# BEYOND TECHNICAL FIXES
## Sufism, Contemplation, and Climate Change as Human Predicament

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Abstract: *Building on the works of the Sufi philosopher Seyyed Hossein Nasr and the German sociologist Hartmut Rosa, this article argues that the climate crisis signals a deeper spiritual and existential crisis beyond technological solutions and carbon reduction strategies. Departing from conventional problem-solution narratives, it frames climate change as a crisis of human self-understanding and our relationship with the more-than-human world. The dominant mechanistic paradigm, which views nature as a resource for exploitation, has led to environmental degradation and alienation. Nasr critiques this objectification, emphasizing that nature must be seen as sacred rather than as a mere resource. In dialogue with Rosa, the article explores the concept of "resonance" and argues that Sufi contemplative practices cultivate a profound ecological consciousness. By integrating Sufi ontology with ethics, it advocates for an interconnected vision of life by treating everything in nature as alive and spiritually meaningful.*

## BEYOND THE PROBLEM-SOLUTION NARRATIVE

With the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General calling the present climate crisis a "code red for humanity," a major UN climate report highlights the undeniable human impact upon our planet and shows we must drastically cut emissions within the next few decades to have a chance of averting catastrophic warming.[1] Yet many neglect the root cause of this crisis, since they frame human-caused climate change as a scientific *problem* needing technical *solutions*, while disregarding the fact that the environmental crisis signals a broader social and existential crisis of humanity, one that cannot be surmised in terms of reducing carbon footprints alone. Drawing on the works of the Sufi philosopher Seyyed Hossein Nasr and the German sociologist Hartmut Rosa, this study first analyzes the nature of the existential threats posed by climate change, before proceeding to argue that Sufi contemplative practices support and foster an active engagement toward the planet's wellbeing and an ecofriendly life and vision.

To begin to see climate change as a human predicament, one must go beyond the problem-solution approach that characterizes much of the Environmental Studies research.[2] Here one may think of the pioneering work of the climate scientist Mike Hulme, who sharply criticizes scientific approaches that describe climate change as a physical phenomenon needing technical solutions.[3] This is to be distinguished from Arne Naess's shallow versus deep ecology approaches. Naess referred to short-term environmental efforts and technology-focused solutions as "shallow ecology" and proposed his own "deep ecology" as an alternative. His alternative analysis aimed to

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consider social, cultural, and technological solutions together, identifying technological fixes as simplistic and insufficient.[4] In contrast to Naess, Hulme argues that the very framing of climate change in terms of a "problem-solution" structure—technological or otherwise—obfuscates its real nature and magnitude. That is to say, while climate change can be framed in terms of scientific, economic, psychological, religious, or political problems, as the following cases show, none of these approaches, Hulme argues, ultimately lead to a "solution." For instance, if the problem of climate change is attributable to a perilous disruption in the Earth's radiation balance, then a potential solution could involve the deployment of particles into the stratosphere to form a sunscreen (science and geoengineering). If the issue is linked to the accumulation of excessive carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere and oceans, then a viable solution might involve extracting carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and sequestering it in durable products or geological formations (science and geoengineering). Alternatively, if the problem of climate change stems from the entrenched self-interest of fossil fuel and other extractive industries exerting undue influence over positions of power, then a potential solution could be the divestment and dismantling of such industries in favor of less centralized and more enlightened alternatives (i.e., economics). If the problem is rooted in the failure to adequately reflect the environmental externalities of goods and services in market prices, then a solution might involve establishing a global carbon price (i.e., economics). Moreover, if the challenge of climate change is connected to prevailing models of economic growth and social wellbeing overly tied to material consumption indicators, then a potential solution could be a reimagining of what constitutes a desirable and meaningful human life, while incorporating these ideas into new policy metrics (i.e., economics). Alternatively, if the problem is rooted in the colonial past and its enduring legacies that continue to subject peoples, species, and environments to coercive and extractive powers, then reparations for the resulting ecological and cultural loss and damage caused by colonial powers might be a solution (i.e., politics).

It can certainly be argued that climate change encompasses all these issues (and more) and that they all require possible solutions. However, if one insists on framing climate change as a *problem*, then it is more accurate to view climate change as a composite problem, a metaissue comprising many interconnected and overlapping smaller problems. Solutions to these constituent problems, as Hulme says, involve mobilizing different and conflicting values and ideologies. Resolving one part of this composite problem (a first-order problem) simply shifts or generates issues elsewhere (second- or third-order problems), as can be seen in the case of geoengineering, for instance. Thus, to truly *solve* climate change would essentially mean exhausting the politico-metaphysical imagination, resulting in a world that is beyond further improvement and flourishing.[5]

Moreover, climate change is not merely a physical phenomenon observable and measurable by science.[6] Instead, it represents our social, cultural, and spiritual predicaments and aspirations, which shape our perspectives on self, society, and humanity's place on Earth. But there is no denying that climate has a physical dimension, for it can be defined as "the average course or condition of the weather at a place usually over a period of years as exhibited by temperature, wind velocity, and precipitation."[7] Thus, no one would doubt that the Amazon's climate is wetter than the Sahara's. However, climate is not merely an absolute quantitative measure but it is also subject to cultural interpretations. For instance, the Sahara's climate varies significantly for a Bedouin compared to a Berliner.[8]

Considering all of the above, we can say that climate change can no longer be limited to being an environmental issue requiring technical solutions. Unlike problems involving physical substances such as lead in gasoline or asbestos in construction, climate change is not something to be eliminated. Climate change cannot be completely resolved by science or technology, even though they contribute valuable insights and offer ways of adapting to changing climates. Likewise, political and economic measures alone cannot solve climate change, although politics may seek cooperative actions, and economics may alleviate some challenges such as capitalism's negative impact on nature.[9] This is because, ultimately, climate change is about *values* and the meaning of the *human project* itself. As Hulme says:

> What is the ultimate performance metric for the human species, what is it that we are seeking to optimise? Is it to restabilise climate, to stabilise population or to minimise our ecological footprint? Is it to increase life expectancy, to maximise gross domestic product (GDP), to make poverty history or to increase the sum of global happiness? Or is the ultimate performance metric for humanity simply survival? It is difficult to see any reason why, in this future climate-stabilised world, our population will be lower, our ecological footprint smaller, our poverty reduced, our GDP greater, our life expectancy longer, or our happiness enriched relative to any other possible future world. What is the human project ultimately about?[10]

Considered thus, climate change becomes an existential issue requiring a humanistic response, which I will explore in the next section.

## CLIMATE CHANGE AS A HUMAN PREDICAMENT

The previous section showed why climate is more than a physical phenomenon and why we need to distinguish between what climate change is (i.e., the scientific definition) and what it means (social, cultural, and spiritual overtones). This section will argue, by way of Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Hartmut Rosa, that it is best to characterize climate change as an existential predicament requiring socio-spiritual responses.

Nasr is perhaps most famous for being one of the first scholars to predict, diagnose, and provide a response to the climate crisis, having spoken out on the topic as early as 1966 and gone on to dedicate two books and numerous articles to the themes of the environment.[11] For Nasr, the degradation and objectification of nature are directly related to the mechanistic conceptions of nature, which leave no room for the "spiritual dimension."[12] He traces the mechanization of nature back to the seventeenth-century Scientific Revolution, which marginalized sacred conceptions of nature through the Galilean primary and secondary qualities distinction and the Cartesian dualism of mind and matter.[13] That is, Galileo Galilei, René Descartes, and other early modern thinkers presented a picture of the world that is hard, cold, colorless, silent, and dead because it is a world of quantity, a world in which mathematical modeling is supposed to reveal mechanical regularity in nature. In other words, only quantifiable entities such as mass, motion, shape, size, and so on have the capacity to reveal the essence of nature, whereas color and smell, alongside the beauty, harmony, and wonder of nature, reside in the realm of human subjectivity.

Nasr argues that the technologies developed from such a mechanistic worldview are directly responsible for the destruction of nature on a vast scale, reaching as far as the higher layers of the atmosphere.[14] This is because such technologies view nature as a means (or a "resource") and not an end (e.g., seeing forests as potential building material and development sites instead of as loci of the sacred, thereby leading to a deeply unsustainable relationship with the natural world).[15] In contrast to the mechanistic view, Nasr argues that one must revive the spiritual meaning of nature by rejecting the Cartesian dualism of mind and matter that reduces nature to a mere "it" and treats it as an "object" not unlike other material objects. One must also be critical of the mechanistic worldview of modern science, which seeks to explain nature in terms of blind forces, processes, and motion. However, Nasr does not reject the positive elements of modern science, which he thinks can be meaningfully integrated into a spiritual order in which the domain of nature possesses a higher meaning.[16]

Be that as it may, there is a correlation between environmental degradation and the spiritual crisis of modern humanity. As Nasr writes in *Man and Nature*:

> Today, almost everyone living in the urbanized centers of the Western world feels intuitively a lack of something in life. This is due directly to the creation of an artificial environment from which nature has been excluded to the greatest possible extent. Even the religious man in such circumstances has lost the sense of the spiritual significance of nature. The domain of nature has become a "thing" devoid of meaning, and at the same time the void created by the disappearance of this vital aspect of human existence continues to live within the souls of men and to manifest itself in many ways, sometimes violently and desperately.[17]

The climate crisis is an existential predicament because nature or the nonhuman world has become devoid of meaning and a mere resource to be exploited. But the loss of meaning in relation to nature is deeply intertwined with the loss of meaning that characterizes the hearts and souls of so many people. In this way, climate change, or the environmental crisis, serves as an external reflection of the inner crisis within individuals who, by prioritizing Earth over Heaven, are now at risk of harming the very planet they seek to protect.[18] As alluded to earlier, for Nasr, resolving the climate crisis goes beyond mere rhetoric or technical fixes; it necessitates a profound transformation in the outlook of modern subjects. But rather than attempting to reinvent the self, as some suggest, the way forward lies in embracing a pontifical identity—a role that serves as a bridge between Heaven and Earth. This perspective envisions the world of nature as a sacred realm and calls for a fundamental shift in how we perceive and interact with the environment.[19]

As we will see below, Nasr's spiritual diagnosis of climate change is complemented by Rosa's sociological critique of modernity. For Rosa, modernity faces three interrelated crises, namely the crises of democracy, psychological wellbeing, and climate change. Taken together, these crises shed light on the sociological causes of Nasr's claim of the disjuncture between humanity and nature.[20]

Since there are numerous theories of modernity, Rosa begins his analysis by first asking what characterizes a modern society. He states that many contemporary social theories portray modernity as an ongoing process of change, primarily characterized by continuous social

differentiation, rationalization, individualization, and the mastery over nature.[21] In his *Social Acceleration*, he defines modernity or modernization as an ongoing process characterized by the dynamic acceleration, or the ever-increasing speed, of material, social, and mental relations.[22] That is to say, a society attains modernity when its stability relies on dynamic processes. In Rosa's view, a modern society can only sustain itself through continuous growth, acceleration, and heightened innovation to uphold and reproduce its structure. The trio of growth, acceleration, and increasing innovation represents the material, temporal, and social facets of a unified process of dynamization.[23] But the process of dynamization is far from being neutral, especially in the face of climate change when the imperative for material growth in modern capitalist societies proves to be a challenging aspect of dynamic stability. Rosa admits that although the distinct advantage of adopting a process-oriented and structural definition of modernity lies in its ability to avoid normative assumptions, this approach sidesteps the assumptions that burden not only the concept of a project of modernity but also the quasi-teleological "classic" theories of modernity. It also avoids normative constraints in identifying modernization with concepts like rationalization, differentiation, individualization, or the progressive domination of nature through instrumental reason.[24] Notwithstanding his definition, Rosa is critical of modernity. He claims that "modernity is out of tune" and that relations of resonance are not functioning harmoniously.[25]

In Rosa's view, the growing challenge of sustaining the global trend of escalation and dynamization has led to a notable shift, in addition to the ongoing economic crisis marked by the exhaustion of capital exploitation on a global scale. Profits and returns tied to growth have given way to new methods of exploitation and redistribution from the bottom up. This transformation has triggered a widespread crisis affecting human relationships with the environment, politics, and the self. The fundamental issue in all three dimensions is that the structurally institutionalized and culturally accepted approach of expanding humanity's influence on the world paradoxically results in a gradual loss of connection with the natural world. This, in turn, leads to a diminishing impact of resonant aspects in human experiences.[26] This is most evident in society's relationship with nature. Rosa writes:

> This is manifested most clearly with respect to society's relation to nature. The programs of scientific penetration and technological domination aim at nothing other than the intensive and extensive expansion of humanity's share of the world. Extractive industries penetrate ever further into the depths of the ocean, the Arctic and Antarctic, and previously inaccessible mineral deposits and layers of rock (e.g. via new fracking processes), while the field of astrophysics aims to peer ever deeper into space, to capture light and waves from ever greater spatiotemporal distances, to allow us to comprehend ever greater distances and ever longer periods of time, and to make the planets of the solar system accessible to us (and potentially exploitable as sources of raw material) through space travel. According to the same logic, particle physics penetrates ever more minuscule microrealms and seeks to make the most elementary and ephemeral phenomena of the universe visible, controllable, and potentially exploitable. Biology and medicine, meanwhile, bring the most fundamental processes of life and the body within the grasp of the knowable and accessible by decoding and making it possible to control the structures of DNA, of genes and hormones, of nerves and the brain, and thus to some extent also of

> affects and emotions. We encounter nature in all of these areas not as something inaccessible that speaks with its own voice, but as a *usable resource* or design object—the institutional mode of relation is a reifying one. This, however, is accompanied by the loss of nature as a sphere of resonance.[27]

Like Nasr, Rosa is unequivocal about the resulting alienation and growing concerns over environmental degradation and fears of nature retaliating in the form of natural disasters like tsunamis, tornadoes, avalanches, earthquakes, heat waves, droughts, and so on.[28] Rosa argues that individuals in late modern societies progressively lose their connection with the natural world as an expressive and responsive counterpart while simultaneously expanding their instrumental control. Their sense of self-efficacy is not derived from achieving resonance-sensitive harmony but rather from a reifying form of domination. This alienation becomes evident in light of the climate crisis and our inability to live sustainably, not only concerning nature but also in relation to the resonant dimension of history.[29]

## HEALING THROUGH RESONANCE

The analyses of Nasr and Rosa in the previous section show that climate change signals an existential crisis resulting in an understanding of self and nature being devoid of depth and meaning. The propensity to control, consume, and dominate everything including the self and nature worsens the situation.[30] For Rosa, the modern predicament is best characterized by a loss of resonant relationship with the natural world. Rosa defines resonance as "a kind of relationship to the world, formed through affect and emotion, intrinsic interest, and perceived self-efficacy, in which subject and world are mutually affected and transformed."[31] It is, moreover, a responsive relationship, which requires that both sides (i.e., human beings and nature) speak with their own voice.

Such concepts of resonance are not surprising when considering the fact that both the human body, which operates on circadian and seasonal rhythms, and the activity patterns observed in various premodern or nonmodern cultures exhibit responses to the apparent movements of celestial bodies. This is particularly evident in their sensitivity to changes in day length, shifts in seasons, and fluctuating tides. These correlations primarily arise not from quasi-mechanical linkages but rather from sensitivities to resonance. For instance, many of the body's circadian rhythms are influenced by social factors, while alterations in day length and seasons, including variations in sunlight intensity, are influenced by meteorological changes and unpredictable events. The notion that human beings exist in resonance with nature, encompassing its rhythms, challenges, fluctuations, and local peculiarities, appears not only evident but also inherently *natural*. This resonance extends beyond celestial bodies and is even more pronounced in relation to terrestrial conditions. The ways of life and traditions of desert communities, mountain tribes, forest inhabitants, island societies, and Nordic nomads seem intricately intertwined with the respective climatic, vegetative, and geological conditions specific to their environments.[32]

## COSMIC HARMONY

Rosa's concept of "resonance" goes some way in establishing a connection with the natural world. But since his resonance theory requires that nature and humanity be two separate entities, it falls short of showing how human beings are part and parcel of a cosmic whole in which the wellbeing of each part is intimately connected to every other part. Nasr, for his part, invokes the Neoplatonic notion of *sympatheia* between human beings and cosmic realities to emphasize the interconnectedness of all beings. As Plotinus writes:

> But if we remember that we posited that the universe is a single living thing, and that since it is so it was absolutely necessary for it to have an internal and self-communication of its experiences [*sympatheia*]; and we remember further that the process of its life must be rational and all in tune [*symphonos*] with itself, and that there is nothing casual in its life but a single melody and order, and that the celestial arrangements are rational, and each individual part moves by numbers, as do the dancing parts of the living being; we must admit that both are the activity of the All . . . and that this is the way the All lives.[33]

That is, the natural world is an interconnected entity marked by harmony among its components and characterized by a divine immanence that becomes discernible due to the presence of the divine within us. All elements of the visible cosmos interact reciprocally because they are integral parts of a unified and living whole, bound by mutual sympathy. Moreover, Nature itself is brought into being through the contemplation of the World Soul and higher cosmic realities (the more practical dimension of contemplation is treated in the following section). This is significant because as Nature itself is formed through contemplation; it also generates through a vision of the higher worlds, serving as the medium through which intelligibility, and consequently the order inherent in these higher worlds, is imposed upon the observable world.[34]

Based on the concepts of *sympatheia*, order, and harmony, Nasr's ecophilosophy advances a participatory view and a deeper understanding of the human-nature relationship. For Nasr, the spiritual view of nature requires of us a complete reunderstanding of what nature is and who we are as human beings who act upon nature, because it is impossible to discuss nature without discussing the image that we have of ourselves.[35] It requires a very radical transformation in our consciousness, which means we must rediscover an alternative way of looking at the world of nature as sacred presence.

## SUFI CONTEMPLATION

The previous section explained the interrelatedness of human beings and the cosmos in terms of *sympatheia*, order, and harmony. It also underscores why we need a radical transformation of consciousness in order to discover the spiritual meaning of nature. This section discusses the role of contemplation in awakening our inner consciousness through which we can experience our cognitive nonseparation from the nonhuman world. The fruits of contemplation can be reaped in terms of an ecofriendly vision of life and action.

Contemplation in Sufism is a cognitive, spiritual activity in which the mind, body, and spirit work in unison to transform the self.[36] A number of terms are used to discuss contemplation in

Sufism, such as *fikr* (meditation/contemplation), *tafakkur* (contemplation), *shuhūd* (vision), and *taʾammul* (attentive contemplation). Among them two are very prominent, namely, *fikr* and *tafakkur*. There is also another word, *murāqaba*, which means watching oneself constantly. Similar to other religious and wisdom traditions such as Buddhism, there is not just one concept or one word; rather, there is a cluster of concepts that all discuss contemplation in Sufism. Contemplative practices also involve an ethical lifestyle. They provide us with an opportunity to know ourselves, the nature of the universe, and our place in it. For Nasr, contemplation involves spiritual knowledge or what the Sufis call *maʿrifa*, that is, a knowledge that relates the knower to higher modes of being. This is brought out skillfully in the following poem of Hātif Iṣfahānī (d. 1783):

> If you explore the core of an atom
> You shall behold a sun within it.[37]

That is, the deep contemplation of a single natural entity can serve as the gateway to the infinite, much like the beholding of the jeweled Net of Indra.[38] Nasr further explains contemplation in terms of its complex relationship with "action." Contemplation is not a passive reaction, nor is it solely an emotional or mental activity. Essentially, it involves the capacity for intuitive knowledge channeled through the "eye of the heart," which directly perceives the true nature of things behind the veils of appearance.[39] As ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī (d. 1492) writes:

> Creation's book I studied from my youth,
> And every page examined but in sooth
> I never found therein aught save the "Truth,"
> And Attributes that appertain to "Truth."
> What mean Dimension, Body, Species,
> In Mineral, Plant, Animal degree?
> The "Truth" is single, but His modes beget
> All these imaginary entities.[40]

That is, through the act of contemplating natural phenomena, the contemplative individual transcends the intermediate domain of reason and enters the realm of pure forms or Platonic ideas. The purpose of studying nature is not to dissect it based on a conceptual scheme, but rather to attain self-awareness by recognizing the interrelationship between the subject and the object.[41]

Contemplation, moreover, paves the door to correct action, where action is not only seen as external deeds but also as an inner spiritual process that prepares the soul for internal transformation. This transformative journey, both inward and outward, brings one to the threshold of contemplation.[42] The appropriateness of one's actions relies on adopting the right state of mind, which in turn arises from establishing a proper connection with the ultimate source of all existence through unitive prayer. In its highest form, prayer thus becomes contemplation. This is because in contemplative prayer, the inner self or spirit goes beyond the duality characteristic of ordinary prayer that involves a personal relationship with the divine, and dissolves in the ocean of Reality. Thus, through contemplation, all aspects of our being can merge together, making prayer in its purest form a powerful means for unifying body, soul, and spirit, and integrating the paths of action, love, and knowledge within ourselves.[43] That is why, Nasr says, "the sage [i.e., the self-

realized person] acts without acting like a lamp that illuminates its surroundings by simply existing."[44] By living in the sanctuary of interiority, the sage connects deeply with the inner essence of other beings, influencing them profoundly without outward action: "The sage contemplates and lives in the dimension of inwardness and by virtue of that interiority has a *sympatheia* with the inner reality of other beings and then acts upon them in the deepest sense without external action."[45] Consequently, correct actions stem from contemplation and are linked to the attainment of spiritual knowledge, or *maʿrifa*.[46]

Nasr further explains the intricate relationship between contemplation and action through *dhikr* (lit. invocation), which is the incantatory formula used in Sufism to concentrate on Being (*hastī*) and attain self-actualization. *Dhikr*, which is a central practice in Sufism, literally means invocation, remembrance, and mention. Every Sufi order (*ṭarīqa*) teaches specific meditation techniques to help its practitioners focus on the *dhikr*, using their minds, imaginations, and, at advanced levels, their hearts, bodies, and tongues. Although the forms of *dhikr* are generally similar across Sufi orders, the meditation practices and litanies (*awrād*) recited between the canonical prayers and the *dhikr* vary from one order to another. In its broadest sense, *dhikr* encompasses any act that helps one to remember God, including daily prayers, communal worship, reading, reciting, or meditating on the Qur'an, giving alms, fasting, and pilgrimage. When performed in a group and vocally, *dhikr* is typically chanted rhythmically and may be accompanied by repetitive body movements. During communal *dhikr*, participants might be arranged in a pattern that holds spiritual and symbolic significance. In solitary practice, verbal repetition of *dhikr* is often considered a precursor to silent meditation. Through *dhikr*, Sufis are meant to develop a heightened awareness of the divine presence in everything, nurturing reverence and gratitude for the gifts of creation. Moreover, through modern adaptations, forms of *dhikr* called eco-*dhikr* or eco-*salawat* (eco-blessings), in addition to regular *dhikr*, have the potential to transform the self, fostering a profound spiritual bond with the more-than-human world and instilling a sense of love and compassion for creation.

Returning to Nasr, he states that *dhikr* contains both "contemplative action" and "active contemplation." The *dhikr* can be conceived as contemplative action because although it is an act, this action is cosmogonically preceded by contemplation, since the world comes into being through divine contemplation and the contemplation of the World Soul as mentioned in the previous section.[47] Moreover, the *dhikr*—at the highest level—is also a state of being that allows the individual to participate in the eternal act of Being. Hence the Sufi poet Jāmī said:

> How fortunate are you to have your heart filled with the light of invocation [*dhikr*]
> A light which has conquered your carnal self
> The thought of multiplicity has passed away
> The invoker has become the invocation and invocation the invoked.[48]

Correspondingly, the *dhikr* is also an active contemplation because it continuously combines the whole of the spiritual work in a way in which progress upon the spiritual path is achieved through an active participation of the entire being of the aspirant.[49] Nasr writes:

> The relationship between action and contemplation thus described on its most essential level in quintessential orison [i.e., *dhikr*] is reflected also on the plane of the study of nature

> . . . Islamic science certainly enabled man to gain knowledge of nature and also to act upon nature, as we see in agriculture, medicine, and the like. But the final goal of this science was to enable man to contemplate nature and to aid him to act upon himself and to remake himself with the help of the contemplative knowledge thus gained. Islamic science was concerned with a process which also implied the possibility for nature considered as the Divine theophany (*tajallī*) to act upon the soul of man, as well as the possibility for man to "act" upon nature through the contemplation of its epiphanies. Islamic science thus began with an objectivization of nature which made it an "object" of study to end with a unitive knowledge which finally integrated man with his own prototype as well as the prototype of nature, so that in the end nature became a "thou," an intimate witness to the Divine Presence.[50]

At the core of Sufi teachings is a deep recognition of the divine presence in all aspects of creation. Sufis view the natural world not merely as physical phenomena but as a sacred manifestation of the divine. This profound intuition fosters in Sufis a sense of unity and solidarity with nature, encouraging them to cultivate a harmonious relationship with the environment. In one of the most enigmatic verses of the Qur'an, God proclaims that all beings in the cosmos sing His praise: "The seven heavens and the earth and all that is therein glorify Him, and there is not a thing but hymneth His glory; but ye understand not their glory" (Q 17:44).[51] Such a verse is bound to raise eyebrows, since we do not hear inanimate entities such as rocks and mountains singing God's glory. The great Sufi poet Rūmī has a rejoinder for those who would cast doubt upon the literal interpretation of this verse. For Rūmī, the problem lies in one's inability to understand the "language of being" and to penetrate the innermost reality of natural phenomena, each of which possesses its own particular mode of consciousness and glorification. Rūmī also rhetorically asks how can we expect people to understand the glorification of inanimate entities when they themselves, despite being language animals, are unable to understand each other, which is the reason they are divided into so many sects and denominations? Rūmī writes:

> Each glorifies Thee in a different fashion,
> and that one is unaware of the state of this one.
> Humans disbelieve in the glorification uttered by inanimate things,
> but those inanimate things are masters in performing worship.
> Nay, the two-and-seventy sects, every one,
> are unaware of each other and in great doubt.
> Since two speakers have no knowledge of each other's state,
> how will it be with wall and door?
> Since I am heedless of the glorification uttered by one who speaks,
> how should my heart perceive the glorification of that which is mute?[52]

Rūmī then concludes by saying that only the spiritually adept whose inner vision (*baṣīra*) is awakened by the eye of the heart can perceive the mystery of every creature's distinct mode of glorification:

> No one knows except the deified human

in whose heart is a spiritual touchstone.
The rest hold only an opinion;
they fly to their nest with a single wing.[53]

As mentioned, for Rūmī, the question of hearing "universal glorification" is related to what he calls the "language of being" (*zabān-i hastī*). Rūmī explains that human language is characterized by speech and verbal expression. However, there are other ways to communicate involving nonverbal expressions. For instance, we can imagine a child gazing lovingly at her mother without speaking. This silent interaction expresses a deep affection and love for her mother that surpasses mere verbal declarations. Similarly, animals, while many have distinct vocal expressions, often communicate their needs and desires nonverbally. Take a cat, for instance, that approaches and calmly sits near your table, blinking and occasionally glancing covetously at the food. Without making a sound, the cat effectively communicates its desire.[54] Rūmī calls the verbal expression the "language of discourse" and the nonverbal the language of one's (inner) state. However, there exists a third and more sublime form of communication: the language of being itself. If language is about expression, what could be more genuine than being, through which things reveal themselves to us as they truly are? Moreover, being underlies and is the foundation of the other two forms of language and every conceivable mode of expression. According to Rūmī, for those who comprehend the language of being, all particles speak, inwardly declaring that they hear, see, and brim with joy. Yet for those unfamiliar with this language, they appear deaf and mute.[55] As he writes:

Would that Being [*hastī*] had a tongue
that it might remove veils from existent things!
O breath of existence, whatsoever words thou mayst utter,
know that thereby thou hast bound another veil upon it.
That utterance and that state of existence
are the bane of perception:
to wash away blood with blood is absurd, absurd.[56]

In Rūmī's view, human beings by nature are spiritual beings but, forgetting themselves due to their immersion in material things, they are unable to comprehend the language of being. Rūmī's Sufi interpretation concerning the universal glorification of all beings (animate and inanimate) finds its support in numerous other Sufi teachers. But we should also note that while the Qur'an consistently highlights the living nature of the cosmos, depicting a conscious universe, exegetical works frequently interpret such verses metaphorically, presenting them as eloquent expressions of God's omnipotence and universal submission to it. For this reason, some Sufi authors such as Ibn ʿAjība (d. 1809) skillfully combine both exoteric and esoteric approaches to scripture so that they do not antagonize an otherwise well-meaning general audience. While Ibn ʿAjība himself views all of creation as possessing what Maria Golovacheva aptly calls "cosmic subjectivity," he deals with various interpretations, including purely metaphorical readings, acknowledging their validity and appropriateness for different audiences.[57] Nevertheless, in Ibn ʿAjība's *The Immense Ocean* (*al-Baḥr al-madīd*), a distinctly Sufi interpretation enriches the theme of universal glorification: everything existing in the world exists between sensation (*ḥiss*) and meaning (*maʿnā*). Sensation

pertains to material reality, while meaning relates to the spiritual realm. Therefore, from a sensory perspective, all things glorify through their conditions, while from a spiritual (i.e., meaning) perspective, everything glorifies with their tongues. However, human fixation on the material often obscures awareness of higher truths. Like Rūmī, Ibn ʿAjība asserts that those who transcend the veil of their limited self-knowledge understand that all created entities simultaneously glorify through expression (in the realm of meaning) and through their state (in the realm of sensation).[58] Again in agreement with Rūmī, Ibn ʿAjība suggests that the reason why ordinary people fail to hear the universal glorification is that their inner vision (*baṣīra*) becomes clouded as they immerse themselves in worldly matters.

In line with classical Sufi teachings, Nasr explains why people fail to understand the language of being or perceive cosmic subjectivity. In his view, modern culture promotes a lifestyle that prioritizes activity over contemplation, reflected in urban environments filled with noise, distractions, constant information, and advertising bombardments. This pervasive environment increasingly directs the soul outward, distancing it from its center. Achieving inner harmony, which is a precondition for achieving harmony with the nonhuman world, has become challenging due to the fast-paced lifestyles prevalent in much of the world today. For Nasr, there is a parallel between the fleeting and transient aspects of the external world and those within the soul. Just as like attracts like, a soul in turmoil becomes further captivated by the chaotic external world surrounding us, losing sight of its own center and of the divine, Who resides at the core of every human being. So, in most individuals, the soul has become disordered, with its various elements misplaced or functioning improperly. People often love what should be rejected and reject what should be cherished. For instance, many cherish busy, scattered activity, which should be avoided, and dismiss contemplative peace and serenity, which should be embraced, although there are always some exceptions. The ordinary human soul is entangled with knots that give rise to negative emotions such as anxiety, aggression, self-centeredness, and depression, leading to behaviors considered spiritually self-stultifying.[59]

Notwithstanding Sufi contemplative ecology and a view of the living cosmos, the question arises as to how Sufi practices of self-actualization can help us cope with the existential crisis of climate change. As mentioned earlier, the problem-solution approach seriously undermines our understanding of climate change, as it fails to ask deeper questions regarding the modern condition that is permeated by the use of energy and fossil fuels. These deeper questions pertain to the ultimate meaning of human life—what is it that we are trying to achieve? Is it about increasing life expectancy, maximizing GDP, eradicating poverty, or boosting global happiness? Is it about self-determination and freedom? Is it about harmony and peace with the more-than-human world? Is it about contemplating the cosmic order? As we ponder these questions while living in the Anthropocene, we realize the necessity of viewing climate change as an existential crisis requiring a socio-spiritual response. But it is important to distinguish between such a response and a "solution"—scientific or otherwise. If we accept climate change as an existential issue, then it cannot have a solution in the sense of having a solution to an unemployment crisis or to problems like the physical contamination of products. Rather, we have to devise new ways of appropriating both our belief systems and lifestyle choices that we believe contribute to the worsening of the climate crisis. This will then help us to cope with the crisis better. Sufi contemplative ecology offers one such possibility, as discussed above. One does not have to be a Sufi or Muslim to derive

contemplative insights from the natural world and cultivate "ecological awareness" to mitigate actions that contribute to increased carbon footprints. Such contemplative insights are abundant in every major wisdom tradition. For instance, in her *Mindfulness as Sustainability*, Maria Jaoudi addresses the imperative of caring for ourselves intellectually, spiritually, and emotionally amid the ongoing global climate crisis.[60] Drawing on teachings, narratives, and insights into consciousness and reality from Buddhist, Christian, Daoist, Hindu, Indigenous, Islamic, and Jewish traditions, Jaoudi argues that mindfulness practices embody sustainability. She illustrates how mindfulness practice, applied individually and collectively, can mitigate global climate change and address environmental injustices.

Yet Sufi contemplative ecology has a more direct utility for the world's nearly two billion Muslims and hundreds of millions of Sufi practitioners found throughout the globe. To be sure, Sufi teachings, especially those pertaining to *dhikr* and contemplation, are widely adopted by climate activists.[61] But more importantly, as Anna M. Gade's illuminative study shows, many Muslim communities are now recasting various *dhikr* practices "to generate specific environmental sentiments and for explicitly environmentalist purposes."[62] As alluded to earlier, there are eco-*salawat* (prayers of blessings on the Prophet Muhammad), which both preserve and integrate traditional practices. One such eco-*salawat* includes prayers and blessings for the Prophet Muhammad, while also containing a part that states: "With blessing (we) care for the natural world, a healthy environment, the earth sustained."[63] Thus, a new purpose (environmental care) has been introduced, both spoken and explicit, while maintaining the traditional structure and authority of the *salawat*, which are recited globally both by Sufis and ordinary Muslims.[64] A more compelling example of how Sufi *dhikr* practices have influenced ecological awareness and environmental actualization is eco-*dhikr*, which has originated from an Islamic educational institution recognized as an environmental school in Java. The introspective and participatory nature of the *dhikr* practice at this institution resonates with its mission of promoting sustainability and environmental care. Even though there was no explicit mention of the environment in the actual ritual, the person (H. M. Nasruddin) who conducted it characterized it as an eco-*dhikr* on the night of its observance, emphasizing its educational aspect that intertwines religious teachings with explicit ecological goals for general wellbeing. Initially framing the practice in terms of self-cultivation using classic Sufi teachings, he subsequently explains how eco-*dhikr* enables one to appreciate the interconnectedness of God, humanity, and the universe. Echoing Rūmī and others, Nasruddin mentions the universal glorification of all things as the basis of this interconnected bond. In line with the Sufi teachings, he explains how eco-*dhikr* aims to destroy the ego, which is the source of disharmony between human beings and the nonhuman world. In Nasruddin's view, eco-*dhikr* enables us to perceive divine presence everywhere in the universe. Moreover, the profound alignment of internal harmony and cosmic order achieved through this practice contributes to environmental protection. As a contemplative practice, eco-*dhikr* incorporates an internalized environmental intent, enabling individuals to direct their focus in prayer, thought, and action in ways that accord with both Sufi tradition and local customs in Central Java.[65]

## CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

If we agree that climate change signals a broader spiritual and existential crisis of humanity, one that cannot be surmised in terms of a problem-solution narrative, then we should consider values

and perspectives that can help us cope with the Anthropocene.[66] For Nasr, the objectification of nature is directly related to the mechanistic worldview, which sees nature simply as a resource to be exploited. And if we accept that such a mechanistic attitude is at the heart of our broken relationship with the nonhuman world, it becomes easy to agree with Rosa that the quality of human life cannot be measured simply in terms of resources, options, and moments of happiness. Instead, we must try to develop a resonant relationship with nature.

One could go further and think about our place in the cosmos in terms of "nonseparation" or interconnectedness or even what Timothy Morton calls the "mesh."[67] To my mind, Sufi contemplative practices can play a pivotal role in awakening a participatory, interconnected view of the world. Contemplative practices in Sufism such as *dhikr* are as much about self-actualization as they are about realizing our nonseparation from the more-than-human world. This is because contemplation helps us to penetrate the deepest layer of our being and in doing so, paves the way to realize the unity of all beings through their inner essence. It helps us to experience the profound identity, which is found throughout existence. Moreover, unlike Romanticism, contemplation in Sufism is not passive, as it involves knowledge, self-awareness, and action. Thus, if one is successful with the practice of *dhikr* (which is accessible to every Muslim and to any other person through various wisdom traditions), one may hope to achieve greater integration and wholeness.

However, often these ideas and practices do not translate into practical vision because they remain trapped in the mind. They only become real when we truly try to engage with nature. I teach a variety of courses on climate change, and sometimes I assign students to write what I call a "nature experience" essay. This is an essay where students have to spend a few hours in nature and simply try to experience the surrounding phenomena. By immersing themselves in the natural world, they realize how different it is from their everyday experience of the world where they remain rather oblivious of the vastness of being. Contemplation plays a crucial role in this context because it is through contemplation that we gain a deeper awareness of ourselves. Then this deeper self-awareness enables us to discover, in a concrete sense, a connection with everything else. It is a gradual process, but such practices have the potential to transform our everyday consciousness, which is now conditioned by the Cartesian habit of mind that sees nature or the nonhuman world as an object, or in the worst-case scenario, as a resource to be exploited. The Cartesian habit creates a sense of isolation from other species. Nature becomes merely a storehouse of resources that sustain us: the air we breathe, the water we drink, the soil where we grow our food, the timber and fish we harvest, and the minerals we mine, all viewed as objects for our consumption. Instead of seeing ourselves as part of a larger whole, we become detached exploiters of nature's bounty, severed from what it provides. We also lose touch with the knowledge of what sustains us, such as the origins of our water, the sources of our food, and the generation of our electricity. These essential sources connect us to the land, acting as threads that tie us to nature. When we lose these threads, we become adrift.[68]

Contemplation, among other things, can have immense benefits as it fosters ecological living by revolutionizing our perception of the world, as we would no longer see the nonhuman world as a resource to be manipulated. The ideas of control, manipulation, and domination with respect to the natural world as well as ourselves are transformed into unity, nonseparation, and harmony. The concern for the nonhuman world in such a transformed outlook manifests itself through one's love and compassion for all beings, including mountains, rivers, trees, forests, birds, and animals.

Moreover, by helping to realize oneness with all beings, contemplation reorients us to see things from the perspective of the other, even if that "other" might be a tree or a mountain.[69] Whereas in the mechanistic perspective, one would explain a tree only in terms of its biochemical composition, a vision of reality based on ultimate oneness would consider everything as alive and shimmering with spiritual meaning. Perhaps the deepest self-transformation that can occur through contemplative practices is the notion of seeing everything as one's self, since all things are united through their inner essences, but not through their outward appearances, which are but variegated. This perspective enables us to feel the *pain* of everything including nature and other sentient beings, since everything is now part of everything else. As such, Sufi contemplation has the potential to redefine meaning in the age of climate crisis.

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# NOTES

[1] See "Secretary-General Calls Latest IPCC Climate Report 'Code Red for Humanity,' Stressing 'Irrefutable' Evidence of Human Influence," United Nations Meetings Coverage and Press Releases, August 9, 2021, accessed February 1, 2024, https://press.un.org/en/2021/sgsm20847.doc.htm.
[2] See, for instance, Mike Hulme, *Why We Disagree About Climate Change: Understanding Controversy, Inaction and Opportunity* (Cambridge University Press, 2017), xxv–xxxix.
[3] See Mike Hulme, *Climate Change* (Routledge, 2022), chaps. 1 and 2; *Can Science Fix Climate Change? A Case Against Climate Engineering* (Polity Press, 2014).
[4] Arne Naess, "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A Summary," *Inquiry* 16 (1973): 95–100.
[5] Hulme, *Climate Change*, xxx–xxxi.
[6] This does not mean one needs to dispute the established physical theories put forth by scientists such as John Tyndall, the temperature data compiled by Guy Callendar, or the potential nonlinear instabilities in oceans explained by Wally Broecker. Disagreements, rather, stem from varying perspectives on the correlation between scientific evidence and other elements. These differences include our interpretation of the ultimate truth, the way we link uncertainty to risk, and our views on the appropriate role of knowledge in shaping policies. To promote discussions on climate change and ensure the effective contribution of scientific knowledge, it is thus essential to recognize the limitations inherent in scientific understanding. Furthermore, there is a need for an awareness that scientific knowledge may undergo transformations as it moves from the confines of the laboratory to the broader social domain. See Hulme, *Why We Disagree*, 106; cf. Mike Hulme, "Reducing the Future to Climate: A Story of Climate Determinism and Reductionism, *Osiris* 26, no. 1 (2011): 245–266, https://doi.org/10.1086/661274.
[7] Hulme, *Why We Disagree*, 4. The word "climate" comes from the Greek *klima*, which was used as early as the sixth century BC by Parmenides to differentiate five zones on the surface of the supposed spherical world. See Marie Sanderson, "The Classification of Climates from Pythagoras to Koeppen," *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society* 80, no. 4 (1999): 669–673. The word *klima* was adopted by Muslim geographers as *iqlīm* during the medieval period, as one can see in the works of such scholars as Shams al-Dīn al-Muqaddasī (d. 991) and Ḥamd Allāh Qazwīnī (d. 1339/1340). See, e.g., Shams al-Dīn al-Muqaddasī, *Aḥsan al-taqāsīm fī maʿrifat al-aqālīm*, ed. M. J. de Goeje (Brill, 1967); Ḥamd Allāh Qazwīnī, *Nuzhat al-qulūb*, ed. Mīr Hāshim Muḥaddith (Intishārāt-i Safīr-i Ardihāl, 2017). In general, these works discuss different regions and their climate, waters, mountains, holy places, money, taxes, weights and measures, customs, marvels, calendar, political power, and so on.
[8] Hulme, *Why We Disagree*, 4. It should be noted that interpreting climate change solely through a physical lens makes it susceptible to unquestioning adoption in endorsing a broader spectrum of ideologies such as green colonialism, the commodification of nature, national security, and celebrity culture. Hulme, *Why We Disagree*, 28.
[9] Hulme, *Why We Disagree*, 328–329.
[10] Hulme, *Why We Disagree*, 336. Hulme ultimately proposes the use of "myths" as a strategy to cope with climate change because they can fulfill various psychological, ethical, and spiritual needs. Although I have sympathy for this perspective, I find it inadequate when it comes to dealing with climate change because it is fundamentally a matter of ontology and ethics, among other things. For more information, see my forthcoming book, *The Interconnected Universe, Sufism, Climate Change, and Ecological Living*.
[11] The two books are *Man and Nature* (based on his Rockefeller Lectures at the University of Chicago) and *Religion and the Order of Nature* (based on his Cadbury Lectures at the University of Birmingham), respectively. Taken together, these works and many other articles on the topic deal with different intellectual traditions such as Greek philosophy, Indian philosophy, medieval philosophy, Sufism, and Islamic philosophy and engage with thinkers including but not limited to Galileo Galilei, René Descartes, Isaac Newton, Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, and George Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Hegel in order to put forward a sacred conception of nature imbued with ethical and spiritual values that would also preserve the hierarchy of reality extending all the way to the Absolute. Lynn White also published a seminal paper at around the same time, tracing the roots of the ecological crisis from the primal world of spirits to the mechanistic world of modern science. However, there

are notable differences between his and Nasr's approach to the issue. In the main, White argues how the "dominion narrative" mentioned in the Bible is responsible for the current ecological crisis. This is because the dominion narrative promotes an anthropocentric view and puts forth a dualistic view of humans and nature. It also encourages the rule of humans over nature. Nonetheless, White's article is important because it does show that religious views are liable to multiple interpretations and can sometimes be responsible for anti-ecological views. But White ignores the complex history of modern science, which went through a series of transformations in the last four to five hundred years thanks to Johannes Kepler, Galileo, Descartes, and Newton. He also ignores such important causes of the crisis (from Nasr's perspective) as quantification and mechanization of nature, deism, and Descartes's mind-matter dualism that foreshadowed the contemporary "mechanistic" view of nature. White's Eurocentric, teleological conception of science and its progress are also at odds with Nasr's perspective on the issue. See Lynn White, "The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis," *Science* 155, no. 3767 (1967): 1203–1207.

[12] On Nasr's impact on Islamic environmentalism, see, e.g., Anna M. Gade, *Muslim Environmentalisms: Religious and Social Foundations* (Columbia University Press, 2019); Richard Foltz, ed., *Environmentalism in the Muslim World* (Nova, 2005); and Tarik Quadir, *Traditional Islamic Environmentalism: The Vision of Seyyed Hossein Nasr* (University Press of America, 2013). Gade's *Muslim Environmentalisms* is also an excellent introduction to the concept of "environment" in Islamic thought.

[13] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man* (OHMSI, 2019), 51–74; *Religion and the Order of Nature* (Oxford University Press, 1996), 126–162.

[14] Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature*, 271. Nasr's criticism of the mechanistic approach to nature probably inspired other seminal studies in this area, see, e.g., Pierre Hadot, *The Veil of Isis: An Essay on the History of the Idea of Nature*, trans. Michael Chase (Belknap Press, 2008); and Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (HarperOne, 1990).

[15] For a parallel critique of technology through the concept of *Gestell* (i.e., how technology frames our perception of the world as a resource to be exploited), see Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*, trans. W. Lovitt (Garland, 1977), 3–35.

[16] Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature*, 270–290.

[17] Nasr, *Man and Nature*, 17.

[18] This is reminiscent of Lewis Mumford's contention in his *Technics and Civilization* that our most impressive technological inventions are often projections of deep spiritual needs along with the most rational and irrational passions. As he summarizes his view, "Man internalizes his external world and externalizes his internal world." See Lewis Mumford, *Technics and Civilization* (University of Chicago Press, 2010), xi, xii.

[19] Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature*, 6.

[20] Nasr has been accused of being a Romantic. In her *Muslim Environmentalisms* (207–214), Gade polemicizes Nasr's views on "nature," saying his approach is typical of white American environmentalism. According to Gade, Nasr sees nature as sublime and crisis-free. Moreover, Nasr's treatment of nature could not foresee postmodern critiques of the deconstructed ideas of nature by such authors as Bruno Latour, Donna Haraway, and Timothy Morton. See, e.g., Bruno Latour, *The Politics of Nature: How to Bring the Sciences into Democracy* (Harvard University Press, 2004); Timothy Morton, *Ecology Without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (Harvard University Press, 2009), https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1n3x1c9. While there is something to Gade's critique of Nasr, I find her conflation of Romanticism with Nasr's ecophilosophy very perplexing. Here is how Nasr himself criticizes Romanticism: "The romantic attitude toward nature, however, was more sentimental than intellectual. Wordsworth speaks of 'wise passiveness' and Keats of 'negative capability'. This passive attitude could not make and mould knowledge. Whatever service the romantic movement rendered in re-discovering medieval art or the beauty of virgin nature, it could not affect the current of science nor add a new dimension within science itself by which man would be able to understand those aspects of nature that seventeenth century science and its aftermath had failed to consider." Nasr, *Man and Nature*, 73. Moreover, it is debatable if Nasr really paints nature as sublime and crisis free. Basing himself on Sufi metaphysics and Neoplatonic cosmology, Nasr thinks that the material world including nature contains imperfections. See Justin Cancelliere, "Seyyed Hossein Nasr's Metaphysical Theodicy," in *From the Divine to the Human: Contemporary Islamic Thinkers on Evil, Suffering, and the Global Pandemic*, ed. Muhammad U. Faruque and Mohammed Rustom (Routledge, 2023), 67–88. While I do not always agree with Nasr, I find Gade's polemics against Nasr unconvincing. For instance, Gade labels Nasr as Orientalist, Occidentalist, and Neo-Orientalist—all in the same

breath. She chides Nasr for not critiquing colonialism in his writings, which again is incorrect, as Nasr does criticize colonialism in his *The Heart of Islam: Enduring Values for Humanity* (Harper, 2002), 100–102. Moreover, her claim that Nasr's ecophilosophy does not concern itself with social justice activism is contradicted by the testimonies of many well-known Muslim environmentalists such as Fazlun Khalid, who openly acknowledge their debt to Nasr's environmental writings. See Gade, *Muslim Environmentalisms*, 211, 239; Fazlun Khalid, *Signs on the Earth: Islam, Modernity, and the Climate Crisis* (Kube, 2019), 161. For a more balanced treatment of Nasr's environmentalism, see Md. Abu Sayem, *Religion and Ecological Crisis: Christian and Muslim Perspectives from John B. Cobb and Seyyed Hossein Nasr* (Routledge, 2023); "Religions and Environmental Sustainability: Focusing on Some Practical Approaches by John B. Cobb Jr. and Seyyed Hossein Nasr," *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 6, no. 1 (2021): 65–80. Finally, it is worth pointing out that recent ecophilosophers have argued against the claim that nature and society are obsolete categories. Tracing the current of hybridism to the writings of Bruno Latour, Andreas Malm, for example, argues that we need to sift out the social components from the natural, if we wish to make sense of the crises and retain the possibility of intervening in them. Andreas Malm, "Against Hybridism: Why We Need to Distinguish between Nature and Society, Now More than Ever," *Historical Materialism* 27, no. 2 (2019): 156–187, https://doi.org/10.1163/1569206X-00001610. See also William Cronon, "The Trouble with Wilderness; Or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, ed. William Cronon (Norton, 1995), 69–90.

[21] Hartmut Rosa, *Resonance: A Sociology of Our Relation to the World*, trans. J. Wagner (Polity, 2019), 404.

[22] Hartmut Rosa, *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity*, trans. J. Trejo-Mathys (Columbia University Press, 2013), chap. 2.

[23] Rosa, *Resonance*, 405.

[24] Rosa, *Resonance*, 406.

[25] Rosa, *Resonance*, 444.

[26] Rosa, *Resonance*, 427.

[27] Rosa, *Resonance*, 428. Emphasis mine.

[28] Rosa, *Resonance*, 428.

[29] Rosa, *Resonance*, 428–429.

[30] The unending urge of modernity to render the world manageable, predictable, accessible, and disposable in every conceivable way has significant implications. This relentless pursuit not only transforms our connection with the world but also leads to a paradox. For instance, the manufactured snow expelled from a snow cannon lacks the authentic experiential quality of natural snowfall. The ultimate goal of achieving complete *control* over the world could result in a dead world. Moreover, this desire for control eventually gives rise to a world that becomes uncontrollable in crucial aspects. Our late modern world proves challenging to control politically, economically, legally, technologically, or individually. The very impulse toward controllability paradoxically generates formidable and uncontrollable manifestations. See Hartmut Rosa, *The Uncontrollability of the World*, trans. J. Wagner (Polity, 2020), viii–ix.

[31] Rosa, *Resonance*, 174.

[32] Rosa, *Resonance*, 269.

[33] Plotinus, *Enneads*, IV, 4.35, vv. 8–17, cited in Gary M. Gurtler, *Plotinus: The Experience of Unity* (Peter Lang, 1988), 113–114. *Sympatheia* signifies an all-pervading force that ties all existing things together. Eyjólfur K. Emilsson, "Plotinus on *Sympatheia*," in *Sympathy: A History*, ed. Eric Schliesser, Oxford Philosophical Concepts (Oxford University Press, 2015), 36–60, https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199928873.003.0003.

[34] Nasr, *Religion and the Order of Nature*, 92.

[35] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *The Spiritual and Religious Dimension of the Environmental Crisis* (Temenos Academy, 1999), 5–30.

[36] See also Malik Badri, *Contemplation: An Islamic Psychospiritual Study* (IIIT, 2000), 1–20, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvk8w1xc.

[37] Cited in Seyyed Hossein Nasr, "The Complementarity of the Contemplative and Active Lives in Islam," in *Traditional Modes of Contemplation and Action*, ed. Y. Ibish and P. L. Wilson (The Imperial Iranian Academy of Philosophy, 1977), 420. Neils Bohr's "model" of an atom literally is patterned on the solar system.

[38] On the symbolism of the jeweled net of Indra, see Francis Cook, *Hua-Yen Buddhism: The Jewel Net of Indra* (Penn State University Press, 1977).

[39] Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought* (SUNY, 1981), 200, https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315888170.
[40] ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Jāmī, *Lawāʾih*, trans. E. H. Whinfield and M. M. Kazvini (Royal Asiatic Society, 1928), 21 (Flash 18).
[41] Nasr, *Islamic Life and Thought*, 204.
[42] Nasr, "Complementarity of the Contemplative," 423.
[43] Nasr, *The Garden of Truth: The Vision and Promise of Sufism, Islam's Mystical Tradition* (HarperCollins, 2007), 101–102.
[44] Nasr, *Garden of Truth*, 89.
[45] Nasr, *Garden of Truth*, 89.
[46] Nasr, "Complementarity of the Contemplative," 421.
[47] Through the Logos or the divine word as in Sufism.
[48] Nasr, "Complementarity of the Contemplative," 427.
[49] Nasr, "Complementarity of the Contemplative," 428.
[50] Nasr, "Complementarity of the Contemplative," 428.
[51] All the translations from the Qur'an are from Muhammad Pickthall (trans.), *The Meaning of the Glorious Qur'an*. (Kazi, 1996), with my modifications.
[52] Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī, *The Mathnawī of Jalālu'ddīn Rūmī*, ed. and trans. Reynold A. Nicholson, vol. 4, *Translation of the Third and Fourth Books* (Cambridge University Press, 1930), 84 (III:1496–1500). Modified by the author.
[53] Rūmī, *Mathnawī*, 85 (III:1508–1509). Modified by the author.
[54] Gholamreza Aavani, *Rumi: A Philosophical Study* (Kazi, 2016), 70–71.
[55] Aavani, *Rumi*, 72.
[56] Rūmī, *Mathnawī*, 263 (III:4725–4727). Modified by the author.
[57] Maria Golovacheva, "Cosmic Subjectivity in Ibn 'Ajība's Qur'ānic Exegesis," *Journal of the Institute for Sufi Studies*, 3, no. 1 (2024): 39.
[58] Golovacheva, "Cosmic Subjectivity," 44.
[59] Nasr, *Garden of Truth*, 119.
[60] Maria Jaoudi, *Mindfulness as Sustainability: Lessons from the World's Religions* (SUNY Press, 2021).
[61] They are too numerous to list here, but a Google search of "Sufism" and "climate change" or "the environment" yields many websites dedicated to climate activism that show the direct influence of Sufi teachings. See also Khalid, *Signs on the Earth*.
[62] Gade, *Muslim Environmentalisms*, 221.
[63] Gade, *Muslim Environmentalisms*, 222.
[64] Gade, *Muslim Environmentalisms*, 222.
[65] Gade, *Muslim Environmentalisms*, 222–223. See also an interview with H. M. Nasruddin Anshoiry on eco-*dhikr* provided by Green Islam in Indonesia and Anna M. Gade, July 2014, accessed on July 3, 2024, https://vimeo.com/102382599.
[66] For a critical take on the notion of the Anthropocene, see Andreas Malm and Alf Hornborg, "The Geology of Mankind? A Critique of the Anthropocene Narrative," *The Anthropocene Review* 1 no. 1 (2014): 62–69, https://doi.org/10.1177/2053019613516291.
[67] On the concept of "mesh," see Timothy Morton, *The Ecological Thought* (Harvard University Press, 2012), 15.
[68] Andrés R. Edwards, *Renewal: How Nature Awakens Our Creativity, Compassion, and Joy* (New Society, 2019), 11.
[69] The ecologist Suzanne Simard reveals how trees go beyond being mere providers of timber or pulp as they form an intricate, interconnected web of life. Forests, in her portrayal, emerge as "social" and cooperative entities, linked through mycorrhizal networks that facilitate the exchange of vitality and vulnerabilities among trees, creating communal lives that bear striking resemblances to our own. See Suzanne Simard, *Finding the Mother Tree: Discovering the Wisdom of the Forest* (Vintage, 2022).