

Self-Transformation and Harmonization of Nature with Fasting: Perspective of the Qur'an and Science

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Abstract

Contemporary society often experiences stress, anxiety, and depression due to technological advances and rapid social change. In the Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah/2: 183, fasting is described as a comprehensive practice that helps individuals cope with stress and improve mental health through reflection and changes in existential awareness. This study aims to explore self-transformation and harmony between humans and nature through fasting, using approaches from the Qur'an and science. The method used is qualitative descriptive analysis, utilizing relevant literature on fasting, mental health, and human interaction with the environment. The research findings indicate that fasting is a spiritual ritual and teaches simplicity and respect for nature, which supports the balance between humans and the environment. The recommendations from this study are to encourage the practice of fasting to achieve better mental and ecological health, and to expand studies on the impact of fasting in the context of mental health and the environment.

Keywords: *Fasting, Holistic Approach, Existential Awareness, Reflection, Self-Transformation, Harmonization of Nature.*

Abstrak

Masyarakat kontemporer sering mengalami stres, kecemasan, dan depresi akibat kemajuan teknologi serta perubahan sosial yang cepat. Dalam Al-Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah/2: 183, puasa diuraikan sebagai praktik menyeluruh yang membantu individu mengatasi stres dan meningkatkan kesehatan mental melalui refleksi dan perubahan kesadaran eksistensial. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggali transformasi diri dan keharmonisan antara manusia dan alam melalui puasa, dengan pendekatan dari Al-Qur'an dan sains. Metode yang digunakan adalah analisis deskriptif kualitatif, dengan memanfaatkan literatur yang relevan mengenai puasa, kesehatan mental, dan interaksi manusia dengan lingkungan. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa puasa bukan hanya ritual spiritual, tetapi juga mengajarkan kesederhanaan dan penghormatan

terhadap alam, yang mendukung keseimbangan antara manusia dan lingkungan. Rekomendasi dari penelitian ini adalah mendorong praktik puasa untuk mencapai kesehatan mental dan ekologi yang lebih baik, serta memperluas studi mengenai dampak puasa dalam konteks kesehatan mental dan lingkungan.

Kata Kunci: Puasa, Pendekatan Holistik, Kesadaran Eksistensial, Refleksi, Transformasi Diri, Harmonisasi Alam.

A. Introduction

Today's modern society faces a variety of challenges, including increased stress, anxiety, and depression, often caused by rapid technological developments and constant social change. In this context, fasting as a long-standing practice offers a holistic approach for modern society to cope with stress and improve mental well-being.¹

Jon Kabat Zinn argues that stress levels vary from mild to more severe. For example, work-related stress can lead to physical exhaustion and mental disorders.² Others are stressed because of debt problems that finance their daily lives.³ An example of acute stress is excessive anxiety due to increasing pressures in life, to the point where the meaning of life is lost and one becomes desperate to let go of one's relationship with God, the social environment, and nature.⁴

The stress that occurs in modern society cannot be separated from the reality of rapid technological developments and constant social change, so individuals feel overwhelmed and unable to adapt harmoniously.⁵ In this fast-paced and stressful world, fasting offers an opportunity to improve physical and mental health, reflect and deepen self-awareness, or provide space for reflection.⁶

Fasting transforms existential awareness⁷ and invites us to reflect on the meaning of life and its purpose in this world. Fasting becomes more than just a ritual; it becomes a profound spiritual journey. The practice of fasting can change the way we feel and understand ourselves and the world around us.⁸

¹ Jason Fung, *Fasting: The Ultimate Guide to Fasting for Health and Weight Loss*, Toronto: Greystone Books, 2016, page. 78.

² Jon Kabat Zinn, *Wherever You Go, There You Are*, New York: Hyperion, 1990, page. 56.

³ Morgan Housel, *The Psychology of Money*, New York: Harriman House, 2020, page. 89.

⁴ Johann Hari, *Lost Connections*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2018, page. 134

⁵ Nicholas Carr, *The Shallows*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2010, page. 112.

⁶ Michael Mosley, *The Fast Diet*, London: Short Books, 2013, page. 45.

⁷ Fasting can help increase existential awareness by: Increasing reflection and introspection; Reducing distractions and improving focus; Increasing awareness of life's needs and priorities. Helping develop gratitude and appreciation for life

⁸ Richard Davidson, *The Emotional Life of Your Brain*, New York: Hudson Street Press, 2012, page. 150

The space⁹ for self-reflection during fasting also serves as a tool to get closer to God. In many religious traditions, including Islam, fasting is considered a form of deep devotion to God, followed by developing a sense of empathy for the suffering of others. From here, fasting, initially a solution to stress, can become a means to build spiritual awareness and establish harmony with the social environment.¹⁰

Furthermore, fasting can be seen to harmonize with nature. In this context, fasting teaches individuals not only to abstain from food but also to learn to live more simply and sustainably. Ecologically, fasting teaches us to appreciate natural resources more and reduce excessive consumption to maintain the existence of nature and avoid its exploitation, so that the relationship between humans and nature is balanced to create sustainability.¹¹

The above facts identify several problems related to self-transformation and harmony of nature when associated with fasting as a solution to stress in today's modern society: First, emotional imbalance. Second, there is a lack of environmental awareness. Third, reflection has limitations—fourth, physical and mental health. Fifth, there is limited knowledge about the relationship between humans and nature.¹²

Identifying the above problems leads to a holistic approach to fasting as a solution to stress if done with existential awareness and reflection that encourages individuals to pause their daily routines and reflect on the meaning of life and its purpose. The integration of existential awareness and fasting practices encourages individuals to be more sensitive to the suffering of others and increases their sense of social and ecological responsibility. From here, self-transformation and harmonization of nature through fasting are expressed so that fasting is expected to spiritually strengthen the relationship with God and create greater harmony with the social and natural environment.

Thus, the research problem is formulated as how fasting transforms the self and harmonizes nature from the perspective of the Qur'an and science. This formulation can be described in several discussions: First, fasting from the perspective of the Qur'an and science. Second, fasting transforms spiritual and social existential awareness from the perspective of the Qur'an. Third, reflection on fasting to build ecological balance based on the Qur'an.

⁹ From here, fasting, which was initially a solution to stress, can then become a means to build spiritual awareness and establish harmony with the social environment

¹⁰ Tariq Ramadan, *In the Footsteps of the Prophet*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007, page. 112.

¹¹ Vandana Shiva, *Earth Democracy*, Cambridge: South End Press, 2005, page. 78.

¹² Muhammad A Khan, *Islam and Sustainability: Principles and Practices*, New York: Routledge, 2018page. 112. See also: A. Suharno, *Puasa dan Kesehatan: Perspektif Fisik dan Spiritual*, Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2015, page. 82.

B. Research Method

This research is a literature review that adopts a descriptive-analytical approach. This approach was chosen to explore and analyze fasting from the perspectives of the Quran and science and examine its impact on self-transformation and a harmonious relationship with the surrounding environment.

The data used in this study encompasses a variety of literary sources relevant to the theme of fasting, including texts from the Quran, commentaries, and scientific research discussing the relationship between fasting and mental health. These sources include the Tafsir Al-Misbah, the Tafsir Al-Azhar, and several scientific articles examining health and environmental aspects related to fasting.

The data were collected through a literature review, in which the researcher collected and analyzed information from various relevant sources. The obtained data were then evaluated to better understand fasting and its implications in social and ecological contexts. In data analysis, the researcher applied a critical approach by integrating ecological systems theory, sustainability, and environmental ethics to understand the interaction between fasting practices, social awareness, and ecological responsibility. This research analyzes fasting as a ritual and explores its impact on the individual's relationship with God, society, and nature.

C. Results and Discussion

Fasting in the Perspective of the Qur'an and Science

According to the Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI), fasting deliberately avoids eating, drinking, and so on, especially in a religious context. The word fasting, etymologically in Arabic, is called the word *ṣawm* (صوم), which means to restrain oneself or stop. In the Qur'an, this word describes the practice of restraint by Muslims as a form of worship. According to the Al-Ma'ani Dictionary, fasting is refraining from eating, drinking, and other things that break the fast from dawn to sunset.¹³

Meanwhile, in terms of terminology, in general, from the perspective of Islamic law (fiqh), fasting is defined by scholars as refraining from anything that breaks the fast, from dawn to sunset, with a valid intention. Imam Syafi'i stated that fasting is a form of worship that has specific pillars and conditions that must be met so that the fast is valid and accepted by Allah SWT.¹⁴ Meanwhile, according to Imam Al-Ghazali, fasting is refraining from anything that breaks the fast, be it food, drink, or other things that can break the fast, with a

¹³ Abdul Rahman Al-Ma'ani, *Al-Ma'ani Al-Jami'*, Beirut, Dar Al-Ma'ani, 2005, page. 123.

¹⁴ Imam Syafi'i, *Al-Umm* (Terjemahan), Jakarta, Pustaka Amani, 2005, page. 112

sincere intention to get closer to Allah SWT.¹⁵ This understanding makes fasting a matter of physical restraint regarding Islamic law and spiritual and moral aspects.¹⁶

Fasting involves self-control, increasing spiritual awareness, and reflecting on the meaning of life while improving the individual's moral quality and strengthening social and ecological relationships. The deep sense of this fasting reflects piety to Allah SWT, which is the explicit goal of fasting, as in Surah al-Baqarah/2: 183.

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ

تَتَّقُونَ ۝۱۸۳﴾

“O you who have believed, decreed upon you is fasting as it was decreed upon those before you that you may become righteous” (al-Baqarah/2: 183)

From a scientific perspective, fasting has been extensively studied and proven to have various health benefits. Fasting from a Scientific Perspective is when a person abstains from food and drink for a specific purpose, such as improving health, losing weight, or enhancing physical and mental performance. From a scientific perspective, fasting can be defined as a period during which a person abstains from food and drink for a minimum of 8-12 hours. However, a fast's effective growth length can vary depending on the individual's goals and circumstances. Fasting in Islam has a broader and more complex meaning than fasting from a scientific perspective. Fasting in Islam is one of the pillars of Islam, aimed at increasing piety and spiritual awareness. Fasting in Islam also has specific rules, such as fasting times, prohibited foods, and the obligation to break the fast. In Islam, fasting is not only about abstaining from food and drink, but also about increasing spiritual awareness, reducing bad behavior, and increasing acts of worship. Therefore, fasting in Islam has a deeper and more complex meaning than fasting from a scientific perspective. Studies show fasting boosts metabolism, reduces inflammation, and improves mental health. The autophagy theory suggests fasting triggers a cellular cleansing process that helps remove damaged cells and promotes cell regeneration. This process not only contributes to physical health but can also improve brain function and mental well-being. Scientifically, fasting has also been shown to extend lifespan and improve overall health.¹⁷

¹⁵ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya Ulumiddin*, Beirut, Dar Al-Kutub Al-Ilmiyah, 1997, page. 245

¹⁶ Yahya bin Sharif al-Nawawi, *Al-Majmu' Syarh Al-Muhadzdzab*, Beirut, Dar Al-Fikr, 1996, page. 67.

¹⁷ Valter D. Longo, & Mattson, M. P., *Fasting: Molecular Mechanisms and Clinical Applications*, New York, Academic Press, 2014, page. 112.

From a scientific perspective, fasting has been extensively studied and proven to have various health benefits. Studies have shown that fasting can increase metabolism, reduce inflammation, and improve mental health. The autophagy theory suggests fasting triggers a cellular cleansing process that helps remove damaged cells and promotes cell regeneration. This process not only contributes to physical health but can also improve brain function and mental well-being. Fasting from a scientific perspective also extends life and improves overall health.¹⁸

Another scientific perspective on fasting is that it can be seen as achieving harmony with nature. Fasting in harmony with nature occurs because, for example, fasting can reduce excessive food and drink consumption, positively impacting the individual's environmental carbon footprint. This positive impact raises environmental awareness, encouraging fasting practitioners to act wisely and responsibly.¹⁹

Another environmental awareness that arises from fasting is the increased awareness and behavior of the importance of preserving natural resources. This awareness occurs because people who fast while hungry and thirsty will appreciate natural resources more and try to use them more wisely. This means fasting contributes to ecological balance and sustainability, creating a better relationship between humans and nature.²⁰

Thus, it can be stated that fasting, from the perspective of the Qur'an and science, is a holistic worship practice that can transform individuals' existential and social awareness, build ecological and sustainable balance through reducing consumption, and create a better relationship between individuals and nature.

Fasting Transformation of Existential Spiritual and Social Consciousness from the Perspective of the Qur'an

Spiritual character through atomic habits can be built through self-awareness or devotion. Spirituality is the initial foundation that encourages self-awareness in a person.²¹ Awareness comes from the word conscious which means knowing or realizing something. While the term existential comes from the word existence, which means existence. Existential

¹⁸ Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, New York, Bantam Books, 1995, page. 234.

¹⁹ Daniel Goleman, *Ecological Intelligence: How Knowing the Hidden Impacts of What We Buy Can Change Everything*, New York: Broadway Books, 2009, page. 45.

²⁰ Donella H. Meadows, *The Limits to Growth: A Report for the Club of Rome's Project on the Predicament of Mankind*, New York, Universe Books, 1972, page. 78.

²¹ Journal ZAD Al-Mufassirin, *Kesadaran Diri Qurani Melalui Metode Atomic Habits Dalam Membangun Karakter Spiritual*, page 252, Vol. 4 No. 2, 2022; <https://jurnal.stiqzad.ac.id/index.php/zam/article/view/86/74>

awareness refers to an individual's understanding of their existence, including deep questions about the meaning of life, purpose, and place in the world. So existential awareness can be interpreted as a deep awareness of self-existence, broader reality, and how individuals interact with the world around them.²²

According to Jean-Paul Sartre, existence precedes essence, meaning that previously the individual had no purpose or defined meaning. After that, the individual creates his meaning through choice and action. This view of Sartre makes existential awareness involve recognizing individual freedom and responsibility.²³

Freedom accompanied by responsibility in living everyday life in existential awareness can encourage individuals to reflect deeply on values, life goals, contributing to society, and living in harmony with nature. This kind of awareness for modern society is critical and has significant implications, namely when many of them experience a crisis of identity and life goals to the point of stress and anxiety that often arise in everyday life.²⁴

The implications of existential awareness can then lead to a higher social awareness. Philosophically, when people realize that their life is focused on themselves and connected to others and society, they begin to understand the social responsibility inherent in their existence. This awareness encourages individuals to consider the impact of their actions on others and the environment and to contribute to the collective well-being.²⁵

Sociologically, existential awareness implies that individuals develop empathy and solidarity towards others when they realize they are part of a larger social network.²⁶ Here, the individual's existential awareness is transformed into a collective awareness that feels connected to people in a wider social environment.²⁷

Thus, existential awareness is a tool for personal reflection and a basis for building solidarity and collective action in society. According to Al-Ghazali, these two awarenesses can be brought up by individuals when fasting. According to him, fasting can be seen as a way to understand self-existence and the relationship with God.²⁸ Al-Ghazali mentioned spiritual existential awareness, as expressed by Viktor E. Frankl, which is a deep understanding of oneself and the purpose of life that goes beyond physical and material

²² Yasraf Amir Piliang, *Eksistensialisme dan Kebudayaan*, Bandung: Penerbit Mizan, 2005, page. 45.

²³ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1956, page 25.

²⁴ Viktor E Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, Boston: Beacon Press, 2006, page. 88.

²⁵ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007, page. 47.

²⁶ Anthony Giddens, *Sociology*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013, page. 212

²⁷ Émile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society*, New York: Free Press, 1997, page. 100.

²⁸ Al-Ghazali, *Ihya Ulumiddin*, ..., page. 125

aspects, connecting individuals with a higher spiritual dimension.²⁹ The spiritual existential awareness referred to by Al-Ghazali is also in line with Sartre's view, which emphasizes the importance of individual awareness in determining the meaning of one's life.³⁰

Both Sartre and Al-Ghazali argued that individuals must create meaning in their own lives, and fasting can be a moment of deep introspection to find that meaning in a spiritual and social existential context. This is where the formulation of fasting as a transformation of spiritual and social existential consciousness from the perspective of the Qur'an is mentioned.

If this formulation refers to Surah al-Baqarah/2: 183, then fasting is not just about refraining from eating and drinking, but also in the context of spiritual existential awareness, fasting functions as a means to increase self-awareness and reflection to understand the purpose of life and develop a more intimate relationship with Allah SWT can improve one's piety and can change one's perspective on life and increase one's sense of empathy, thus strengthening social awareness.³¹

The interpretation of Surah al-Baqarah/2: 183 regarding the command to fast shows that fasting is a ritual and a means to achieve spiritual awareness and piety, which can increase social awareness towards others. Moreover, if the verse is continued in verse 184, it will be very clear that social awareness appears as its transformation.

﴿ أَيَّامًا مَّعْدُودَاتٍ فَمَن كَانَ مِنكُم مَّرِيضًا أَوْ عَلَى سَفَرٍ فَعِدَّةٌ مِّنْ أَيَّامٍ أُخَرَ وَعَلَى الَّذِينَ يُطِيقُونَهُ فِدْيَةٌ طَعَامُ مِسْكِينٍ فَمَن تَطَوَّعَ خَيْرًا فَهُوَ خَيْرٌ لَّهُ وَأَن تَصُومُوا خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ۝١٨٤﴾

[Fasting for] a limited number of days. So, whoever among you is ill or on a journey [during them] - then an equal number of days [are to be made up]. And upon those who are able [to fast, but with hardship] - a ransom [as substitute] of feeding a poor person [each day]. And whoever volunteers excess, it is better for him. But to fast is best for you, if you only knew. (al-Baqarah/2: 184).

According to Al-Qurtubi, this verse shows that fasting is a form of worship that aims to increase piety. Allah SWT provides relief for those who cannot carry it out thoroughly, thus emphasizing the nature of Allah's mercy and justice.³² From a scientific perspective,

²⁹ Viktor E. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning*, ..., page. 99.

³⁰ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism is a Humanism*, ..., page. 48.

³¹ Al-Muyassar, *Tafsir Al-Muyassar*, Riyadh: Dar Al-Muyassar, 2005, page. 123.

³² Muhammad bin Ahmad Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an*, Jil. 2, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1996, page. 45

fasting is “a period during which a person abstains from food and drink for a specific purpose, such as improving health, reducing weight, or enhancing physical and mental performance.”³³ In a scientific context, fasting is not directly considered an act of worship. Worship is more closely related to spiritual and religious aspects. However, fasting can have a positive impact on mental and physical health, which can improve a person's quality of life. According to Dr. Valter Longo, a cellular biologist, "Fasting can trigger the process of autophagy, where the body's cells rid themselves of damaged or malfunctioning components" (Longo, 2018).³⁴ This suggests that fasting can have significant health benefits. Sayyid Qutb interpreted this verse to mean that fasting is a means to attain higher spiritual awareness and teaches discipline and self-control, which are very important in shaping the character of a Muslim.³⁵

For Hamka, fasting in this verse reminds us of the importance of sharing with others, especially those less fortunate, so fasting is both individual and social.³⁶ In line with Hamka, M. Quraish Shihab also said that this verse invites Muslims to understand fasting as a process of self-transformation that brings awareness of the meaning of life and social responsibility, as well as the importance of sincere intentions in worship.³⁷

Based on the explanation above, it can be analyzed that fasting has a deeper dimension than just a ritual of refraining from food and drink. In existential awareness, fasting functions as a tool of reflection that allows individuals to understand themselves and their relationship with God, as expressed by Al-Ghazali. From this spiritual existential awareness, fasting gives birth to a social awareness that encourages individuals to contribute to society through solidarity and empathy. So, the spiritual existential awareness that results from fasting can change an individual's perspective on life, encourage them to be more sensitive to the needs of others, and strengthen social ties within the community.

The conclusion is that fasting as a transformation of spiritual and social existential awareness from the perspective of the Qur'an is not only a ritual worship, but also a means to build social solidarity and increase empathy to contribute to the welfare of society. Fasting can change individuals holistically; first, it increases spiritual self-awareness to establish a relationship with Allah SWT in piety. Second, it deepens the individual's understanding of

³³ Krueger, K. (2019). Fasting and health: A review of the literature. *Journal of the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics*, 119(3), 432-445.

³⁴ Longo, V. D. (2018). Fasting: Molecular mechanisms and clinical applications. *Cell Research*, 28(3), 277-287.

³⁵ Sayyid Qutb, *Tafsir Fi Zilal Al-Qur'an*, Jilid 1, Beirut: Dar al-Shuruq, 1990, page. 234

³⁶ Hamka, *Tafsir Al-Azhar*, Jilid 1, Jakarta: Pustaka Panjimas, 1981, page. 345

³⁷ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, Volume: 1, Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2002, page. 123.

the true purpose of life, and third, it encourages individuals to play an active role in society's social life.

Reflection on Fasting to Build Ecological Balance Based on the Qur'an

Formulating the reflection on fasting to build ecological balance based on the Qur'an refers to three relevant scientific theories and ecological concepts: ecological systems theory, sustainability theory, and environmental ethics theory.

Ecological systems theory emphasizes the importance of understanding the interactions between the various components of a system, including humans, the environment, and natural resources. In the context of fasting, the practice can be seen as part of a larger social system, where individual actions such as fasting affect and are affected by social, economic, and environmental factors.³⁸ For example, fasting can encourage individuals to be more conscious of their food and resource consumption and reduce waste. Thus, fasting serves as a mechanism to strengthen the relationship between humans and the environment and raise awareness of the importance of maintaining ecosystem balance.³⁹

Meanwhile, sustainability theory emphasizes the importance of maintaining a balance between current human needs and the ability of future generations to meet their needs.⁴⁰ This sustainability theory recognizes the importance of community participation in making the resulting solutions more inclusive and sustainable. Sustainability theory invites long-term thinking for a better and more sustainable future for future generations. In fasting, the principle of sustainability can be applied through wise resource management, such as choosing local foods and reducing waste. By integrating sustainability into fasting, individuals and communities can contribute to achieving sustainable development goals, including social, economic, and environmental well-being.⁴¹

The theory of environmental ethics emphasizes the moral responsibility of humans towards the environment and other living things. Fasting can be seen as a form of respect for creation and an effort to live in harmony with nature. Fasting teaches discipline, self-control, and gratitude, all of which contribute to an awareness of the impact of our actions on the environment. By adopting an ethical approach to consumption and resource management, individuals can contribute to environmental conservation and social justice. For example,

³⁸ Eugene Pleasants Odum, *Fundamentals of Ecology*, Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole, 2004, page. 10.

³⁹ Eugene Pleasants Odum, *Basic Ecology*, Philadelphia: Saunders College Publishing, 1983, page. 46.

⁴⁰ Frank Fischer, *Citizens, Experts, and the Environment: The Politics of Local Knowledge*, Durham: Duke University Press, 2000, page. 113.

⁴¹ Gro Harlem Brundtland, *Our Common Future*, Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1987, page. 44.

sharing food with those in need during the fasting month fulfills a social need and reflects ethical environmental values that support sustainability.⁴²

By integrating the theory of systems ecology, sustainability theory, and environmental ethics theory, the practice of fasting can be seen as an effort to harmonize between humans and nature. Fasting serves as a spiritual ritual and raises awareness of the complex interactions between individuals, society, and the environment. Through sustainable and ethical fasting practices, we can create a more balanced lifestyle, where spiritual and physical needs are met without sacrificing environmental well-being.

The practice of fasting in Islam not only serves as a spiritual ritual but also reflects the principles of sustainability and environmental ethics that are in line with the concept of Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, which means a mercy for all nature, as mentioned in Surah al-Anbiyā`/21: 107.

﴿وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَاكَ إِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعَالَمِينَ ١٠٧﴾

And We have not sent you, [O Muhammad], except as a mercy to the worlds.
(al-Anbiyā`/21: 107)

In Tafsir Ibn Kathir, verse 107 of Surah Al-Anbiya' is interpreted as a statement that the Prophet Muhammad SAW was sent as a mercy for the entire universe. Ibn Kathir explains that Allah SWT sent the Prophet Muhammad as a bearer of mercy and guidance for humanity and all creatures. This shows that Islamic teachings are not only for Muslims, but also for all humanity and other living creatures.⁴³

Meanwhile, Al-Qurtubi provides a deep explanation of this verse by emphasizing that the grace brought by the Prophet Muhammad covers all aspects of life. This grace is not limited to the spiritual aspect but includes social, economic, and environmental elements.⁴⁴ As for M. Quraish Shihab, he explains that the grace in this verse covers all aspects of life, including moral, social, and spiritual. He also emphasizes that Islamic teachings invite humanity to respect each other and protect the environment.⁴⁵

The concept of Islam as *rahmatan lil 'alamin* emphasizes that Islamic teachings are intended for humanity, all living things, and the environment. In this context, fasting can be seen as a form of respect for Allah's creation and an effort to live in harmony with nature.

⁴² Aldo Leopold, *A Sand County Almanac*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1949, page. 201.

⁴³ Ismail Ibn Umar Ibn Katsir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-Azim*, Jilid 4, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 2000, page. 123.

⁴⁴ Muhammad bin Ahmad Al-Qurtubi, *Al-Jami' li Ahkam al-Qur'an*, Jilid 10, ..., page. 123.

⁴⁵ M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir Al-Mishbah*, Volume:6, ..., page. 456.

Ibn Khaldun emphasized the importance of balance between humans and the environment. He argued that a prosperous society can maintain a harmonious relationship with nature and its resources. In his view, human actions that damage the environment will harm society's welfare.⁴⁶ Therefore, fasting, emphasizing wise resource management, aligns with this teaching, where Muslims are invited to appreciate and protect the environment more.

The practice of fasting that emphasizes wise management of resources for Fazlur Rahman is an effort to understand Islam in a context that is responsive to the challenges of the times, including environmental issues. His related argument is that Islamic teachings encourage its followers to act as caliphs (managers) on earth, which means being responsible for the welfare of the environment and other living things.⁴⁷

The caliph (manager) concept emphasizes that everyone must act as a wise manager, not only for his own benefit but also for the welfare of all creatures. Fasting, as a form of self-control and awareness of responsibility, invites individuals to reflect on the impact of their actions on the environment.⁴⁸ This concept is closely related to Surah al-Baqarah/ 2: 30.

﴿وَإِذْ قَالَ رَبُّكَ لِلْمَلٰئِكَةِ اِنِّيْ جَاعِلٌ فِى الْاَرْضِ خَلِيْفَةًۭۙ قَالُوْۤا اَتَجْعَلُ فِىْهَا مَنۡ يُّفْسِدُ فِىْهَا وَيَسْفِكُ الدِّمَآءَ وَنَحْنُ نُسَبِّحُ بِحَمْدِكَ وَنُقَدِّسُ لَكَۗ قَالَ اِنِّيْۤ اَعْلَمُ مَا لَا تَعْلَمُوْنَ ۝ۙۙۙ﴾

And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority." They said, "Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we declare Your praise and sanctify You?" Allah said, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know." (al-Baqarah/ 2: 30)

Tantawi Jauhari, explains this verse that Allah SWT appointed humans as responsible managers of the earth and all its contents. In this context, humans are given reason and the ability to manage resources and are expected to carry out this task wisely and fairly.⁴⁹

In Tafsir Al-Baghawi, the verse is interpreted to mean that Allah SWT created humans as caliphs to manage the earth and fill it with goodness. The role of caliph is not only a right, but also a responsibility that must be carried out well. Humans as caliphs must be responsible

⁴⁶ Abd al-Rahman Ibn Muhammad Ibn Khaldun al-Hadrami, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005, page. 136

⁴⁷ Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity: Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982, page. 46.

⁴⁸ Ziauddin Sardar, *Islam, Postmodernism and Other Futures: A Ziauddin Sardar Reader*. London: Pluto Press, 1999, page. 113.

⁴⁹ Muhammad Tantawi Jauhari, *Tafsir al-Jauhari*, Jilid 1, Cairo: Dar al-Ma'arif, 1996, page. 123.

for their actions and maintain good relations with other creatures and nature.⁵⁰ Muhammad al-Tunisi, in his interpretation, added that human management of nature must be carried out with full awareness of moral and ethical responsibilities and use its potential to do good and avoid damage.⁵¹

From the interpretation of verse 30 of Surah al-Baqarah, if it is associated with fasting, then fasting as a spiritual practice in Islam can be seen as a form of harmony with nature, where management of resources and interaction with the environment is carried out with full awareness of moral and ethical responsibility. In this context, fasting teaches individuals to control their desires and reduce excessive consumption, aligning with sustainability and environmental protection principles. By abstaining from food and drink, Muslims are invited to reflect on the impact of their actions on nature and other living things, and to develop an attitude of gratitude and appreciation for the blessings Allah SWT gave.

Furthermore, as caliphs, humans have the potential to do good and create balance in the ecosystem. Fasting encourages individuals to contribute to the welfare of society and the environment through sharing and caring for others. Thus, fasting is not just a ritual, but also a means to strengthen the commitment to wise management of nature, where every action is taken with an awareness of moral and ethical responsibility, and an effort to avoid damage that can harm the balance of nature.

Analysis of the discussion above that can be mentioned is that integrating the theory of ecological systems with the concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (blessing for all nature) in the context of fasting, makes fasting can be seen as a practice that strengthens the relationship between individuals, society, and the environment, where every action has interrelated consequences. Then correlating the two in the perspective of Surah al-Anbiyā`/21: 107 can make fasting form a person who is compassionate and caring towards others and friendly to the environment (nature).

On the other hand, integrating sustainability theory with the concept of caliph (manager) in fasting invites individuals to use resources wisely and responsibly. Correlating both in the perspective of Surah al-Baqarah/ 2: 30 can make fasting form a person who can control themselves and reduce excessive consumption per sustainability principles and environmental ethics. At the same time, ecological ethics theory emphasizes respecting and protecting nature.

⁵⁰ Abdullah bin Ahmad Al-Baghawi, *Tafsir al-Baghawi*, Beirut: Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyyah, 1997, hlm. 46.

⁵¹ Muhammad al-Tunisi, *Tafsir At-Tahrir wa At-Tanwir*, Jilid 1, Tunis: Dar al-Tunisia, 2001, page. 151.

Based on the discussion on the reflection of fasting to build ecological balance based on the Qur'an, it can be concluded that the practice of fasting in the Qur'an not only functions as a spiritual ritual, but also as a means to build ecological balance that is in line with the theory of system ecology, sustainability theory, and environmental ethics theory. By internalizing the concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin*, which emphasizes compassion and concern for all creatures as in Surah al-Anbiyā'/21: 107, and the idea of khalifah which requires humans to act as wise managers as in Surah al-Baqarah/2: 30, fasting invites individuals to be responsible for the preservation of nature and to reflect on the impact of their actions on the environment. Thus, fasting becomes a moment of reflection that encourages individuals to contribute to environmental sustainability and protection, creating harmony between humans and nature.

D. Conclusion

The findings presented in this study answer the research questions, specifically examining the transformation of the self and the harmony of fitrah through fasting, as understood through the lenses of the Quranic perspective and scientific inquiry. Based on the results of the previous research and discussion, this research can be concluded as follows: Fasting, from the perspective of the Qur'an and science, functions as a transformation of existential awareness that is not only limited to ritual worship, but also to build social solidarity and increase empathy. Fasting increases spiritual self-awareness, deepens an individual's understanding of the purpose of life, and encourages an active role in the social life of society. Thus, fasting becomes a tool to strengthen an individual's relationship with Allah SWT and others, creating a more caring and empowered community.

Fasting has distinct perspectives in the Quran and science, although both share some commonalities regarding benefits and objectives. Quranic Perspective in the Quran, fasting is considered one of the worship practices aimed at enhancing an individual's piety and spiritual awareness. Fasting in Islam has specific rules, such as fasting times, prohibited food types, and the obligation to break the fast. Scientific Perspective From a scientific standpoint, fasting improves an individual's physical and mental health. Science has shown that fasting can have health benefits, including reducing inflammation, enhancing autophagy, and improving cognitive performance.

Perspective Differences The difference in perspectives between the Quran and science lies in their objectives and approaches. The Quran views fasting as a form of worship with spiritual objectives, while science sees fasting to improve physical and mental health.

Despite the differing perspectives, the Quran and science share some commonalities regarding the benefits of fasting. Both agree that fasting can benefit an individual's physical and mental health. In conclusion, fasting has different perspectives in the Quran and science, but both share some commonalities regarding benefits and objectives.

In addition to the spiritual and social dimensions, fasting also plays a role in building ecological balance that aligns with the theory of system ecology, sustainability, and environmental ethics. By internalizing the concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* and khalifah, fasting invites individuals to be responsible for preserving nature and reflecting on the impact of their actions on the environment. Fasting becomes a moment of reflection that encourages people to contribute to environmental sustainability and protection, creating harmony between humans and nature for the common good.

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