



# The message of Ecological Balance in the Story of Prophet Saleh and Prophet Sulaiman in the Al-Qur'an

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## ABSTRACT

Environmental damage due to ecological imbalance has become a global issue because of its detrimental impact on all lines of life. One of the main causes is due to the wrong perspective of humans in assessing nature. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine the meaning of the message of ecological balance in the story of Prophet Saleh and Prophet Sulaiman in the Qur'an using the perspective of literary ecocriticism. The data analysis method used is descriptive-analytical. The result of the research is that ecological balance can be disturbed or maintained accordingly depending on how humans behave. The Thamuds saw nature only as a commodity so they were greedy in using nature, such as making buildings beyond their needs, monopolizing water sources and killing the camel of Prophet Saleh. This attitude then made them damaged the ecological balance and made them destroyed. In contrast to the Prophet Sulaiman who has an attitude of gratitude. So, the Prophet Sulaiman, in utilizing nature, prioritizes fairness and respect. This can be seen from how the Prophet Sulaiman organized the animals that became his army and respected the existence of ants. This attitude then makes the ecological balance maintained and life becomes sustainable.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Human thinking abilities make it possible to develop science and technology (Oschepkov et al., 2022). With it, humans are able to create an artificial environment that is different from the natural environment, resulting in a change in the natural ecosystem into an artificial ecosystem (Zhao et al., 2020). The progress of human thinking makes it capable of becoming the master of the environmental order (Ryder & Voageley, 2018). However, there is a dark side to this, namely that poor environmental management will reduce the quality of life and the environment (Utina & Baderan, 2009). Humans tend to exploit nature for a materialistic, hedonistic and consumption lifestyle, so they always try to clean and increase their possessions. In fulfilling their needs, humans often view nature as an object that has no value, so they treat it arbitrarily. If the environmental crisis is not corrected wisely, it will not only impact animals or plants but also humans. Like racism, the environmental crisis is a broad cultural problem, not a problem of just one scientific discipline. Everyone who thinks is needed to take part in it. In the fields of science, engineering and public policy, this problem is very clear. However, other fields such as humanities, history, philosophy, religion, geography, culture, literature and other arts contribute to the solution to the environmental crisis. This needs to be done in the hope of creating technological

breakthroughs, legislative reform and written agreements that prioritize environmental welfare. Apart from that, it is necessary to change values, and perceptions of what is called the environment from before (Buell, 2009).

Therefore, based on the background explanation above, the aim of this research is to reveal the message of ecological balance in the story of Prophet Saleh and Prophet Sulaiman with a literary ecocritical perspective. It is hoped that this research can contribute to improving ecological balance so that life can continue to be sustainable for future generations. There is previous research that is used as a reference, because the theme of the discussion is at first glance the same, including the thesis on the contextualization of the ancient prophets and their relevance to modern life (Harahap, 2021) which states that the lifestyle of the 'Ad and Thamud looks exactly like people today in terms of their greed for possessions. However, the excess wealth they have makes their hearts closed to receiving goodness. Apart from that, there is a thesis entitled Humans, Animals and Plants in the Al-Qur'an (Yumna, 2021) which says that animals and plants are equal in rank as servants of Allah; no one is higher than the other. Another research is an article in the journal Balance.

Ecology in Tafsir Al-Misbah says that ecological balance is the universe and everything created by Allah that carefully and flawlessly runs according to its function (Baqi & Fuad, 1981). There are differences between the research that has been carried out previously and the research carried out by the authors, namely in terms of the theory used and the steps in carrying out the analysis, which will then give rise to different conclusions (Rahman, 2020). This type of research is library research and uses a qualitative method that uses a literary ecocritical perspective approach in studying the story of the Prophet Saleh and Prophet Sulaiman in the Al-Qur'an. Literary ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary approach to literature that specifically examines various environmental problems depicted through literary works (Didipu, 2021). Ecocriticism is a series of words ecology and criticism. If interpreted one by one, 'ecology' means the scientific study of patterns of relationships between plants and plants, animals and animals and humans to humans and to their environment. Meanwhile, the word 'criticism' means a form and expression of judgment about whether quality is good or bad. So, in simple terms, ecocriticism is criticism from an environmental perspective (Harsono, 2008).

Ecocriticism pays attention to the reciprocal relationship between literary works and the environment, including the relationship between social and physical reality, which is usually a concern in ecology. Ecocriticism is able to explain how nature and the environment, with its various problems, become an inseparable part of literary works. Nature and the environment are not only understood as background places and atmospheres but are also aspects that help build the aesthetics of a literary work. Therefore, this approach is a cultural studies model that discusses environmental issues in literary texts. Ecocriticism raises explicit cultural analysis regarding environmental issues (the "green" movement), this study is included in the "green" moral and political agenda. The ecocritical approach can be analogous to a critical movement expressing advocacy on social, cultural, environmental and political-ecological issues as an ecosystem (Mujiningsih, 2023). Although ecocriticism was initially used as a tool to dissect human-made literary works. However, ecocriticism can also be used to explore the ecological or environmental meanings in the verses of the Qur'an. This then makes the stories in the Qur'an able to provide new, fresher and actual meanings for solutions to problems that are currently inflamed.

The stages of research carried out include: 1) Collecting verses from the Qur'an relating to the Prophet Saleh and Prophet Sulaiman, 2) Classifying the verses that have been collected, 3) Examining these verses in the tafsir book, 3) Analyzing the interpretation of the verses relating to the story of Prophet Saleh and Nabi Sulaiman using a literary criticism perspective, 3) Summarizing all the research data that has been obtained into a complete message. The data analysis method used is descriptive-analytic, which is used to provide explanations and analyze the message of ecological balance contained in the story of Prophet Saleh and Prophet Sulaiman in the Al-Qur'an from a literary ecocritical perspective.

## 2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 2.1. The story of Prophet Saleh in the Qur'an

Prophet Saleh As is the prophet sent to the Thamud tribe. As for the story in the Al-Qur'an, its presentation is quite detailed. Not only does it explain the story, but the Qur'an also explains the background conditions of the place where Prophet Saleh lived. Place the verse of the Qur'an that tells the story of Prophet Saleh. and the Thamud tribe among others: QS. Al-A'raf [7]: 73-79, Hud [11]: 61-68, Al-Hijr [15]: 80-84, Ash-Shu'ara [26]: 141-159, An-Naml [27]: 45-53, Fushshilat [41]: 17-18, Al-Qamar [54]: 23-32, Ash-Shams [91]: 11-15. In addition to telling the Thamud tribe in detail, the Qur'an often mentions the name of the Thamud tribe not accompanied by its story as an example of a tribe that was destroyed for committing disobedience, this is found in At-Taubah

[9]:70, Hud [11]: 89, Hud [11]: 95, Ibrahim [14]: 9, Al-Isra: [17] 59, Al-Furqan [25]:38, Al-Ankabut [29]: 38, Sad [38]:13, Gafir [40]: 31, Fussilat [41]: 13, 17 Qaf [50]:12, Az-Zariyat [51]: 43, An-Najm [53]: 51, Al-Haqqah [69]: 4-5, Al-Buruj [85]: 18, Al-Fajr [89]:9.

Therefore, the story of Prophet Saleh and the Thamud people are found in 63 verses spread over 8 surahs, namely Al-A'raf, Hud, Al-Hijr, Ash-Syu'ara, An-Naml, Fushshilat, Al-Qamar, Ash-Syams. In addition to the mention of the story, the Qur'an often mentions the Thamud people in other verses that are not accompanied by their story or the mention is coupled with other peoples, namely found in 16 verses spread over 15 Surahs, namely At-Taubah, Hud, Ibrahim, Al-Isra`, Al-Fuqron, Al-Ankabut, Shad, Ghafir, Fushshilat, Qaf, Adz-Dzariyat, An-Najm, Al-Haqqah, Al-Buruj, Al-Fajr.

Prophet Saleh As or Saleh bin Ubaid bin Masih bin Hadir bin Thamud bin 'Atsir bin Iram bin Nuh was sent to the people of Thamud who had committed polytheism against Allah SWT. by worshiping idols. The name Thamud is attributed to the name of their grandfather, Thamud, brother of Judais. Thamud and Judais were the sons of Abir bin Iram bin Sam bin Nuh. They are one of the tribes of the Arab nation 'Aribah (original Arabs before Prophet Ibrahim As) who settled in the Hijr, which is the place between Hijaz and Tabuk (Katsir, 2010). This is what makes them mentioned in the Qur'an as Ashabul Hijr. The Thamud people are estimated to have lived in 800 BC (Zahrah, 1958).

Al-Hijr, now called Madain Saleh, is located approximately 22 km to the northeast of al-'Ula in the Madinah Al-Munawaroh region. Al-Hijr is popular in history because of its strategic location, namely being on the past trade route that connected the Arabian Peninsula and Syria (Al, 2007). The Thamud had expertise in sculpting and carving. This can be proven in the Al-Qur'an, which tells the story of the Thamud, such as QS. Al-A'raf [7]: 74. They carved large rocks and mountains to serve as places to live. Apart from that, they are also experts in making carvings and pottery, which are then used as merchandise. Apart from that, other products they trade are incense and spices. Because where they live is a trade route, it makes it easier for them to trade, and the results provide wealth, so they can live prosperously and prosperously. Another pleasure that Allah bestowed on them was the fertile place where they lived. This makes agriculture, plantations and animal husbandry advanced. They were given a long life, to the point that their age was so long that no building survived beyond their age. The Thamud are described as a people who like material pleasures in terms of food, drink and a sturdy place to live.

The abundance of sustenance that God gave to the Thamud people did not make them grateful and worship God Swt. but they even worship idols and feel superior, which makes them arrogant and do not want to accept the invitation and advice to the goodness of the Prophet Saleh. The peak of Thamud's tyranny was when they killed the Prophet Saleh's camel, which was proof of his prophethood. They did it bravely and did not feel guilty or afraid in the slightest, even though Prophet Saleh had warned him that if the camel was hurt, then God's punishment would come down. Even after that, they charge the punishment. Three days after the killing of the camels, the Thamud people were immediately punished by God in the form of a loud sound due to the collision of heavenly bodies that shook the earth and made their strong houses meltdown in an instant and befell all the Thamud people who were in opposition.

## 2.2. The story of Prophet Solomon in the Al-Qur'an

The Qur'an describes Prophet Solomon as a prophet and also a king who was skilled in leadership. The following are verses from the Qur'an that tell the story of Prophet Sulaiman QS. Al-Anbiya` [21]: 78-82, An-Naml [27]: 15-44, Saba` [34]: 12-14, QS. Sad [38]: 30-40. Apart from including verses about the story of Prophet Sulaiman, the Qur'an also mentions the name of Prophet Sulaiman without any story in it, namely Al-Baqarah [2]: 102, An-Nisa [4]: 163. Therefore, the story of Prophet Sulaiman is contained in 49 verses spread across 4 letters, namely Al-Anbiya`, An-Naml, Saba` and Shad. Apart from mentioning his story, the Qur'an often mentions Solomon in other verses that are not accompanied by his story, namely in 2 verses spread across 2 Surahs, namely Al-Baqarah and An-Nisa. The number of mentions of the word Sulaiman in the book al-Mu'jam al-Mufahros li Alfadz Qur'an is 17 times in 16 verses and 7 letters, namely Al-Baqarah, An-Nisa, Al-An'an, Al-Anbiya`, An-Naml, Saba` and Sad (Baqi & Fuad, 1981).

Prophet Sulaiman has a lineage to Prophet Ibrahim As, namely Sulaiman bin Dawud bin Asysya bin Uwaid bin Abir bin Salmun bin Nakhsyun bin Umaina Adab bin Iram bin Hashrun bin Farish bin Yahudza bin Ya'qub bin Ishaq bin Ibrahim (Katsir & Ismâil, 2002). Prophet Sulaiman is the son of the Prophet Dawud and inherited his prophethood and power. The Power of Prophet Sulaiman was greater than his father's power because apart from the power of Prophet Dawud, Prophet Sulaiman was able to control the wind, demons, and knowledge of

the language of birds and ants. Prophet Dawud and Prophet Sulaiman, with the abundance of power and blessings they had, did not make them arrogant. Instead, they were grateful to Allah SWT.

One of the stories stated in QS. An-Naml [27]: 18-19 is about the Prophet Ibrahim and his army passing through an ant's nest. Prophet Sulaiman's cavalry vibrated the ground, making the colony of ants who were working collecting food and others working in their nests feel the vibration that Prophet Sulaiman's army was passing by and heading towards their nest. Therefore, one of the ants said to the other ants, "O ants! Solomon's army is on its way to this village! Come on, go back to your homes. Otherwise, the soldiers will destroy you while they don't know it." Then Prophet Solomon looked at the ant who was warning his friends about the arrival of him and his soldiers. Prophet Solomon, who had been given the gift of understanding animal language, was able to understand what an ant was saying, then he immediately looked at the ant and smiled. Then Prophet Sulaiman got off his horse, prostrated himself to Allah, raised his head to the sky in prayer and expressed his gratitude for the blessings that had been given to him. Then Solomon prevented his soldiers from entering the ants' place and chose another path. At first, many ants were afraid that Solomon and his soldiers would destroy their houses. However, the ant then told them about what had just happened and they were happy to hear it, so they asked Allah SWT. to give Solomon and his soldiers a victory over their enemies. Finally, Solomon's soldiers continued to fight in the way of Allah, and the ants returned to their place to work in peace (As-Sayyid, 2005).

The most detailed story regarding the story of Prophet Sulaiman is when he conquered the kingdom of Queen Balqis and made her return to worship Allah SWT, which is found in the QS. An-Naml [27]: 20-44. At first he got information from the hoopoe bird regarding a kingdom under the leadership of a woman named Ratu Balqis. The kingdom worshiped the sun. Then Prophet Sulaiman sent a letter inviting him to worship Allah SWT. However, Queen Balqis responded by sending gifts as a way of peace and to prove whether Prophet Sulaiman was truly the Prophet of God or just a king. Prophet Sulaiman was angry with the sending of these gifts because it seemed like he was insulting him, and then Prophet Sulaiman declared that he would attack Queen Balqis' kingdom. Queen Balqis admitted defeat before being attacked by surrendering herself to come to the Kingdom of Prophet Sulaiman and follow the religion of Prophet Sulaiman.

Another specialty possessed by Prophet Solomon was that he subdued the wind, melted copper and subdued the jinn under his command, as stated in the QS. Saba` [34]: 12. The wind carried and blew away Prophet Solomon's carpet. This wind speed is capable of covering a full month's travel distance in just half a day. Hasan Al-Bashri said, "Prophet Sulaiman departed from Damascus in the morning, then descended and landed in Ishtakhr for lunch, then flew again from Ishtakhr, then rested in Kabul. The distance between Damascus and Ishtakhr reaches a full month's travel distance for fast drivers, and vice versa" (Az-Zuhaili, 2013). Prophet Sulaiman's genie worked to make large and tall buildings and so on, according to Prophet Sulaiman's orders. If the jinn rebel and refuse to obey and obey Prophet Sulaiman, they will surely have to taste a painful and heartbreaking punishment, namely burning in this world or the punishment of hell in the afterlife.

Prophet Sulaiman died with the stick in his handle eaten by termites, but the jinn did not know this until Prophet Sulaiman fell down because his stick was eaten by termites. It was predicted that Prophet Sulaiman had died one year earlier. The genies did not dare to stop working because they were so afraid of Prophet Solomon. Prophet Sulaiman died at the age of 53 years, while Prophet Sulaiman was officially appointed king at the age of three and began building the city of Baitul Maqdis four years after he became king.

### 2.3. Literary Ecocriticism on the Story of Prophet Solomon and the Thamud in the Al-Qur'an

#### a. *Prohibition of Doing Damage on Earth to the Thamud People*

The Thamud were descendants of the 'Ad people who survived the punishment of Allah SWT. In the beginning, the Thamud studied and took lessons from what happened to the 'Ad, so that they could build a very advanced and prosperous civilization. The Thamud lived in a fertile place, so their natural resources were abundant. Apart from that, welfare also increases because they can manage these resources well. The most prominent thing about the Thamud civilization was that they were experts in building architecture. They carved large stones into sturdy and beautiful buildings and residences. This is as stated in QS. Al-A'raf [7]: 74, Al-Hijr [15]: 82, Ash-Syu'ara [26]: 147-150.

But unfortunately, the well-being of the Thamud people in terms of resources and the ability to cultivate them does not make them grateful, let alone believe in Allah SWT. They even cause damage to the surface of the earth. Until Prophet Saleh, as stated in the Qur'an, reminds them not to do damage on the face of the earth. This is found in QS. Al-A'raf [7]: 74, Ash-Shu'ara [26]: 151-152, An-Naml [27]: 48.

The well-being of the Thamud has made them have an extravagant lifestyle. According to Wahbah Zuhaili in Tafsir Al-Munir, the Thamud have a materialistic lifestyle, so they are always competing in this regard. In



addition, because they have the ability to carve buildings from stone, they feel proud, high-spirited and compete with each other to continue building without seeing the need to live in it (bin Musthafa al-Zuhaili, 2016). Another greed that they do can be seen in their dissatisfaction with the ration of sharing well water with camels, which became a miracle of Prophet Saleh. In addition to their hatred for Prophet Saleh, who gave advice to believe in God and not do damage to the earth, they also felt dissatisfied with the ration of well water that they used to have to share with a camel. Because that's why the camel should be left to live wild, but they killed it with pride and charged the punishment to be rushed to Prophet Saleh. After a few days passed, they were punished by Allah SWT in the form of an earthquake that brought down the strong buildings they were proud of.

The abundance of natural resources in the lives of the Thamud and their ability to process them makes them live in prosperity. However, just because of their greed, they were destroyed by Allah SWT. welfare seems to belong to humans absolutely, even though welfare belongs to Allah SWT, which can be used by humans within a certain time limit. However, if humans understand and practice in their lives that the abundance of existing resources can meet all their needs and are used wisely and sufficiently, then these resources will remain protected and have a sustainable existence.

In the modern era, natural resources are only seen as commodities, which can be utilized on a large scale for human life without considering the welfare of other creatures. Nature is considered only as a human servant whose job is to mediate human goals. Using natural resources for human life is actually fine, but if you use them excessively and exceed the limits of human needs, then it is referred to as exploitation which causes damage to the balance of various elements of life (Mun'im, 2022).

Human greed, as if they want to own everything in the world, has become the root of the environmental crisis. The growth of technology and industry has a positive side that is very useful and beneficial. However, if technological and industrial progress is based on greed and acquisitiveness, it will not produce useful progress, but will instead have a destructive impact that will disrupt all aspects of life. The nature of greed and covetousness is the nature of viewing other people or creatures other than oneself as inferior and useless. So when someone uses nature on a greedy basis, he will be selfish and view it as if nature is not alive and useful. Even though everything in this world is connected to each other everything has an important role in it. If one component is missing, then all the rest of life will be disrupted. Therefore, it can be concluded that the lesson from the story of the Thamud is that the management of the natural landscape that has been provided by Allah SWT is actually very permissible, but its use should not be excessive. Because it will cause fatal damage to the wheels of life.

#### *b. Camels as Miracles and Trials*

Prophet Saleh As in preaching a lot of resistance from the Thamud people. One of them is that they do not believe in Prophet Saleh. as a prophet. Then, the Thamud people, with their arrogance and arrogance, challenged Prophet Saleh to give a sign of his prophethood in the form of something amazing so that they could believe. The Thamud people at that time had the ability to carve stones to make beautiful buildings. Therefore, the Thamud people challenged the Prophet Saleh to pull a camel out of the biggest rock. Then Prophet Saleh (as) prayed to God, then the stone split and a camel came out of it. However, the hearts of the Thamud people have turned to stone, so that no matter how Prophet Saleh's prophetic signs are shown, they still will not believe. Prophet Saleh's camel is not only a proof of his prophethood, but also a test for his people whether they will believe or not. The envy of their hearts towards Prophet Saleh's camel made them dare to kill the camel, even though previously Prophet Saleh had made an ultimatum to them to let the camel run wild and drink well water, and in return, they were allowed to milk the camel, as much as they wanted. This is in accordance with QS. Al-A'raf [7]: 73 & 77, QS. Hud [11]: 63-65, QS. Al-Isra` [17]: 59, QS. Ash-Shuara [26]: 155-157, QS. Al-Qamar [54]: 27-29, QS. Ash-Shams [91]: 13-14.

Nature, with all its contents, can actually fulfill all human needs because nature has provided it. The reality of nature as a source of human life should provide awareness to maintain and respect nature. Ideally, humans can take and manage natural products. However, on the other hand, humans must maintain the integrity and preservation of natural creation. Humans have an interest in respecting nature and not just taking and enjoying natural products (Wiparlo & Pandor, 2024). The natural landscape is a test on earth, a test that can show human nature from the way they treat it. If humans treat nature arbitrarily, not seeing it as a source of life and a manifestation of God's greatness, then nature will become a source of evil and even disaster for humans. However, in contrast, if humans view nature as a unit that must be protected, nature will return it as a form of gratitude by providing various kindnesses.

This can be seen from the story of the Thamud people, where they see nature only as a commodity for their own benefit and profit. They carved huge rocks to show how great they were. In addition, they dared to kill the Prophet Saleh's camel. because they do not see it as one of the proofs of the greatness and creation of Allah SWT that needs to be protected and respected for its existence.

Humans who treat nature well indicate that they have within themselves a responsible nature and that they are a part of life, so they are obliged to maintain and preserve this unity by not disturbing or even destroying the lives of other creatures. This is because he is aware that if one of the factors of this unity is treated arbitrarily then it will damage his own life or even his future. Meanwhile, humans who treat nature cruelly show their greed. He will only care for nature if it benefits him, but if nature does not benefit him, then he will not hesitate to damage and destroy it.

Therefore, the wisdom of depicting the camel, on the other hand, as a miracle of the Prophet Saleh but also as a test and trial for the Thamudites can be implemented today. The camel is symbolized as nature and the Thamud as humans. So it can be said that the expanse of the earth and its contents are proof of the greatness of Allah SWT. Apart from that, nature can also be a means of testing to determine whether humans have a responsible, fair, wise nature or whether they instead have a greedy, selfish nature.

### c. *Prophet Sulaiman Used and Appreciated Animals*

Prophet Sulaiman, famous in addition to being a prophet of God, is also a wealthy ruler and king. Prophet Sulaiman As is an example of someone who is great in terms of leadership. Why not? He has an army of not only humans but also jinn and birds shoulder to shoulder with the army of Prophet Solomon. The greatness of Prophet Sulaiman is nothing but a gift from Allah SWT, who gave him the knowledge to understand the language of birds and subjugated the jinns to him. As in QS. An-Naml [27]: 16-17, QS. Saba` [34]: 12-13.

Prophet Solomon's greatness was not only in terms of his leadership but can also be seen in terms of how he respected the existence of small creatures. This can be seen from the story of how great and brave Prophet Sulaiman was with his army when passing through an ant nest. Then an ant told his people to hide so that they would not be trampled by Prophet Solomon's mighty army. Then Prophet Sulaiman, who understood the words of an ant, smiled because, indeed, he and his army did not want to destroy and do evil to these ants. This story is stated in QS. An-Naml [27]: 18-19

The story of Prophet Sulaiman, if seen from an ecocritical perspective, has a very deep message regarding the relationship between humans and nature. First, humans are allowed to use nature. Prophet Sulaiman used birds as soldiers very well. Humans, as ecological creatures, cannot escape from what nature provides. Humans cannot be separated from water, air, land, climate and so on. Therefore, humans really need other creatures to survive and develop as humans. On the other hand, other living creatures need humans and ecosystems to survive and develop as natural creatures (Keraf, 2014).

Second, respect the existence and life of creatures other than humans. The other side is that Allah gave Prophet Sulaiman the gift of being able to subdue and utilize creatures other than humans as his army because Allah believed that Prophet Solomon could utilize them with full respect and would not oppress them. This can be seen from the story of Hud-Hud who was late in arriving when Prophet Solomon gathered all his troops. At that time, Prophet Sulaiman had planned to punish the Hud-Hud bird, but soon, the Hud-Hud bird arrived and provided information regarding the kingdom of Queen Balqis. In this story, if Prophet Sulaiman was defeated by his passion for anger or his arrogance of greatness, Prophet Sulaiman could have immediately punished Hud-Hud by slaughtering him. But Prophet Sulaiman was big-hearted and did not do that and gave Hud-Hud the opportunity to prove the news he had brought. This is as stated in QS. An-naml [27]: 20-27.

The attitude taken by Prophet Ibrahim as the Hud-Hud bird reflects the understanding and appreciation that nature, including humans, is interconnected with one another. This view provides an understanding that the universe is not a giant machine that can be approached with domination and control, but with an attitude of respect, cooperation and dialogue. That's why human life practices must be harmoniously aligned with nature and its Creator, in a pattern of relationships and life practices that care for each other, nurture, respect and care for each other. Taking care of nature is the same as taking care of yourself; taking care of nature means taking care of life, including taking care of human life itself. This paradigm was later called by A. Sonny Keraf (Keraf, 2014) the systemic-organic paradigm.

Third, understanding knowledge about nature makes a person more careful and appreciative. This can be seen in the story of Prophet Solomon, who passed through an anthill and understood their language. The

award given by God to Prophet Sulaiman did not make him feel proud but rather made him return the greatness by praying that he would be a grateful person.

If seen from an ecocritical perspective, Prophet Sulaiman, with all the power he possessed, still viewed creatures other than humans as creatures of God who each had their own uniqueness. However, modern humans often consider nature only as an assistant in fulfilling their affairs. So it is not uncommon for humans to make careless use of nature which is only beneficial in the short term, but the damage occurs in the long term. Therefore, humans must learn how to understand the environment and be clever in managing responsible use of resources. Because only in this way can humans live sustainably.

#### d. *The Gratitude of Prophet Solomon*

Prophet Sulaiman As. inherited from the Prophet Dawud in the form of honorary power. However, the gifts given by Allah to Prophet Sulaiman were greater than those of Prophet Dawud As. The subordination can be seen of the wind, genies and birds under his power. However, the great blessings that Allah gave did not make Prophet Solomon become greedy or even love the world but became more grateful to Allah SWT. This can be seen in the story of Prophet Sulaiman and Queen Balqis who gave various kinds of gifts to Prophet Sulaiman as reconciliation so that his kingdom would not be attacked. Seeing these gifts, Prophet Solomon, who had no greed for the world, instead said that what God had given him was better than what was in front of him. This is stated in the QS. An-Naml [27]:36

Balqis also surrendered himself to come to the kingdom of Prophet Sulaiman. Prophet Sulaiman also prepared for the arrival with the desire that Queen Balqis' throne could be moved to his throne. Then one of his soldiers who had knowledge volunteered to carry out the task, but before Prophet Ibrahim blinked. The greatness given to Prophet Ibrahim did not make him arrogant but made him even more grateful to Allah SWT. This is stated in QS. An-Naml [27]: 40.

If seen from an ecocritical perspective, the wisdom in the story of Prophet Solomon regarding his grateful nature should be used as an example and role model for people today. This is due to one of the views called the mechanistic paradigm, which emerged during the Enlightenment period in the West. This paradigm views nature as lower than humans because nature does not have reason. Therefore, the impact of this paradigm makes nature have no value and is considered like a giant machine, which gives rise to an attitude of ignorance, exploitation and destruction of nature. In addition, this view sees nature as if it is separate from humans. So if nature is damaged, the damage will not affect human life (Keraf, 2014).

This paradigm then gave birth to greed and greed for abundant natural resources. Everything inside can actually fulfill human needs, even more. But if it has been infiltrated by greed and greed, these resources will not be able to fulfill human desires; they will always feel less and less, even though the impact of this greed can be seen in the form of ecological imbalance and other natural damage. but because it feels inadequate, nature and everything in it continues to be exploited without any improvement. Therefore, the grateful nature of Prophet Ibrahim As. must be used as a leading example in dealing with greed in using resources.

Mukhlis said that gratitude is a concept that can be actualized for environmental sustainability. The concept of gratitude in environmental conservation is to utilize the environment as it should. Utilize various natural, biotic and abiotic facilities according to the place where they live. The goal is that the components of natural balance are maintained in accordance with the tasks assigned by Allah SWT. to him. The more grateful humans are, the more nature will remain in balance. Nature becomes harmonious because actions are persuasive, not exploitative. On the other hand, if gratitude is limited to saying "thank God" without accompanying action, nature will increasingly have a negative impact due to less friendly actions. As Allah SWT says in QS. Ibrahim [14]: 7.

#### **2.4. Message of Ecological Balance in the Story of Prophet Saleh and Prophet Solomon**

The story of Prophet Saleh and Prophet Sulaiman in the Al-Qur'an, if viewed using an ecological critical perspective, contains messages that are very important for life. This can be seen from several things: first, the message of natural harmony. Eco-philological relationship between humans and the environment is a necessity. This means that humans and the environment are interconnected and have a reciprocal relationship (Mukhlis, 2022). This harmony can be seen from the camel of Prophet Saleh, which benefited the Thamud. Apart from that, the camel was given the right to drink the same well water as the Thamud people. This shows how animals have the same rights as humans in using nature for life, which then provides benefits to humans. Humans who have benefited from nature should fulfill their obligations by providing benefits back to nature in the form of preserving and protecting it. If humans do not give their obligations to

nature, what will happen is what happened to the Thamud people who actually killed the camel of Prophet Saleh, that is, destroyed.

Natural life, in the Islamic view, runs on the principles of harmony and balance. The universe runs on the basis of harmonious arrangements and precise calculations. Even though in nature they look like different units, they are all in one working system that supports each other, is interrelated, and depends on each other. This means that if one unit or part is damaged, it will definitely cause other units or parts to become damaged as well. This kind of principle of harmonious order and precise calculation should be a guideline or foundation for humans to live their lives on this earth. Thus, all human actions must be based on careful calculations which are expected to support the principles of order and balance (Yafie, 2006).

The second is ecological reflection. Nature can be used as a representation of a person's assessment. Nature can be said to be like the camel of Prophet Saleh, which is stated as a test or trial. If someone sees the abundance of natural resources as something low and of no value, then it is not surprising that within him, there is greed and covetousness, which causes damage to the earth. However, it is inversely proportional if someone sees nature as something alive, a sign of the greatness of Allah SWT. then it will grow a sense of gratitude, faith and responsibility in him when he uses nature. The Thamud are an example of an earlier people who treated nature badly. They are so greedy and excessive. This can be seen from how they were unjust in competing to build buildings that exceeded their needs and killing Prophet Saleh's camel. This is different from Prophet Sulaiman who was given many gifts by Allah SWT with a humble attitude and good at being grateful. This can be seen from how he reacted when crossing an ant's nest. He understood the words of an ant who was giving orders to other ants to enter their nest to avoid being trampled by Prophet Solomon's troops. Prophet Sulaiman, after knowing this, smiled and prayed to Allah to become a person who was grateful for the blessings He had given him.

Third, the ecological mandate. Humans on earth, apart from being servants of Allah, are also caliphs who bear moral and spiritual responsibility for this earth. Therefore, humans must act responsibly in the use and management of the earth. Human responsibility, as caliph on earth, is to worship him, both vertically and horizontally. This horizontal worship is related to environmental preservation. The existence of halal and haram provisions in religion is actually an effort to limit the space for human movement so that they can live an orderly life while maintaining the balance of the environmental system (Rohmana, 2013).

The concept of humans as *abdullahs* and also *khalifatullahs* was carried out by Prophet Sulaiman As admirably (Rahman, 2016). Prophet Sulaiman as Abdullah, there is no need to doubt his credibility because he is a prophet of Allah who has very high faith and gratitude. As for Prophet Sulaiman, seen from *khalifatullah's* perspective, it can be seen from how he was able to organize and utilize birds as soldiers fairly and wisely. If Prophet Sulaiman had only the principle that Khalifatullah forgot that as Abdullah, he did not hesitate to behead the hud-hud who were late in arriving when Prophet Sulaiman gathered all his army. However, Prophet Sulaiman, with his wisdom, gave hud-hud the opportunity to prove the news he brought about Queen Balqis. Based on the story of Prophet Solomon, humans as caliphs on earth; apart from being able to utilize nature and its surroundings, humans must also be able to maintain and organize the preservation of ecological balance so that life can be maintained. People in the world not only have the duty to be monotheistic to Allah, but they also have to ask themselves who has actually provided their sustenance. Humans in the world use God's creation as a source of sustenance and provisions for life. How low a person's morals would be if they were given something and only enjoyed it, but then did not maintain it.

Fourth, sustainable consumption. Using and exploiting nature is not only for now, but also pays attention to the welfare of the next generation. Nature, with everything in it, can fulfill all human needs so that they do not experience any shortages in their lives; nature has provided all these needs. The problem that arises now is human actions that no longer pay attention to the integrity of nature. This can be seen in the large-scale exploitation of natural products to meet human needs. Humans no longer act naturally towards nature. It cannot be denied that the aim of this action is to improve human welfare. But the desire to make life better turns out to make humans act blindly, including in the use of natural creation (Wiparlo & Pandor, 2024). The existence of human error in utilizing natural resources does not constitute an absolute prohibition on managing and using nature. But what needs to be emphasized is that there needs to be proper management by paying attention to environmental impact analysis and not overdoing it. In the Qur'an, humans are allowed to eat fruit, fish in the ocean and various kinds of animals on land, but they are not allowed to eat excessively (Amin, 2016). This is in accordance with the Word of Allah QS. Al-An'am [6]: 141.

The story of Prophet Saleh's camel. which was entrusted to the Thamud tribe is one of the lessons that need to be pondered on the wisdom of sustainable consumption. The camels of Prophet Saleh As can benefit



the Thamud people with milk sufficient for their needs. Prophet Saleh As had given them rules to free the camel, not to be disturbed, let alone killed. Because if the camel is killed, then the result is that the Thamud tribe will receive punishment from Allah SWT. Thamud's disobedience to Prophet Saleh made them dare to kill the camel. A few days later, God sent down punishment according to their wishes until they perished and had nothing left.

### 3. CONCLUSION

The story of Prophet Saleh As and Prophet Sulaiman As in the Qur'an does not only contain monotheistic and social wisdom. But there is also wisdom in terms of ecological balance. Ecological balance can be disturbed or maintained depending on how humans behave. This can be seen from the attitude of Nabi Saleh's people, Thamud's people and Prophet Sulayman's people in viewing and utilizing natural resources. The Thamud viewed nature only as a commodity, so they were greedy and used nature excessively, such as building more buildings than needed, monopolizing water sources only for themselves and killing the camel of the Prophet Saleh. It is this attitude that then makes them destroy the ecological balance and cause it to be destroyed by Allah SWT. In contrast to Prophet Sulaiman who has an attitude of gratitude for all the gifts given by God. So, Prophet Sulaiman, in utilizing nature, prioritized an attitude of fairness and respect. This can be seen from how Prophet Solomon organized the animals that were in his army and respected the existence of ants. This attitude then ensures that ecological balance is maintained and life becomes sustainable.

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