

**Zulkifli Mohd Yusoff & Zaini Ujang (2023), *Tafsir Mawdu'i Sungai*, Kajang: Akademi Jawi Malaysia. 251 Pages, ISBN 978-967-2422-50-1<sup>©</sup>**

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River pollution has become a global environmental crisis that causes water scarcity and biodiversity loss. It has become an urgent global challenges that demand immediate attention from scholars, policymakers, and faith communities alike. Issues such as freshwater depletion, loss of aquatic habitats, and biodiversity decline not only disrupt ecosystems but also carry serious social, economic, and intergenerational consequences (Sandra Díaz et al., 2019). In Malaysia, these pressures are intensified by population growth, rapid urbanization, industrial activity, and changing land-use patterns that alter natural hydrological systems (Chin, C., & Ng, Y., 2015; Afroz R. et al., 2014; Chai Lee, 2020; Shamsiah Omar et al., 2023). Addressing this crisis requires more than science and sound policy; it calls for strong moral grounding and spiritual insight. Here, the Qur'an offers a framework for shaping human ethics and guiding Muslim engagement with environmental stewardship. The book of *Tafsir Maudui Sungai* responds to this need by weaving together Qur'anic verses on rivers through a thematic approach, integrating them with scientific understanding and modern water resource management.

*Tafsir Mawdu'i: Sungai* is authored by two experts whose complementary strengths shape the book's distinctive interdisciplinary approach. Professor Dato' Dr. Zulkifli Mohd Yusoff, a leading scholar in Qur'anic studies, brings extensive experience in classical and contemporary tafsir (<https://umexpert.um.edu.my/zulkifliy>). His long-standing involvement in national and international Qur'anic research institutions, together with his substantial academic publications, provides the theological and methodological foundation for this work. Meanwhile, Dato' Seri Ir. Dr. Zaini Ujang, a renowned environmental engineer and sustainability expert, contributes deep experience in

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water management, environmental policy, and science based frameworks for sustainable development (<https://people.utm.my/zainiujang/biography>). His scientific insight enables the book to contextualise Qur'anic teachings on rivers and water within real environmental challenges and contemporary ecological discourse.

The book holds a special place and is regarded as a significant contribution to the field of tafsir in Malaysia. It was completed on 20 April 2023 and officially launched with the consent of the Chancellor of the University of Malaya, His Royal Highness Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah of Perak, on 12 October 2023 at the University of Malaya in Kuala Lumpur. Spanning 251 pages, the book was published in 2023 by the Akademi Jawi Malaysia in collaboration with the Raja Zarith Sofiah Centre for Advanced Studies on Islam, Science and Civilisation (CASIS), Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. This book offers a fresh contribution to contemporary Qur'anic exegesis by integrating Islamic scholarship with environmental and scientific insights. It fills a key gap in tafsir literature by focusing on river and water sustainability from a Qur'anic perspective. While the book draws extensively on Malaysian examples and environmental contexts, its conceptual framework, particularly the integration of revelation (*wahy*) with scientific reasoning, holds universal relevance. Importantly, the authors have made deliberate efforts to make the book accessible to a broad audience. By including introductory discussions on *'Ulum al-Qur'an* and the foundations of tafsir, it is written in a clear and structured style suitable for both academic readers and the general public.

The book begins with an Introduction that sets the stage for its message. Authors explain the importance of river conservation, restoration, and protection to ensure its sustainability using scientific research and analysis. Water is an important element in Islam that reflects functionality, purity, and mercy. This book brings together examples from Qur'anic verses and interpretations. Altogether, this is a reference from cross expertise by the approach of thematic tafsir. The book's second section opens with Chapter 1, about how the Qur'an speaks about *'alam*, the natural world. It explains terms used, how creation unfolds, and why it exists, while describing the qualities of nature itself. The chapter also stresses that nature is a vital source of life, reminds readers of humanity's duty to care for the environment, and introduces Islamic principles of environmental ethics and ecological wisdom. Next, in Chapter 2, is the water concept in the Qur'an, its vital role in human life, existence, purity, and other purposes in daily life. Authors bring up the value of water from Qur'anic verses and the importance of water in the ecosystem, benefiting human development,

health, civilization, and economy. The chapter ends by underscoring the Qur'an's message about water's importance, the different water sources it mentions, and humanity's responsibility to protect this vital resource. Meanwhile, Chapter 3 focuses on rivers in the world. The authors discuss different types of rivers, explain how rivers are described in the Qur'an, highlight references to global rivers within the scripture, trace historical accounts linked to rivers, and reflect on rivers as metaphors.

Chapter 4 turns to the depiction of rivers in the Hereafter. It begins with an explanation of the rivers of Paradise, the names of the heavenly gardens, and the role of water in the afterlife, concluding with Qur'anic verses that describe these celestial rivers. Building on that, Chapter 5 highlights four recurring motifs of heavenly rivers like glad tidings, divine reward, ultimate success, and their status as a defining feature of Paradise, while offering a thoughtful look at the celebrated river *al-Kawthar* through classical tafsir, hadiths, and the insights of renowned Muslim scholars. Chapter 6 examines natural springs, from the story of Zamzam to five Qur'anic themes that consist of history, metaphor, divine power, and rewards or punishments. Next, Chapter 7 distils lessons from 56 Qur'anic verses about rivers, linking water to earthly and eternal prosperity, ideal ecosystems, and the need for an "eco-shift" in human behaviour. In the book, "eco-shift" is introduced as a transformation framework coined by the authors to encourage changes in lifestyle toward environmental responsibility. This shift promotes "eco-habits" that finally lead to consistent daily actions that reduce environmental harm and support river sustainability. And finally, in Chapter 8, the concluding chapter, offers a comprehensive summary of the entire discussion, tying together the key insights and reflections presented throughout the book (Zulkifli Mohd Yusoff & Zaini Ujang, 2023).

*Tafsir Mawdu'i: Sungai* is a pioneering contribution to contemporary Qur'anic scholarship, offering an innovative integration of Qur'anic exegesis with modern scientific perspectives on environmental issues. The collaboration between its two authors strengthens the work's interdisciplinary depth. Together, their expertise produces a rare synthesis that situates Qur'anic teachings on rivers and water within current ecological realities, an approach rarely explored in Malaysian tafsir literature, thereby filling a notable gap in existing Qur'anic studies. By aligning scriptural interpretation with contemporary environmental challenges, the book demonstrates how the Qur'an can serve as a foundation for public policy, education, and sustainable living. Although the discussion is grounded in the Malaysian context, its principles carry wider relevance, offering a model for faith-based ecological ethics applicable across the Muslim world.

Supported by both classical references and scientific data, the book remains accessible to a broad readership. More than a traditional tafsir, it serves as an ethical and practical guide for appreciating and safeguarding water and rivers as divine blessings. This thematic and interdisciplinary approach not only enriches Malaysia's body of tafsir literature but also contributes meaningfully to global conversations on environmental ethics in the Qur'an.

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