a thousand and one mirrors. The "perfect" mirror that can represent the "face" of God as a whole is a perfect human (insan kamil) (Suwito, 2011: 49).

Third, the theory of al-Hikmah al-Muta'alliyah was conceptualized by Mulla Sadra (w.1641). Basically, Mulla Sadra never named his school of thought al-Hikmah al-Muta'alliyah, the mention of al-Hikmah al-Muta'alliyah as a philosophical school was first introduced by 'Abd al-Razzak Lahiji (d. 1072 H / 161 AD), student and son-in-law at the same time. The figure who was very enthusiastic about explaining the reason for using this



term as the name for Mulla Sadra's school of philosophy was Mulla Hadi Sabzawari (1212-1295 H / 1779-1878 AD), a Persian philosopher and mystic in the 13th / 19th century AD (Kuswanjono, 2009: 24).

The interesting concept of Sadra is related to the concept of being. For him, being is transformed. In Sadra's term it is known as *al-harâkah al-jawhariyyah* (substantial movement). Namely the impermanence of an existence (appearing) or being, in the hierarchy of being. In a different expression, it means the strengthening or weakening of the intensity of "being" (form or existence) being (Bagir, 2017: 94).

Prior to Mulla Sadra, philosophers argued that motion occurred only in four accident categories: quantity (*kamm*), quality (*kaif*), position (*wadh'*), and place (*ain*). In other words, the substance does not change but only the four categories of accidents do. Because if a substance (an object / thing) changes, humans can never call something permanent. Because that is what humans call it, the substance has changed into another, then humans have changed into another. Sadra argues that, besides the change in the category of accidents, motion also occurs in substance. Seeing in the external world the change of material things from one state to another. Apples change from green, then yellow, to red. Size, taste, weight are always changing. Since the existence of an accident is dependent on a change in substance, so a change in accident is related to a change in substance as well. All material things change in this connection, Sadra maintains the *huduts* (newness) of the physical world, the impermanent nature of the essence of matter, and time as the fourth dimension of matter; that is, as a measure of the quantity of motion (Bagir, 2017: 94).

Fourth, al-Ghazali's theory says that everything other than Allah (*Maa siwa Allah*) is new and created. Meanwhile, the nature of God is *qadim* first, existed long ago, not new. Nature is a product of God. Meanwhile, Allah is the essence and cause of the existing nature. This illustrates that al-Ghazali understands this nature atomistically (not monistically) with God (Suwito, 2011: 50). Al-Ghazali also criticized the opinion of previous philosophers, that nature is eternal in the sense that it has no beginning, for him God is the creator, which means to create something from nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*). If nature (in the sense that everything that exists apart from God) is said to have no origin, then nature was not created and thus God is not the creator. According to him, in the Koran, it is stated that God is the Creator of everything. According to al-Ghazali in Islamic theology, he does not embrace the notion that nature does not begin (Nasution, 2014: 32).

Based on the four theories about God, nature, and humans, and the relationship between nature and God in Sufism is very unique. The first three theories above indicate that

nature is holy because it comes from a holy Essence. Likewise with the concept of al-Ghazali, nature is a product of God. Damaging a product is the same as damaging the manufacturer. In the context of the environment, destroying the environment is the same as moving away from God. This concept has the potential to be used as a basis for building environmental spirituality based on Sufism. Because seeing God as the center while nature and humans are manifestations of God's attributes. This means that human nature is an integral part of nature, while the universe is a reflection of God's power. So in this context, taking steps to make peace and live in harmony with nature is the best way. According to Nasr, there can be no peace between humans unless there is peace and harmony with nature. In order for all this to happen, then humans must be in harmony and be in harmony with the heavens, with the source and origin of all creatures. Whoever is at peace with God, he will also be at peace with His creation, with nature and with humans (Nasr. 2005: 163).

## **2. Humans as Khalifah of Allah on Earth**

Humans as khalifah on earth are that humans are the most perfect place of tajalli (manifestation) of God, which is the center of existence; namely humans as a small nature (microcosm), which is then reflected in the big world (macrocosm), and the divine characteristics are reflected in it (Afifi, 1989: 19). Due to human nature like this, then man was made the caliph on earth. Man is willing to accept the mandate that Allah offers him. Because humans realize that they are capable of carrying it, because they are rational beings who are able to take responsibility. The meaning of the caliph in this discussion will focus on environmental issues.

The concept of khalifah always refers to, among others, the verse of the al-Qur'an which translates as follows:

"And (remember) when your God said to the angels, I will make the khalifah on earth. They said, "do you want to make someone who corrupts and sheds blood there, while we praise You?" He said, "I really know what you do not know" (Surah Al-Baqarah: 30).

The main thought of this verse is in the sentence which means "Truly I will make the caliph on earth". The key word for this sentence is the word caliph. According to the Quraish Shihab, the term caliph in this verse does not have a political connotation. Because the expression is in the singular, khalifah, and the subject is in the first person singular, "ya mutakalamin", that is "inni" (Really I am). The appointment of Adam as caliph in this

singular form is natural, because when the incident occurred, no other party could be seen in the appointment (Shihab, 1993: 156-159).

In contrast to the interpretation of Thaba 'Thaba'i, the term khalifah in this verse does not have the connotation of individual politics, but rather communal cosmology. Khalifah whose operation was carried out by Adam, actually did not mean Adam's person alone, but Adam as a symbol of the community of the human species. Thus the person with the title of khalifah is the entire human species, Adam is only a symbol of the human species.

Based on the above interpretation, the term khalifah contained in surah al-Baqarah verse 30 tends to have a cultural ecological connotation. That is, humans are appointed as caliphs given a mandate by Allah to carry out an ecological mission, namely to manage the environment in a sustainable manner. God as the environmental potential manager and man as the actual manager of the environment. this is a form of cooperation between God and humans in managing the environment.

Furthermore, according to Sachiko Murata, that humans play a unique role in the universe as representatives (khalifah) of Allah, which in turn demands human responsibility (Murata, 2000: 38). As the representative (khalifah) of Allah, humans are obliged (actively) to be able to represent themselves according to the attributes of Allah. One of the attributes of Allah regarding this nature is to act as a guardian or guardian of nature (al-rab al'alamin). So, as the representative (caliph) of Allah on earth, humans must be active and responsible for protecting the earth. Safeguarding this earth means maintaining the sustainability of the earth's function as a place for God's creatures to live, including humans, while at the same time maintaining the sustainability of their lives.

Khalifah can also mean leadership. Humans are God's representatives on this earth who have been appointed to be leaders for all of God's other creatures (the universe including the earth) and everything in it (the atmosphere, and the natural resources it contains, including plants and animals). This meaning has a consequence that humans must be able to represent God to lead and maintain the sustainability of all creatures (Supian, 2014: 510).

#### **4. Conclusion**

The issue of environmental damage is already complex and heavy. Humans are too ignorant if they are supposed to reap the benefits in a sustainable manner which means that humans must maintain a harmonious relationship with nature and the environment. There is an extreme contradiction between human nature and nature: human beings have the nature to

dominate and this quality is inherent, while nature is possessed and will be exhausted if not managed humanely. Human activities affect their environment and conversely human life is influenced by their environment. If humans are only concerned with their needs without paying attention to the natural balance contained in their environment, naturally nature will no longer be part of an ecosystem that can prosper life, and on the contrary nature will become a disaster.

Awareness of human nature and natural nature should be an ideological foothold for humans, in this context, developed countries that have long injured nature and the environment should take a big share in the restoration of the environment. This is where, in the opinion of the researcher, the concept of ecological sufism in Nasr's view becomes important, especially since the sufistic value is related to ecological issues, not only in individual values, but also into communal values, this is really a solution offering to build a sustainable society, at the national level. and globally, namely a sustainable society that builds and manages its life together based on awareness of the importance of the environment.

The conceptualization of ecological Sufism values is rooted in an ecological spirituality that is based on Sufism values and is connected to answer the problematic realities of today's environmental crisis. The concept of ecological Sufism emphasizes the harmony between God, humans, and nature. Therefore, Seyyed Hossein Nasr's ecological Sufism thought needs to be implemented in people's lives as a view of life that has values and can be an alternative thought in addressing environmental problems.

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