



## Maqāṣid al-‘Ilm and Maqāṣid al-Bī’ah: A Dialogue between the Philosophy of Science and Ecotheology in the Environmental Crisis

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### ABSTRACT

The contemporary environmental crisis—marked by ecological degradation, climate change, and a weakening of ethical responsibility toward nature—demands a renewed integration between scientific knowledge and spiritual consciousness. This study examines the dialogical relationship between Maqāṣid al-‘Ilm (the higher objectives of knowledge) and Maqāṣid al-Bī’ah (the higher objectives of environmental stewardship) within the encounter of the philosophy of science and Islamic ecotheology to formulate an ethical–epistemic framework for ecological responsibility. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach through systematic literature review, philosophical document analysis, and thematic synthesis of classical and contemporary Islamic sources alongside ecotheological and scientific-philosophical discourses, this research develops an integrative conceptual model linking objectives of knowledge with environmental ethics. The findings indicate that Maqāṣid al-‘Ilm prioritizes wisdom-oriented knowledge grounded in moral refinement and the preservation of life, while Maqāṣid al-Bī’ah emphasizes ecological balance (*mizān*), environmental justice (*‘adl al-bī’ah*), and protection of creation as expressions of worship and stewardship (*khalīfah*). Their dialogical integration reveals that scientific knowledge detached from ethical and spiritual foundations tends to exacerbate environmental degradation, whereas knowledge rooted in ecotheological awareness fosters holistic ecological consciousness that unites rational inquiry, moral responsibility, and spiritual devotion. The study concludes that integrating these two maqāṣid offers a transformative epistemological paradigm for reorienting the human role as moral agent and *khalīfah* of the earth, contributing to the development of environmentally responsible scientific practice, spiritually grounded education, and sustainable worldviews capable of responding effectively to the ecological crisis.

**Keywords:** philosophy of science, ecotheology, islamic environmental ethics

### INTRODUCTION

The global environmental crisis, encompassing climate change, ecosystem degradation, and the decline of biodiversity, indicates that the modern paradigm of knowledge is experiencing a fundamental disorientation. Scientific and technological progress, which should serve human well-being, has instead contributed to ecological destruction, signaling an epistemological problem within modern science that tends to be anthropocentric and reductionistic in orientation [1], [2], [3]. This condition underscores the urgent need for an alternative paradigm that is more humanistic, holistic, and ecological in nature.

Within the Islamic intellectual tradition, knowledge (*‘ilm*) is understood not merely as a cognitive activity, but as a process of worship, spiritual purification, and the preservation of creation. This orientation is reflected in the concept of maqāṣid al-‘ilm, namely the higher objectives of knowledge grounded in public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*), justice, and the preservation of life. In parallel, maqāṣid al-bī’ah positions

environmental stewardship as an integral dimension of humanity’s role as *khalīfah* on earth. These concepts reinforce the potential for integrating epistemology, ethics, and spirituality to cultivate a comprehensive ecological consciousness [4], [5], [6].

Previous studies have highlighted the relevance of the relationship between Islamic theology, ecology, and epistemology in responding to environmental crises. Quddus [7] affirms that Islamic ecotheology functions as a form of constructive theology offering ethical and spiritual frameworks for addressing environmental degradation. Meanwhile, Murad [8], through his studies on Islamic environmental stewardship, demonstrates how science and nature can be reinterpreted through Islamic cosmology, thereby generating a more theocentric environmental paradigm. More recently, Susanti [9] developed an integrated water conservation framework that combines Islamic ecotheology, local wisdom, and scientific approaches, illustrating that multidisciplinary integration can

produce more holistic and applicable environmental policies.

The development of ecotheology itself has opened new spaces for dialogue between spirituality, theology, and science in responding to ecological destruction. Ecotheology views nature as a sacred text (*āyāt kauniyyah*) containing moral and spiritual values that must be preserved. When this perspective encounters the philosophy of science, new possibilities emerge for constructing a paradigm of knowledge that integrates scientific rationality with ecological spiritual consciousness. In this context, the dialogue between *maqāṣid al-‘ilm* and *maqāṣid al-bī‘ah* becomes highly relevant to addressing contemporary environmental crises [10], [11], [12]. This approach not only engages with technical and policy-oriented issues but also investigates the philosophical and ethical roots of the human–nature relationship. Accordingly, this study aims to formulate a conceptual framework that synergizes these two *maqāṣid* in developing a paradigm of sustainability and ecological justice [13], [14].

Through an interdisciplinary philosophical analysis, this article seeks to propose a *maqāṣid*-based ecological epistemology capable of strengthening the theoretical and normative foundations for the development of scientific knowledge and environmental policy. This approach contributes not only to advancing theory in the philosophy of science and ecotheology but also affirms the centrality of ecological awareness as an integral dimension of human knowledge and spirituality.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative–descriptive approach within a comparative philosophical analytical framework aimed at examining in depth the conceptual dialogue between *Maqāṣid al-‘Ilm* and *Maqāṣid al-Bī‘ah* in the context of the contemporary environmental crisis [15], [16], [17]. This approach is selected because research on Islamic ecotheology and the philosophy of science necessitates a holistic textual reading and interpretive inquiry that cannot be sufficiently captured through quantitative data alone. Qualitative inquiry provides the analytical space to explore philosophical, theological, and ecological ideas dispersed throughout both classical and contemporary literature, thereby enabling the construction of richer and more nuanced conceptual interpretations [16], [18].

Data collection is conducted through a systematic literature review of both primary and secondary sources [19], [20], [21], [22]. Primary sources consist of works by classical and modern Islamic scholars on knowledge, nature, and ecology, alongside key philosophical texts central to discourses on Islamic epistemology and cosmology [23], [24]. Secondary sources are drawn from contemporary studies on Islamic ecotheology, including the work of Quddus, which illustrates how constructive theology can offer ethical solutions to modern ecological challenges, and the writings of Murad, which emphasize that the Islamic concepts of *khilāfah* and *amānah* possess robust

philosophical foundations for ecological responsibility. Additionally, the research of Susanti enriches the theoretical framework of this study by introducing perspectives on water conservation grounded in ecotheology, scientific approaches, and local wisdom, demonstrating the integrative relationship between religious values and sustainability practices [20], [25].

Data analysis is conducted through content analysis, enabling the identification of recurring patterns and thematic constructions concerning the objectives of knowledge (*maqāṣid al-‘ilm*) and the objectives of Islamic environmental ethics (*maqāṣid al-bī‘ah*) across multiple texts [26], [27], [28], [29]. This process involves philosophical interpretation, conceptual thematic mapping, and the categorization of key ideas to locate both points of convergence and divergence among paradigms. A comparative approach is subsequently applied to assess how various thinkers conceptualize the relationships between knowledge, revelation, and the natural environment [30], [31]. The analysis is undertaken hermeneutically to ensure that textual meanings are interpreted within their respective socio-intellectual contexts while simultaneously allowing for the emergence of a synthesized conceptual framework.

Research validity is maintained through source triangulation, achieved by comparing literature drawn from differing historical periods, intellectual traditions, and methodological orientations [32], [33], [34]. This strategy ensures that the resulting arguments are not based upon a single interpretive perspective but are constructed from a broad network of complementary scholarly insights. Such a methodology enables this study to present a comprehensive portrayal of how the dialogue between the philosophy of science and Islamic ecotheology can contribute conceptual solutions to contemporary environmental crises [35], [36], [37].

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study reveals that the dialogue between the philosophy of science and Islamic ecotheology is conceptually articulated through the integration of *Maqāṣid al-‘Ilm* (the higher objectives of knowledge) and *Maqāṣid al-Bī‘ah* (the higher objectives of environmental stewardship). Based on qualitative textual analysis of primary and secondary sources, the findings demonstrate that both *maqāṣid* provide an ethical–spiritual foundation capable of reorienting modern scientific paradigms toward greater ecological responsibility.

### 1. Knowledge as a Path toward Cosmic Harmony in the Perspective of *Maqāṣid al-‘Ilm*

The findings indicate that within Islamic epistemology, knowledge is not understood merely as a cognitive or technical endeavor but as a moral–spiritual pathway toward cultivating wisdom and sustaining cosmic harmony. Al-Ghazālī emphasized that the ultimate purpose of knowledge lies in the purification of the soul (*tazkiyat al-naḥs*) and servitude to God, positioning the pursuit of knowledge as inseparable from ethical responsibility

toward both humanity and nature [38]. Knowledge thus functions as an integrative process connecting intellectual activity with moral development and social benefit.

The concept of *Maqāṣid al-ʿIlm* further underscores the preservation of intellect (*ḥifẓ al-ʿaql*) as a central objective, yet this preservation is inseparable from the cultivation of *ḥikmah* (wisdom) grounded in the unity of reason and revelation. Nasr critiques the modern scientific worldview for desacralizing nature by disconnecting knowledge from spiritual metaphysics, thereby transforming the natural world into a mere object of material exploitation [39]. In contrast, Islamic epistemology interprets nature as *āyāt kawniyyah*—cosmic signs of God—thus situating scientific inquiry within a broader spiritual vision.

These findings highlight that when knowledge becomes detached from its maqāṣid-oriented ethical framework, it risks degenerating into a value-neutral instrument of domination that accelerates environmental degradation. Reintegrating the maqāṣid of knowledge therefore becomes essential in reviving ecological consciousness and redefining science as a means of safeguarding, rather than exploiting, the natural world.

## 2. Maqāṣid al-Bīʿah as the Ethical Expression of Human Stewardship

The results demonstrate that *Maqāṣid al-Bīʿah* are grounded in the Qurʾanic worldview of *tawḥīd* and the concept of human stewardship (*khilāfah fī al-arḍ*). Humanity is entrusted not with absolute domination, but with the moral responsibility to preserve the balance (*mīzān*) of creation and uphold the trust (*amānah*) bestowed by God. Islamic cosmology recognizes ecological harm as an expression of *fasād fī al-arḍ* (corruption on earth), a moral violation rather than a mere technical failure.

Murad explains that the doctrine of *khilāfah* must be interpreted as an ethical mandate obligating human beings to protect ecosystems and maintain environmental justice [8]. This understanding repositions ecological responsibility as a religious duty deeply embedded within Islamic moral philosophy [40], [41], [42], [43]. Quddus further emphasizes that Islamic ecotheology understands the environmental crisis as fundamentally spiritual in nature—a crisis of faith, moral awareness, and human accountability [44].

From this perspective, *Maqāṣid al-Bīʿah* extends contemporary maqāṣid discourse beyond anthropocentric concerns to encompass the preservation of water, land, air, biodiversity, and the integrity of ecosystems as collective necessities for the flourishing of all forms of life. The environment thus becomes a moral subject entrusted with inherent value, not merely a resource to be utilized for human interests.

## 3. Environmental Crisis as an Epistemological and Theological Crisis

The findings reveal that the contemporary environmental crisis is rooted not only in irresponsible policies or technologies but in a deeper epistemological rupture. Merchant characterizes this rupture as the historical shift from an organic worldview to a mechanistic worldview that strips nature of sacred meaning and ethical significance [45]. In this transformation, scientific rationality increasingly objectified the natural world, reducing it to a manipulable system devoid of intrinsic value.

Within Islamic thought, this condition reflects the abandonment of the maqāṣid-based ethical orientation of knowledge. Rahman affirms that human trusteeship over nature cannot be equated with mastery or ownership; rather, it embodies a moral obligation to establish harmony and justice throughout creation [46]. Therefore, environmental destruction is interpreted as a multidimensional crisis encompassing the erosion of *tawḥīd*, ethical collapse, epistemic distortion, and spiritual negligence [47], [48].

Empirical findings from Susanti's research support this analysis by demonstrating that conservation initiatives grounded in religious values and local wisdom prove more effective in cultivating sustainable practices than technocratic or regulatory approaches alone [9]. These insights affirm the necessity of integrating spiritual ethics into environmental praxis as a prerequisite for durable ecological transformation.

## 4. Integrating Maqāṣid al-ʿIlm and Maqāṣid al-Bīʿah as an Ecological Paradigm

This study identifies the synthesis of *Maqāṣid al-ʿIlm* and *Maqāṣid al-Bīʿah* as the core contribution toward constructing an Islamic ecological paradigm. The objectives of knowledge oriented toward wisdom and public benefit converge with environmental stewardship as expressions of a unified moral commitment to protect life and sustain cosmic harmony. Knowledge thereby becomes not an instrument for the conquest of nature but a means of nurturing the integrity of creation [49], [50].

Kuhn's theory of paradigm shifts suggests that systemic crises expose anomalies that compel fundamental epistemological transformations [51]. In the context of the environmental crisis, the failure of mechanistic science has revealed the need for a holistic paradigm that acknowledges interconnectedness. Capra refers to this emerging perspective as ecological holism, which recognizes reality as a dynamic web of interdependent life systems [52]. Islamic ecotheology resonates strongly with this view by embedding scientific inquiry within a sacred cosmology centered on *tawḥīd*.

Jonas strengthens this paradigm by articulating an ethics of responsibility that demands long-term moral consideration for the future of the planet when deploying scientific and technological

powers [53]. The integration of maqāṣid ethics thus establishes sustainability as a form of spiritual responsibility and intergenerational justice.

##### 5. Practical Implications of the Maqāṣid-Based Ecological Paradigm

The findings indicate that the maqāṣid ecological paradigm yields concrete implications for education, policy formulation, and community-based conservation. Environmental education infused with ecotheological ethics fosters spiritual ecological awareness and pro-environmental behavior. Murad and Susanti demonstrate that faith-based ecological movements have effectively mobilized grassroots engagement in water conservation, sustainable agriculture, and ecosystem rehabilitation [9].

Al-Faruqi further argues that reconstructing Islamic epistemology toward value-based science prevents knowledge from being trapped in moral neutrality, redirecting it toward the goals of social justice, humanization, and planetary care [54]. Accordingly, the maqāṣid ecological paradigm constitutes not merely a theoretical synthesis but a civilizational ethos capable of guiding sustainable development rooted in both rational inquiry and spiritual accountability.

##### CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings discussed above, it can be concluded that ecological implementation within the perspectives of Ecotheology and *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* demonstrates a mutually reinforcing relationship between divine values, ecological civility, and the objectives of Islamic law. The environmental programs examined indicate that community members have not yet fully understood the theological connection between environmental preservation and acts of worship. Nevertheless, they have begun to adopt ecological practices that align with the principle of *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* (environmental preservation) as a derivative of *ḥifẓ al-naḥs* (protection of life) and *ḥifẓ al-māl* (protection of wealth).

The findings further reveal that religious institutions and community religious leaders play a strategic role in nurturing ecological awareness grounded in theological values such as the concepts of *khalīfah fī al-arḍ* (human stewardship of the earth), *amānah* (divine trust), and the prohibition of environmental destruction (*fasād*). Although the programs implemented remain relatively modest, they demonstrate that integrating environmental ethics with the objectives of Islamic law can foster more consistent and sustainable ecological behavior. Therefore, this study affirms that ecotheology is not merely a normative discourse but can be translated into concrete and measurable social practices, particularly when contextualized within the framework of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*.

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