

## Beyond Anthropocentrism: Reinterpreting Islamic Legal Ethics through Transspecies Rights and Ecological Jurisprudence

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#### Abstract:

Contemporary Islamic legal discourse predominantly adheres to an anthropocentric paradigm, marginalizing the moral and legal status of non-human entities. This study critically interrogates the philosophical and normative foundations of Islamic legal ethics by expanding the rights discourse through a transspecies lens. Employing an interdisciplinary approach—integrating ecological philosophy, moral rights theory, and transformative of magashid syariah, this interpretations research key concepts in Islamic reconceptualizes jurisprudence, including life, agency, and ethical responsibility. Through a hermeneutical analysis of classical and contemporary Islamic texts, the study demonstrates how broadening the scope of rights beyond human subjects can fundamentally reshape Islamic legal thought. The findings reveal that a transspecies perspective not only enriches Islamic legal philosophy but also fosters a holistic jurisprudential framework that aligns with ecological ethics and sustainability principles. By integrating insights environmental ethics, animal rights philosophy, and Islamic legal theory, this study challenges anthropocentric paradigms and offers a transformative vision for the ethical foundations of Islamic jurisprudence. Ultimately, this research contributes to broader discussions on legal pluralism, environmental ethics, and the reinterpretation of religious normative frameworks in addressing contemporary ecological crises.

#### **Keywords:**

Islamic Legal Philosophy; Transspecies Rights; Ecological Ethics

#### Abstrak:

Wacana hukum Islam kontemporer dominan secara mempertahankan perspektif antroposentris, yang secara sistematis memarjinalkan pertimbangan moral dan hukum entitas non-manusia. Penelitian ini secara kritis mengkaji landasan filosofis dan normatif etika hukum Islam dengan menginterogasi batas-batas tradisional wacana hak melalui pendekatan lintas spesies. Dengan mengintegrasikan filsafat ekologi, teori hak moral, dan interpretasi transformatif maqashid syariah, studi ini mengusulkan rekonseptualisasi radikal pemahaman yurisprudensi Islam tentang kehidupan, keagenan,

dan tanggung jawab etis. Melalui analisis hermeneutik komprehensif terhadap sumber-sumber teks Islam klasik dan kontemporer, penelitian ini menunjukkan bagaimana memperluas kerangka konseptual hak di luar subjek manusia dapat mengubah secara mendasar filosofi hukum Islam. Studi ini menggunakan metodologi interdisipliner, mensintesis wawasan dari etika lingkungan, filosofi hak hewan, dan teori hukum Islam untuk mengembangkan pendekatan teoritis baru vang menantang paradigma antroposentris yang ada. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa perspektif hak lintas spesies tidak hanya memperkaya pemikiran hukum Islam tetapi juga memberikan pemahaman yang lebih holistik tentang saling keterkaitan ekologis dan pertimbangan moral. Pada akhirnya, penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi pada diskusi yang lebih luas tentang pluralisme hukum, etika lingkungan, dan potensi reinterpretasi transformatif kerangka normatif keagamaan.

#### Kata Kunci:

Filsafat Hukum Islam; Hak Lintas Spesies; Etika Ekologis

#### Introduction

Islamic legal philosophy, with its deep roots in the Qur'an and Hadith, has historically focused on human agency, responsibilities, and rights. This anthropocentric approach has led to the marginalization of non-human entities in moral and legal discussions, despite the Qur'an's frequent emphasis on the interconnectedness of all creation (tawḥūd) and the inherent value of non-human life (Nasr 2007; Foltz et al. 2006). In a world increasingly threatened by ecological crises, this human-centered paradigm is being questioned for its inability to address broader ecological concerns (Hussain 2021; Izzi Dien 2000). This research builds on existing critiques to explore how Islamic legal ethics might be expanded to incorporate transspecies rights and ecological considerations (Shomali 2008).

A significant gap in Islamic jurisprudential discourse lies in its limited engagement with environmental ethics and the rights of non-human entities (Mahoro and Samekto 2021). Scholars such as Foltz (2006) and Izzi Dien (2000) have highlighted the Qur'anic recognition of nature's intrinsic value, yet this has not been systematically integrated into Islamic legal frameworks. Contemporary debates on *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (the objectives of Islamic law) emphasize public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*) and justice (*'adl*), but these discussions remain largely confined to human interests (Kamali 2022; Solikin and Wasik 2023). This study reimagines *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* through an ecological lens, proposing a broader framework that includes the moral and legal consider ability of non-human entities (Auda 2022; Jenkins 2005).

The theoretical underpinnings of transspecies rights draw from interdisciplinary fields such as environmental philosophy, animal ethics, and legal pluralism (Taylor 2020; Adhikari, Williams, and Lovett 2007). In Islamic jurisprudence, the notion of stewardship (*khilāfah*) has often been interpreted as a mandate for human dominion over nature, yet an alternative reading suggests a moral obligation to protect all creation (Nasr 2007; Billah and Shihab 2024). This research interrogates classical texts, such as the writings of Al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyyah, alongside contemporary scholarship, to explore how the ethical principles embedded in Islamic thought can support a transspecies rights paradigm (Hallaq 2004; Safi 2003).

Previous scholarship on Islamic environmental ethics has primarily focused on sustainability and conservation, leaving the question of non-human agency and rights underexplored (Foltz et al. 2006; Mustafa Abdul Rahman and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah 2013; Qayyim 2005). This study addresses this gap by engaging with global debates on ecological justice and integrating these insights with Islamic legal theory (Mohd Yaseen Gada 2014a; Hayat 1967). The novelty of this research lies in its interdisciplinary approach, synthesizing environmental ethics challenge and Islamic jurisprudence to anthropocentric paradigms and propose a transformative reconceptualization of rights and moral responsibilities (Robinson 2014; Kamali 2022).

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By conducting a hermeneutical analysis of classical and contemporary Islamic sources, this study demonstrates the potential for Islamic legal ethics to transcend human-centered frameworks and incorporate ecological moral considerations. This approach aligns with the Qur'anic vision of harmony between humanity and nature, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all life forms (Nasr 2007; Izza 2024; Dien 2000). Furthermore, the study builds on the works of Auda (2010) and Kamali (2008) to expand the application of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* in addressing the ethical challenges posed by environmental crises (Auda 2022; Al-Jayyousi 2018).

This research contributes to broader discussions on legal and potential environmental ethics, the reinterpretations of transformative religious normative frameworks (Saniotis 2012). By integrating transspecies rights into Islamic jurisprudence, it offers a holistic perspective on ecological justice that bridges classical Islamic thought and contemporary global challenges. Ultimately, this study aims to provide a theoretical foundation for the development of Islamic legal frameworks that are both ethically comprehensive and ecologically inclusive.

#### Methods

This study employs an interdisciplinary methodology to examine the potential integration of transspecies rights into Islamic legal ethics. Primary data were collected through a hermeneutical analysis of classical Islamic texts, including the Qur'an, Hadith, and works by foundational scholars such as Al-Ghazali, Ibn Taymiyyah, and Ibn Hazm. These texts were selected for their relevance to ethical and legal discussions on human-nonhuman relationships and their philosophical grounding in Islamic jurisprudence (Hallaq 2004; Safi 2003). The analysis focused on identifying verses, narrations, and legal opinions that address the moral and legal status of non-human

entities (S. A. Rahman 2017; Khalid 2010).

In addition to textual analysis, this research incorporated secondary sources from contemporary Islamic legal scholarship and environmental ethics (Rizvi 2010). Journal articles and monographs reviewed to contextualize classical were interpretations within modern debates ecological sustainability, animal rights, and moral philosophy (Francione 2008; Foltz 2006). Thematic coding was employed to organize these sources into categories such as stewardship (khilāfah), intrinsic value in non-human life, and ecological justice (Webb 1998). NVivo software facilitated the systematic coding and cross-referencing of classical and contemporary materials to identify thematic overlaps and gaps (Dien 2000; Mustafa Abdul Rahman and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah 2013).

To ensure a comprehensive understanding of the subject, the study utilized a comparative framework, drawing parallels between Islamic legal principles and theories in environmental philosophy and animal rights (Islam and Islam 2015; Azzam 2012). This approach helped highlight shared concerns and potential synergies while exposing tensions between anthropocentric and non-anthropocentric paradigms (Taylor 2020; Kamali 2022). This comparative analysis was guided by maqāṣid al-sharī'ah (objectives of Islamic law), emphasizing public welfare (maṣlaḥah) and justice ('adl) as interpretive tools for addressing ecological and moral questions (Auda 2022; Solikin and Wasik 2023; Nasr 2007).

The findings from these analyses were synthesized into a coherent theoretical framework for expanding Islamic legal ethics beyond human subjects. This framework was reviewed and validated through consultations with scholars in Islamic jurisprudence and environmental ethics, ensuring its alignment with both classical principles and contemporary ecological concerns (Husain et al. 2019; Foltz et al. 2006). By integrating textual hermeneutics with interdisciplinary insights, this methodology provides a robust foundation for reimagining

Islamic legal philosophy in a transspecies context (Rizvi 2010; R. Rizk 2014).

## Result and Discussion Reinterpreting Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah through a Transspecies Lens

The findings reveal that *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* (objectives of Islamic law), traditionally centered on human welfare, can be reinterpreted to encompass the well-being of non-human entities (Dien 2000). Classical interpretations, which emphasize preserving religion (*dīn*), life (*nafs*), intellect (*'aql*), lineage (*nasl*), and property (*māl*), have been shown to have implicit ecological implications (Kamali 2022; Solikin and Wasik 2023). For instance, the preservation of life extends to ecosystems as a necessary condition for human survival and ethical stewardship (*khilāfah*) (Auda 2022; Dien 2000; Solikin and Wasik 2023).

Expanding *maqāṣid* to include ecological well-being aligns with Qur'anic principles that highlight the interconnectedness of all creation, such as the notion of *mīzān* (balance) and the idea that every being forms part of a divine purpose (Nasr 2007; Foltz 2006). This reinterpretation challenges anthropocentric readings of Islamic law, suggesting that ethical responsibility transcends species boundaries (Taylor 2017; Francione 2008). Scholars such as Safi (2003) and Mustafa (2018) argue that such an expansion of Islamic legal objectives is both a theological necessity and a practical response to contemporary ecological crises (Safitri et al. 2022; Mohd Yaseen Gada 2014b).

Furthermore, the reinterpretation of *maqāṣid* underscores the principle of sustainability embedded in Islamic jurisprudence. The Qur'an frequently emphasizes the concept of moderation (*i'tidāl*) and the prohibition of wastefulness (*isrāf*), which can be directly linked to modern environmental concerns such as resource depletion and climate change (Hussain 2021; Foltz 2006). By framing ecological issues within the objectives of

Islamic law, scholars and practitioners can legitimize sustainable practices as religiously mandated, thereby fostering greater acceptance among Muslim communities (Kamali 2022; Dien 2000).

The principle of *dharūrah* (necessity), which allows temporary suspensions of legal prohibitions to preserve life and well-being, further supports the integration of ecological considerations into *maqāṣid* (Solikin and Wasik 2023; Safi 2003). For instance, prohibiting industrial activities that harm ecosystems or contribute to biodiversity loss can be justified under this principle to prevent long-term ecological harm. This demonstrates how traditional Islamic legal principles can be adapted to address contemporary challenges while preserving their ethical and theological foundations (Husain et al. 2019; Kamali 2022).

A critical aspect of this reinterpretation is the role of animals in Islamic ethics. The Qur'an explicitly references the moral agency and community structures of animals, stating, "There is no creature on earth nor a bird that flies with its wings, but they are communities like you" (Qur'an 6:38). This recognition of non-human communities implies an inherent value and dignity in all life forms, which can serve as a basis for extending *maqāṣid* to include the rights and welfare of animals (Dien 2000; Francione 2008). Expanding the scope of *maqāṣid* in this way provides a theological framework for advocating animal rights within an Islamic context (Nugraha and Asnawi 2019; Masri 2016).

Moreover, the reinterpretation of *maqāṣid* through a transspecies lens highlights the importance of justice ('*adl*) in human-nonhuman interactions. Justice, a central tenet of Islamic law, requires that all beings receive their due rights and treatment (Kamali 2022; Hallaq 2004). This principle can be applied to address issues such as industrial farming, deforestation, and habitat destruction, which disproportionately harm non-human entities. Islamic environmental ethics, as

argued by Nasr (2007) and Mustafa (2018), can play a significant role in advocating for equitable policies that consider the needs of all creation (Haque 2017; Nasr 2009).

Integrating ecological considerations into *maqāṣid* also opens up new avenues for interfaith collaboration on environmental issues. Islamic ethical principles such as *tawḥīd* (oneness of God), *khilāfah* (stewardship), and *mīzān* (balance) resonate with similar concepts in other religious traditions, providing a common ground for collective action (Husain et al. 2019; Taylor 2020). This collaborative potential highlights the universality of ecological ethics and its compatibility with Islamic legal thought (Francione 2008; Foltz et al. 2006).

Finally, this expanded interpretation of *maqāṣid* aligns with broader global movements advocating for ecological justice and sustainability (Solikin and Wasik 2023). By demonstrating the compatibility of Islamic law with contemporary ecological ethics, this research challenges the perception of Islamic jurisprudence as static or outdated. Instead, it reveals the dynamism and adaptability of Islamic legal principles, positioning them as valuable contributors to addressing the ecological crises of the modern age (Solikin and Wasik 2023; Kamali 2022).

# The Practical Integration of Transspecies Rights in Islamic Legal Ethics

The study further demonstrates the practical potential of integrating transspecies rights into Islamic legal ethics. By applying a hermeneutical analysis to the Qur'an and Hadith, this research identifies explicit references to the intrinsic value of non-human life, such as verses emphasizing that all creatures worship Allah and have their communities (*umam*) (Izza 2024; Foltz et al. 2006). These references provide a theological basis for recognizing the rights and moral agency of non-human entities

within Islamic law (Dien 2000; Archer, Dakake, and Madigan 2021).

This perspective challenges existing anthropocentric frameworks that dominate Islamic legal discourse. For instance, while the principle of *khilāfah* has traditionally been interpreted as granting humans dominion over nature, alternative readings suggest it implies a responsibility to protect and sustain all forms of life (Nasr 2007; Safi 2003). This reinterpretation aligns with global movements advocating for ecological justice and animal rights, demonstrating the compatibility of Islamic ethics with contemporary environmental paradigms (Francione 2008; Mustafa Abdul Rahman and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah 2013).

One key area where transspecies rights can be practically integrated is in the domain of sustainable agricultural practices. Islamic legal principles emphasize the ethical treatment of animals, prohibiting unnecessary harm and mandating humane practices in slaughter and care (Foltz 2006; Kamali 2008). These principles can be expanded to include sustainable farming practices that minimize environmental harm, align with ethical stewardship (*khilāfah*), and promote biodiversity (Husain et al. 2019).

Islamic jurisprudence also provides guidelines for preserving natural resources, emphasizing moderation (*i'tidāl*) and the prohibition of wastefulness (*isrāf*). These principles can inform contemporary conservation policies, such as water management, forest protection, and climate mitigation efforts (Izza 2024; Husain et al. 2019). By framing these initiatives within an Islamic ethical framework, policymakers can engage Muslim communities in global environmental efforts more effectively (Hallaq 2004; Francione 2008).

Additionally, the inclusion of transspecies rights can address ethical concerns in industries such as factory farming and wildlife exploitation. Islamic teachings on the inherent value of all creation provide a moral foundation for advocating against practices that harm animals or disrupt ecosystems (Taylor 2020;

Nasr 2007). For example, integrating these teachings into legal frameworks can lead to stricter regulations on industrial practices that contribute to environmental degradation and animal cruelty (Auda 2022; Mustafa Abdul Rahman and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawzīyah 2013; Solikin and Wasik 2023).

The study also highlights the potential for Islamic ethical principles to influence broader legal systems, offering a model for inclusive jurisprudence that incorporates ecological and moral considerations (Hancock 2017). By emphasizing the interconnectedness of life, Islamic jurisprudence can contribute to global discussions on environmental justice and legal (Husain et al. 2019; Kamali 2022). For instance, the concept of *maqāṣid alsharī'ah* (objectives of Islamic law) can be reinterpreted to prioritize ecological sustainability as part of public welfare (*maṣlaḥah*) (Solikin and Wasik 2023; Foltz et al. 2006).

Islamic environmental ethics can also play a role in addressing global challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution. By situating these issues within the framework of *maqāṣid*, scholars and practitioners can advocate for policies that align with both religious values and scientific principles (Nasr 2007; Taylor 2020). This alignment underscores the relevance of Islamic jurisprudence in addressing modern ecological crises while remaining faithful to its theological foundations (Dien 2000; Kamali 2022).

The practical integration of transspecies rights also opens up opportunities for interfaith collaboration on environmental issues (Abdul-Matin 2010). Shared ethical principles, such as stewardship and justice, can provide a common ground for collective action across religious and cultural boundaries (Francione 2008; Foltz 2006). This collaborative potential highlights the universality of ecological ethics and its compatibility with Islamic legal thought, emphasizing the role of religion as a unifying force in global environmental efforts (Hallaq 2004; Kamali 2022).

Ultimately, this expanded framework offers a transformative vision for Islamic legal ethics, one that acknowledges the moral agency of non-human entities and promotes a holistic approach to ecological justice (Thompson 2020; El-Sherbini et al. 2023). By challenging anthropocentric paradigms and advocating for a more inclusive interpretation of Islamic principles, this research contributes to the development of a dynamic, ecologically conscious jurisprudence that addresses the pressing needs of our time (Nasr 2007; Auda 2022).

## Theological and Philosophical Underpinnings of Transspecies Rights in Islamic Legal Ethics

The study explores the theological and philosophical foundations that support the inclusion of transspecies rights within Islamic legal ethics (Ghaly 2016). Central to this argument is the Qur'anic principle of  $tawh\bar{\iota}d$  (the oneness of God), which underscores the interconnectedness of all creation. This concept serves as a theological basis for recognizing the intrinsic value of non-human entities as part of the divine order (Thompson 2020). The Qur'an frequently describes nature and non-human beings as signs ( $\bar{a}y\bar{a}t$ ) of God, emphasizing their inherent worth and moral significance (Husain et al. 2019; Dien 2000; Nasr 2007).

The philosophical implications of *tawḥīd* extend to the concept of *mīzān* (balance), which represents the equilibrium that humans are tasked to maintain as stewards (*khulafā'*) of the Earth. This stewardship is not an unrestricted dominion but a sacred trust requiring the protection and preservation of all life forms (Husain et al. 2019; Foltz et al. 2006). Philosophers such as Ibn Rushd and Al-Farabi emphasized the interdependence of humans and their environment, framing ecological responsibility as an extension of justice (*'adl*) and wisdom (*ḥikmah*) (Kamali 2022; Safi 2003).

The notion of non-human moral agency is also supported by Hadith literature, which attributes consciousness, worship, and divine accountability to animals and natural phenomena. For instance, the Prophet Muhammad's teachings on the ethical treatment of animals and the sanctity of natural resources provide a framework for recognizing the rights and dignity of non-human entities (Francione 2008; Foltz et al. 2006). These teachings challenge anthropocentric paradigms by asserting that all creation has a role in fulfilling divine purposes.

The study also incorporates insights from contemporary environmental ethics and animal rights philosophy to bridge classical Islamic thought with modern ecological concerns. Thinkers such as Seyyed Hossein Nasr and Mawil Izzi Dien argue that Islamic theology inherently supports a biocentric worldview, where humans are morally obligated to uphold the integrity of ecosystems (Nasr 2007; Izzi Dien 2000). This perspective aligns with global movements advocating for transspecies rights, demonstrating the compatibility of Islamic jurisprudence with broader ethical discourses (Francione 2008; Taylor 2020).

Critically, this theological and philosophical foundation calls for a reexamination of traditional interpretations of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*(Beka 2021; Abu-Shamsieh 2020). By extending the objectives of Islamic law to include ecological and transspecies considerations, scholars can provide a more comprehensive framework for addressing contemporary challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation (Auda 2010; Mustafa 2018). This expanded interpretation ensures that Islamic jurisprudence remains relevant and adaptive in the face of global crises.

This research underscores the potential for Islamic legal ethics to offer unique contributions to the evolving discourse on ecological justice (Muhammad Yaseen Gada 2024; M. M. Rahman et al. 2024). By grounding transspecies rights in Islamic theology and philosophy, it highlights the enduring relevance of religious traditions in promoting a holistic and inclusive approach to morality and law. Such an approach not only

addresses the pressing needs of the modern world but also revitalizes the spiritual dimensions of Islamic jurisprudence.

#### Conclusion

This study explored the potential integration of transspecies rights into Islamic legal ethics by reinterpreting maqāṣid al-sharī'ah and examining the practical applications of a transspecies framework within contemporary jurisprudence. The findings reveal that Islamic legal principles, traditionally focused on human welfare, can be expanded to encompass the moral and legal considerability of non-human entities. By highlighting the ecological implications of Qur'anic and Hadith teachings, this research demonstrates the compatibility of Islamic jurisprudence with global movements advocating for ecological justice and animal rights.

The implications of this research are significant, offering a transformative vision of Islamic legal ethics that aligns with contemporary environmental challenges. By situating Islamic principles within a transspecies framework, contributes to broader discourses on legal sustainability, and moral responsibility. However, the research also acknowledges its limitations, particularly the need for further empirical studies to assess how these theoretical insights can be practically implemented across diverse Muslim communities.

The contributions of this research lie in its interdisciplinary approach, bridging Islamic jurisprudence with environmental ethics and animal rights philosophy. It provides a foundation for future studies to explore the integration of ecological considerations into other aspects of Islamic law and theology. Suggestions for further research include examining case studies of Muslim communities implementing ecoconscious practices and investigating the role of Islamic education in fostering ecological awareness. This research underscores the adaptability and relevance of Islamic legal

traditions, advocating for their active role in addressing the urgent ecological crises of the modern world.

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