Eco-Sufism concept in *Syair Nasihat* as an alternative to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) policy in the environmental sector

A Y Wirajaya*, B Sudardi, Istadiyantha and Warto

Culture Studies Program, Postgraduate, Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia

Corresponding author: asepyudha.w@gmail.com

**Abstract.** This report examined the dimensions of Sufism related to sustainable environmental conservation efforts contained in the *Syair Nasihat* (SN) text. *SN* is an ancient manuscript about the teachings of eco-Sufism that is written in Arabic and Malay. The eco-Sufism teachings in SN text are more concerned with natural processes in seeking the safety of themselves and their environment. The efforts are carried out through a process of self-dynamics that is more integrative, namely humanistic-theocentric. The process of shifting the dynamics was originally self-centered, then slowly and gradually shifted to the community, namely togetherness divinely, humanity, and nature. It means that all human behavior must always be directed solely to gain the pleasure of God and also oriented to provide safety and welfare for the universe, including humans and the environment. This is a representation of the concept of leader on earth and a real form of *amaliah* regarding the elaboration of the concept of greeting or spreading safety and welfare for the universe. Thus, the concept of eco-Sufism contained in the SN text is expected to be duplicated and applied in other places so that it can support the policy of SDGs in the environmental field.

1. *Introduction*

*Syair Nasihat* (*SN*) is an ancient manuscript found in Bali, on April 10, 1857 AD. This manuscript was written using *dluwang* paper, Arabic script, and in Malay [1]. This manuscript contains the teachings of Sufism, especially eco-Sufism [2]. Actually, in the context of Sufism, there are not many ancient manuscripts that discuss the concept of eco-Sufism. Discussions about Sufism usually revolve around the polemics of *wahdatul wujud* dan *wahdatusy-syuhud* [3–5]. Thus, the existence of this SN manuscript becomes interesting for further study. Moreover, currently, the phenomenon of environmental damage that has occurred has become so acute that it requires alternative solutions with a more humane approach to provide enlightenment and inspiration for all stakeholders of this nation [6,7]. This is in line with the concept of sustainable development which has been being pursued and implemented by the government [8].

The eco-Sufism teachings contained in this *SN* text are more concerned with natural processes in seeking the safety of themselves and their environment [2]. Manuscripts of this kind seem to have been used as a means or medium of da'wah by the scholars of the archipelago in the 17-18 century AD [9 – 11]. This kind of da'wah has attracted many parties to learn more about Islam with the wisdom values contained in it [3,4,12].
The concept of da’wah which is carried out by prioritizing learning about the wisdom of life makes Islamic teachings more easily accepted by the wider community. This happens because they can apply and at the same time reflect on aspects of worship that have tended to be individual (hablum mina’l-Lāh) and become integrated (hablum minnās dan hablum min alam) [13,14]. This effort is carried out through a process of self-dynamics that tends to be more integrative, namely humanistic-theocentric (al-insani ar-rabbani) [15,16]. In this context, eco-Sufism can mean ecology-based Sufism. That is, spiritual awareness is obtained by interpreting the interaction between systems of existence, especially in the surrounding environment [13,15,17,18].

The environment in the perspective of eco-Sufism is a medium or means of worship to get to God. In other words, nature is a means of remembrance of Allah SWT [15]. Thus, if nature is a source of wisdom and knowledge, then the perpetrator of this type of Sufism will then treat nature very wisely, namely the good qualities that have been filled in him [15,19]. In the context of ecological systems, destroying or destroying nature is the same as destroying oneself and at the same time destroying future generations. Meanwhile, in eco-Sufism, it can be said that destroying nature is the same as destroying the means of makrifah. In other words, in the concept of eco-Sufism, the existence of the natural surroundings is a brother who must always be maintained because he is the source of (1) life and (2) knowledge (science, makrifat). So, destroying nature is the same as closing the door for guidance or wisdom [13,15].

Eco-Sufism or green Sufism is a relatively new Sufi concept that is constructed through the unification of awareness between environmental awareness and divine awareness, namely (1) environmental awareness (save it, study it, and use it) is an inseparable part of spiritual consciousness (spiritual consciousness). That is, loving the universe is part of loving God. Thus, loving something that belongs to God is the same as loving God; (2) strive for a process of transformation from spiritual consciousness to ecological consciousness (implementation or movement level). The goal is the realization of universal harmony (harmony in nature) and harmony (tawfiq compatibility) between Sufi practitioners and God. This condition then produces mutual love (between humans and God, humans, and humans and the universe) [13,15,18].

Thus, the ethics of eco-Sufism encourages human behavior to be able to live in harmony, both with God and with the universe (harmony in nature). This ethical system then gave birth to beauty (aesthetics) [20,21]. These two aspects (ethical and aesthetic systems) then become self and social attributes so that eco-Sufism has its own (typical) style that is different from other Sufis [15].

2. Methods

The method used in this research is the qualitative method. The qualitative method is a research procedure that emphasizes descriptive data from the observed research object [22–24]. As for the material object in the form of an SN manuscript, the basic text editing method or ledger is used [7,25–27]. Furthermore, the edited text of the SN is used as research data to be classified and analyzed according to the formulation of the problem that has been determined. At this stage of analysis, it is expected to reveal the meaning associated with the use of the concept of eco-Sufism in the SN text [28–30]. Then, the results of the analysis can be used as a source of inspiration to solve various environmental sector problems in facing the challenges of sustainable development [6,31–33].

3. Results and discussion

3.1 The concept of ecosufism in the SN text

The essence of Sufi is an attempt to appear in the form of morals or behavior. These Sufi traits are applied to daily actions. The birth act also functions as a marker (attribute or identity). In other words, Sufi is the inner aspect of personality (ethics) that is revealed and radiates light (and functions as an attribute) [14–16]. In this context, Sufis are a distinctive social group with simplicity, obedience, divine orientation, wisdom, and solidarity. These attributes then become their "shared distinctive identity" which is different from the attributes of other groups. This can be seen in the SN text excerpt as follows.
budi bahasa yang kaubuang
supaya kasih sekalian orang//
hawasafsumu lawan berperang
itulah musuh yang amat garang (SN, h. 5 – 6)

the manners you threw away
so love everyone //
your lust against war
that's a very fierce enemy (SN, p. 5 – 6)

Based on these quotes, it can be seen that lust is the main enemy and at the same time the first enemy to be conquered. That is, without being able to control "lust", then no matter how great a human being he will not have any meaning, both in front of Allah SWT and humans and other creatures. Therefore, in Islamic teachings, people are often reminded of this problem.

In other words, the Sufi construct contained in the stanza quote does not only talk about personal or individual constructs but is also related to social attributes. This social attribute is important to be raised in this context, especially to explain the power of Sufis as the basis for the formation of new solidarity that functions as a driving force for change. Thus, the control of "lust" initially moves in a personal or individual sphere, but when he has succeeded in controlling that passion, he will be able to contribute positively to other people and his environment.

So, Sufism is a process of takhalli (emptying or draining), tahalli (content), and tajalli (embodiment or implementation) [14–16]. Or in terms that are easier to understand, Sufism is a KIM process, namely Drain, Fill, Mancur/mancar. In other words, Sufism is a process of draining one's ugliness which is the root of spiritual and physical ailments, such as arrogance, joy, envy, bad prejudice, fights, and so on. After the draining process is successfully carried out until it is empty of all kinds of spiritual impurities, then the next process is filling (takhalli), which is filling oneself with noble qualities, such as sincerity, tawadhu', compassion, willingness, love, and other qualities. other noble qualities as the attributes of Allah SWT [34–36]. The good qualities that are embedded in the individual (individual interior) are then emitted or manifested into the behavior of daily life as an individual exterior, which in the context of the verse is good speech and the nature of compassion for fellow creatures created by Allah SWT. This stage is called tajalli or manifested and radiates in the universe. If this movement is carried out massively, then actually Tasawuf has carried out a collective interior and exterior collective process [15,37].

In addition, Sufism also recognizes the existence and truth of metaphysics (occult), in addition to the truth of material and rational existence. In Islam, the acknowledgment of the truth of metaphysics becomes the basis or parameter of whether a person is judged as a mutaqqin or not as stated in the following verse.

Alif lam mim (1) zalika al-kitābu lā raiba fihi hudal ilmuttaqīna (2) al-lāzīna yu’minūna bil ghai bi wa yuqīmūna ash-shalātā wa minmā razaqnahum yunfīqūna (3) wa al-lāzīna yu’minūna bi mā unzila ilaiha wa mā unzila min qablika wa bil akhiratihum yuqīmūna (4).

It means: (1) Alif, Lam, Meem. (2) This is the Book about which there is no doubt, a guidance for those conscious of Allah – (3) Who believe in the unseen, establish prayer, and spend out of what We have provided for them, (4) And who believe in what has been revealed to you, [O Muhammad], and what was revealed before you, and of the Hereafter they are certain [in faith].

Of course, this is different from the modern Western scientific tradition which still does not recognize the existence of metaphysics. In other words, a dead-end stands in the way of the modern Western scientific tradition which only emphasizes the senses and reason. Capra [38] criticized this mindset with the term reductionization, namely the process of reducing potential. In fact, in this case, Capra said that the cause of the current global crisis is due to the mechanistic and linear perspective of modern humans. This Cartesian mindset is suspected by Capra as the cause of this way of thinking [38].

Nasr also criticizes the Western mindset, which says that environmental damage is caused by spiritual emptiness. Nasr, in his theory of rim (periphery) and axis (center), says that human life is like a circle. In this circle, humans with a Western mindset are on the edge of the circle. In this circle, humans with a Western mindset are not on the edge of the circle. The transformation from the edge to the center becomes an important thing in human life [39–41]. This is also in line with the following SN text excerpt.
alhamdulillah puja Yang Esa
kepada Allah Taala Tuhan Yang Kuasa
jikalau kurang kita periksa
mengenal ketuhanan terlalu susah (SN, h. 1)

Thank God, worship the One
to Allah the Exalted Lord the Almighty
if not we will check
knowing divinity is too difficult (SN, p. 1)

Thus, based on this quote, it can be seen that to be able to know Allah SWT requires seriousness of intention to learn about the nature of life, the nature of creation, and the nature of life. Without adequate provisions, efforts to know and understand God will only be in vain. In this context, Sufism views that the essence of existence is the beginning and end of a process of knowing God [13, 42–44].

One form of recognition and at the same time imitating the attributes of God can be done by applying the attitude of asceticism. *Zuhud* is a form of silent protest by the Sufis which is indicated by non-verbal language, namely through the symbol of "clothing" and a simple way of life. Thus, outwardly *zuhud* is seen as an ascetic form. Socio-culturally, *zuhud* is a manifestation of concern and protest against deviations from Islamic teachings that are outside the limits of the Shari'a. Considering the rulers at that time often used Islam as a means of legitimizing personal ambition. They are eager to restore the original message of Islam brought by the Prophet Muhammad. So, Sufis are enforcers and upholders of Islamic values [14, 15].

In this context, Sufis respond to the environment in different ways. In early Islam, the *suff* was a response to the luxuries of life even with “silent protest”. The phenomenon of all-material life in the present era is also addressed by the Sufis as a means to calm themselves from the hustle and bustle of an all-materialistic life [15].

Sufism – which is the mystical dimension of Islam – focuses on ethical and aesthetic relationships between humans and God, as well as between humans and other ecosystems. In this context, Islam as the basis of Sufism views that all creation has benefits and is carried out without wasting, and glorifies Allah SWT [45]. The statement that all creatures glorify Allah is the premise of truth. This fact is a metaphysical real (occult) which is not accepted by the Western scientific tradition. If that is the case, then the rocks, leaves, plants, animals, even the rice and plates will glorify Allah SWT. In the ecosystem, among them are producers (providers of food) for others.

However, in the Sufi tradition, ecosystem relations do not only apply to producer and consumer laws as in ecology. However, Sufism has a more advanced and holistic view. Nature, in the Sufi tradition, can function as: (1) *āyāt* (a sign of God's greatness); (2) media to get closer (qurbah) and (gratitude); (3) learning tools (getting wisdom); (4) sweetener (*zīnah*); and (5) fulfillment of needs (consumption) [15, 18, 39, 41].

Thus, seeing nature with the eye of the intellect (eyes of the heart) is seeing nature, not only understood as the reality (form) of gross objects but as a theater (performance) in which nature and theater reflect divine attributes. Nature is a thousand mirrors reflecting the face of the Divine. To see nature as theophany is to see God in nature and its forms [15, 18, 39, 41, 46]. This understanding of nature as a symbol of God's manifestation cannot be separated from the understanding of Islam, namely (1) all creatures are (being) with obedience (Muslim) "surrender to God"; (2) all humans who accept God's holy will according to nature are Muslims (obedient); (3) Gnostic (wisdom) is the highest Muslim trait. The whole of nature is connected with the existence of God. Islam is obedience, both passively and actively [15].

Thus, the diverse realms are manifestations of the one Being entity. The analogy of the relationship between nature and Being is depicted through the "Face" with the "image" of the face in several mirrors. That one face can be reflected through a thousand and one mirrors. The “perfect” mirror that can depict the “Face” of God in its entirety is a perfect human being (*insān al-kāmil*) [47–50]. Thus, destroying nature which is God's product is the same as hurting the producer, namely God. Therefore, in the concept of the environment, destroying the environment is the same as distancing oneself from God. This concept has the potential to be used as the basis for building a friendlier environment for life.
3.2 Implementation of Eco-Sufism in life
The theme of life in Sufism is usually included in the discussion of being (existing, or existence), both being (wājib al wujūd) and being held (al-maujūdāt). In other words, existence is a system. That is, causally human beings cannot exist before the existence of other forms, including minerals and soil, plants, and animals [15]. Understanding the spiritual system of existence will lead a person to be closer to his Creator and to become wiser in his behavior. The concept of the chain of existence is then the basis for environmental ethics. This can be seen in the SN text excerpt as follows.

Based on these quotes, it can be seen that the cultivation of the concept of eco-Sufism can only be done through understanding the concept of life. Without discussing the concept of life, it is difficult to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of environmental ethics. This delivery strategy is a very important form of cultural capital.

The relationship between humans (as individuals) with Allah SWT, social (other humans), and nature is a triangular relationship that should not be broken. That is, humans as individuals become the center. The perfect relationship "triangle" is often interpreted in the event of isrā' mi'rāj. Isrā' mi'rāj is a spiritual-social journey. The most important fruits of this journey are (1) spiritual security that can strengthen the faith of the Prophet; and (2) spiritual-social training in the form of prayer rituals.

At the time of isrā', the Prophet gained direct knowledge of reality. The culmination of this spiritual journey is a direct encounter with Allah SWT. Allah SWT wants the servant to increase his status to reach the level of khalīfah (representative) of Allah SWT on earth. He is the developer of God's mission whose job is to prosper the universe, especially the earth. The khalīfah acts as a mediator between God and His creatures, both humans and the universe.
In this context, the *khalfah* plays "divine" tasks, such as creating, caring for, maintaining, and keeping the universe better and more useful. Thus, the concept of marks of prostration (*min atsar al-sujūd*) as described in Q.S. [48]: 29 can be understood not only to have black marks and visible on the forehead but also to have a positive impact and contribution to human life and the universe, including the environment in it. So, prostration is a symbol of very deep devotion to God, others (social), and the universe.

4. Conclusion
Some conclusions that can be conveyed are as follows. *First*, SN is an ancient manuscript in Arabic script, in the Malay language, and contains the teachings of eco-Sufism. Eco-sufism is a relatively new Sufi concept that is constructed through the unification of consciousness between environmental consciousness and divine consciousness.

*Second*, the Sufi construct contained in the stanza SN quote initially talks about controlling "lust". This control initially moves in a personal or individual sphere, but when the lust has been successfully controlled, then in fact it will begin to contribute positively, both to other people (social) and the environment (universe).

*Third*, the implementation of eco-Sufism in life is built by awareness of Being. With this awareness, a servant will be given the ability by Allah SWT to meet Him through the ritual of prayer. Through good and correct prayer activities, it turns out that it will lead a servant to increase his status to the level of khalīfah (representative) of Allah on earth. So, with the status of *khalfah*, he will play the duties of "divinity", such as creating, caring for, maintaining, and keeping the universe for the better and useful.

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