

## Environmental Ethics as Axiology: Epistemic Convergence between Western Philosophy and Ibn ‘Āshūr’s Qur’anic Hermeneutics

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### Abstract

This article examines the axiological foundations of environmental ethics through a critical analysis of the convergence between Western epistemology and Ibn ‘Āshūr’s Qur’anic hermeneutics. Departing from the contemporary ecological crisis as a moral and philosophical problem, the study argues that environmental degradation is rooted not merely in technical failures but in underlying epistemic and axiological paradigms. Using a qualitative descriptive-analytical method and library research, the article analyzes Ibn ‘Āshūr’s interpretation of selected Qur’anic verses QS al-Baqarah [2]:30, QS al-Rūm [30]:41, and QS al-Raḥmān [55]:7–9 focusing on the concepts of khalīfah, fasād, and mīzān. The findings demonstrate that Ibn ‘Āshūr integrates rational, empirical, and teleological reasoning in a manner that converges with critical currents within Western epistemology, particularly those emphasizing responsibility, balance, and ethical interconnectedness. This epistemic convergence generates a coherent axiological framework that positions environmental stewardship as a moral obligation grounded in both rational accountability and divine trust. The article concludes that Ibn ‘Āshūr’s hermeneutical approach provides a robust axiological foundation for contemporary environmental ethics, enabling a constructive dialogue between Islamic thought and modern philosophical discourse on ecological responsibility.

**Keywords:** Axiology, Environmental Ethics, Western Epistemology, Qur’anic Hermeneutics, Ibn ‘Āshūr

### INTRODUCTION

The contemporary environmental crisis constitutes one of the most profound challenges facing humanity today. Data from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) indicate that in 2024 atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) concentrations reached their highest level in recorded history, increasing by approximately 3.5 parts per million compared to the previous year (World Meteorological Organization, 2025). This escalation has been accompanied by a marked rise in the frequency and intensity of climate-related disasters, including extreme flooding, prolonged droughts, and severe heatwaves, all of which have far-reaching consequences for global health and economic stability (Soomro et al, 2025). The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that between 2030 and 2050 climate change will contribute to approximately 250,000 additional deaths annually due to malnutrition, diarrheal diseases, malaria, and heat stress, while nearly 3.6 billion people currently live in regions highly vulnerable to climate impacts (World Health Organization, 2014). These realities demonstrate that the environmental crisis is not merely an ecological issue but a global moral and ethical problem that demands a multidisciplinary response,

including engagement with Islamic exegetical traditions (Waqar Khanzada Muhammad et al., 2024).

Within the Islamic worldview, the Qur'an accords significant attention to the natural world and the relationship between humanity and the environment. The *āyāt kawmīyyah* emphasize the orderliness of creation, the principle of balance (*mīzān*), and humanity's responsibility as *khalīfah* to safeguard the sustainability of the earth (Gade, 2019). However, throughout the historical development of Qur'anic exegesis, classical commentators tended to prioritize theological, linguistic, and legal dimensions, while the ecological implications of these verses were rarely explored in a contextual and systematic manner (Kaltsum & Amin, 2024). Classical tafsīr works such as those of al-Ṭabarī, al-Qurṭubī, and Ibn Kathīr were primarily oriented toward literal meanings and the socio-historical context of the Prophet and the Companions, leaving limited space for reflection on contemporary issues such as ecosystem degradation, natural resource exploitation, and global climate change (Azmat, 2019). This has contributed to a gap between the normative ideals of the sacred text and the empirical realities of modern human life.

It is within this context that an urgent need emerges for contemporary Qur'anic interpretation to engage critically with developments in modern science and philosophy. The modern world is largely constructed upon Western epistemological foundations that emphasize rationality, empiricism, and scientific approaches to reality. These paradigms have profoundly shaped how humanity understands nature and addresses ecological problems through science and technology (Biermann, 2022). When Qur'anic interpretation remains isolated from these epistemic frameworks, it risks losing its practical relevance within global discourse (Lumbard, 2024). Epistemic alignment between Islamic tafsīr and Western thought, however, should not be understood as subordination to Western paradigms. Rather, it represents a dialogical effort to identify points of convergence between revelation and reason, spirituality and scientific inquiry (Siddiqi, 2021). Through such engagement, *tafsīr* may function not only as a theological text but also as an ethical and epistemological foundation capable of contributing meaningfully to solutions for the global environmental crisis.

One of the most significant figures capable of bridging the dialectic between Islamic values and modern thought is Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir Ibn 'Āshūr (1879–1973), a Tunisian reformist scholar best known for his monumental work *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*. In this work, Ibn 'Āshūr advances a maqāṣid-based approach to Qur'anic interpretation that is rational, contextual, and open to empirical findings. His hermeneutical project seeks to recover the higher objectives of the Sharī'ah (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*) as a means of ensuring the continued relevance of the Qur'an in changing historical contexts (Mujib & Hamim, 2021).

Scholarly engagement with Ibn 'Āshūr has expanded considerably, with primary attention given to the methodology and epistemological foundations of his tafsīr. Researchers such as Khaerul Asfar and Annur Wahid have demonstrated that Ibn 'Āshūr employs an analytical (*tahliḥ*) method with a strong emphasis on rational interpretation (*tafsīr bi al-ra'y*), as evidenced by his sophisticated linguistic analyses and critical engagement with earlier exegetical works (Asfar, 2022). Complementing these findings, Miftahul Jannah argues that Ibn 'Āshūr's epistemology is methodologically accountable, grounded in a diverse range of sources including the Qur'an, *ḥadīth*, and reason and guided by a commitment to critical objectivity in pursuit of public welfare (*maṣlahah*) (Jannah, 2025).

More recent scholarship has even identified points of convergence between Ibn 'Āshūr's thought and modern intellectual frameworks. Ali Rahman and Kholaf Al Muntadar, for instance, explicitly discuss the presence of epistemic convergence between Western epistemology and Ibn 'Āshūr's tafsīr, particularly in his engagement with contemporary

scientific theories and interdisciplinary approaches (Rahman, 2024). Nevertheless, a significant gap remains: no study to date has systematically employed this epistemic convergence as a conceptual bridge for constructing a coherent framework of Islamic environmental ethics.

This study seeks to address that gap by examining the epistemic points of convergence between Ibn ‘Āshūr’s Qur’anic hermeneutics and Western thought, and by exploring their implications for the development of Islamic environmental ethics through an analysis of QS al-Baqarah [2]:30, QS al-Rūm [30]:41, and QS al-Raḥmān [55]:7–9. The urgency of this research lies in the pressing need to articulate a Qur’anic interpretive paradigm capable of engaging constructively with the challenges of the contemporary era.

## METHODOLOGICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study employs a qualitative approach using a descriptive–analytical method to examine the epistemic convergence between Ibn ‘Āshūr’s Qur’anic hermeneutics and Western thought, as well as its relevance to the formulation of environmental ethics. The descriptive–analytical method is applied to systematically explicate the epistemological concepts articulated in *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr*, particularly in Ibn ‘Āshūr’s interpretation of selected *āyāt kawniyyah*, namely QS al-Baqarah [2]:30, QS al-Rūm [30]:41, and QS al-Raḥmān [55]:7–9.

The analysis is conducted through library research (*dirāsah maktabiyyah*), focusing on primary sources most notably Ibn ‘Āshūr’s exegetical corpus and supported by secondary sources such as scholarly books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and previous studies addressing Islamic epistemology, Qur’anic hermeneutics, and Western philosophical thought. These sources are critically examined to identify patterns of methodological alignment between Ibn ‘Āshūr’s epistemological framework particularly its rational (*burhānī*), empirical, and *maqāṣid*-oriented dimensions and key epistemic principles underpinning modern Western philosophy.

Conceptually, the study adopts an integrative analytical framework that treats epistemology as a bridge between revelation and reason. Rather than pursuing a historical–causal analysis of intellectual influence, this research emphasizes parallel epistemic trajectories and methodological convergence. Through this framework, the study elucidates how Ibn ‘Āshūr’s interpretive methodology provides a normative and axiological foundation for Islamic environmental ethics that is both textually grounded and contextually responsive to contemporary ecological challenges.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Western Epistemology and the Environmental Question

The ecological crisis confronting modern civilization cannot be separated from its epistemological foundations that is, from the dominant ways in which human beings have understood and related to reality over the past centuries (Belous et.al., 2021). At its core, this crisis is not merely a technical or policy-related problem, but a profound philosophical issue concerning how modern humanity conceives of itself in relation to nature. Environmental degradation thus reflects a deeper crisis of knowledge, meaning, and ethical orientation embedded within the intellectual history of Western thought (Banerjee & Arjaliès, 2021).

### Cartesian Dualism and Baconian Instrumentalism

Modern Western philosophy, which served as the intellectual engine of the Scientific and Industrial Revolutions, fundamentally constructed an instrumental and hierarchical relationship between humanity and nature (Dash, 2024). This paradigm rests upon two major philosophical pillars.

René Descartes (1596–1650), through his famous dictum *cogito, ergo sum* (“I think, therefore I am”), introduced a radical ontological separation between the thinking subject (*res cogitans*) and the material world (*res extensa*) (Gan, 2024). Within this Cartesian framework, human beings are conceived as rational, self-conscious subjects, while the material universe including animals and plants is reduced to inert, soulless matter, functioning as a vast mechanistic system (Gilby, 2025). This dualistic worldview effectively stripped nature of its intrinsic value and sacrality, transforming it into a passive object available for manipulation by human reason (Jena et al., 2024).

Complementing this ontological separation, Francis Bacon (1561–1626) articulated the practical orientation of modern knowledge. Through his maxim *scientia potentia est* (knowledge is power), Bacon reconceptualized science from a contemplative pursuit into an instrument for mastering and controlling nature in the service of human progress (Zhimin, 2023). The convergence of Cartesian dualism and Baconian instrumentalism thus produced an epistemology of domination, one that rationalized environmental exploitation as both inevitable and desirable (Schlegel, 2022). Nature ceased to be perceived as a nurturing “mother” and was instead reimagined as a warehouse of raw materials awaiting extraction and utilization.

### **Epistemic Critiques and the Shift toward Interconnectedness**

As the ecological consequences of this paradigm have become increasingly severe, contemporary Western philosophy has mounted sustained critiques against the logic of domination. A significant turning point emerged with phenomenology, particularly in the work of Martin Heidegger (1889–1976). Heidegger rejected the notion of the human subject as an isolated observer standing over against the world. Instead, he proposed that human existence is fundamentally *being-in-the-world* (*In-der-Welt-sein*), emphasizing that humans are always already embedded within their environments. He sharply criticized modern technological rationality for reducing all beings to mere *standing-reserve* (*Bestand*), resources to be ordered, stored, and exploited (Onwuatuegwu, 2022).

This epistemic shift gave rise to several ecological philosophies that sought to reconceptualize humanity’s relationship with nature. Deep Ecology, pioneered by Arne Naess (1912–2009), went beyond anthropocentric “shallow ecology” by advocating an ecocentric worldview. It asserts that all forms of life possess intrinsic value, independent of their utility for human purposes. This perspective demands a fundamental transformation of consciousness from viewing humans as rulers of nature to recognizing them as integral members of an interconnected ecological community (Breivik, 2021).

Closely aligned with this reorientation is the Ethics of Care, rooted in feminist philosophy, particularly the work of Carol Gilligan (b. 1936). This ethical framework challenges abstract, rule-based models of justice by emphasizing relationality, responsibility, and attentiveness. Applied to environmental ethics, the Ethics of Care encourages humans to understand their relationship with nature not as one of ownership and control, but as one of mutual dependence and moral responsibility. Caring for the Earth emerges as an ethical imperative grounded in the recognition of shared vulnerability within a web of life (FitzGerald, 2025).

Furthermore, Environmental Hermeneutics underscores that nature is always interpreted through cultural, historical, and symbolic frameworks. The Cartesian vision of nature as a machine is thus only one interpretive lens among many. Environmental hermeneutics calls for alternative ways of “reading” nature not as a mute object of scientific scrutiny, but as a

meaningful and dynamic partner in dialogue, capable of shaping human understanding and ethical orientation (Soares, 2021).

### **Toward a Dialogical Epistemology**

Consequently, Western epistemology can no longer be regarded as monolithic. In response to ecological crises, it has undergone a significant internal transformation from a paradigm of separation and domination toward one of interconnectedness, care, and responsibility. This internal epistemic shift opens a fertile space for dialogue with other intellectual traditions. It is within this space that Western philosophical developments can meaningfully engage with Islamic exegetical traditions, which as will be demonstrated through the analysis of Ibn ‘Āshūr have long conceptualized nature not as an object of exploitation, but as a manifestation (*āyah*) of divine wisdom that imposes ethical responsibility upon humanity.

### **Ibn ‘Āshūr’s Qur’anic Hermeneutics on Environmental Verses**

Ibn ‘Āshūr is widely recognized as a reformist Qur’anic exegete who advanced a *maqāṣid*-oriented approach an interpretive framework grounded in the higher objectives and wisdom of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī‘ah*) (Suleiman et al., 2024). His epistemological foundation is not monolithic but rather represents a sophisticated synthesis that bridges the classical Islamic intellectual tradition with modern modes of reasoning. In practice, Ibn ‘Āshūr grounds his interpretation in a *Bayānī* (textual) foundation while extensively employing *Burbānī* (rational–empirical) tools as his primary analytical instruments. The *Bayānī* dimension is evident in his consistent reliance on the authority of revelation (the Qur’an) as the primary source of knowledge. Upon this foundation, however, *Burbānī* instruments reason (*‘aql*), logic (*mantīq*), and empirical observation (*tajribah*) are systematically deployed to extract deeper layers of meaning.

Ibn ‘Āshūr explicitly rejects any dichotomy between revelation and reason, maintaining that both originate from the same ultimate truth. This position is particularly evident in his interpretation of the so-called *āyāt kammiyyah* (cosmic or natural signs). Rather than confining interpretation to literal meanings or purely theological explanations, he actively invites logical reasoning and empirical observation. To illustrate how this epistemic framework operates in the practical interpretation of environmental themes, this section analyzes three key concepts derived from the Qur’anic verses examined in this study: *khalīfah* (QS al-Baqarah [2]:30), *fasād* (QS al-Rūm [30]:41), and *mizān* (QS al-Raḥmān [55]:7–9).

### **Rational–Critical Reasoning in the Concept of *Khalīfah* (QS al-Baqarah [2]:30)**

The verse states: “And [remember] when your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed, I will place a *khalīfah* upon the earth.’”

In interpreting the key term *khalīfah*, Ibn ‘Āshūr explicitly demonstrates a rational–critical epistemology. He does not uncritically accept the literal meaning of “successor” or “substitute.” Instead, he subjects this meaning to logical scrutiny. According to Ibn ‘Āshūr, understanding *khalīfah* as a literal replacement is theologically untenable, since God neither physically inhabits the earth nor abandons a task that is subsequently delegated to humanity. This theological reasoning functions as an epistemic filter, rejecting interpretations that could imply anthropomorphism (Ibn ‘Āshūr, n.d.).

Having dismissed the problematic literal meaning, Ibn ‘Āshūr turns to a metaphorical interpretation that is more rationally defensible. He concludes that *khalīfah* denotes a manager or trustee (*mudīr*) entrusted with executing God’s will on earth. He reinforces this interpretation by defining *khalīfah* as one who acts on behalf of an owner in managing possessions (*al-taṣarruf fī mamlūkātihī*), without implying the physical presence of the owner. Accordingly, the task of human vicegerency is to cultivate and sustain the earth (*ta‘mīr al-*

*ard*) in accordance with divine intent, conveyed through revelation or inspiration (Ibn ‘Āshūr, n.d.).

The epistemological implications of this interpretation are highly significant for environmental ethics. Through rational reasoning, Ibn ‘Āshūr transforms the concept of *kehalifah* from that of a sovereign ruler endowed with authority into that of a steward bound by responsibility, trust, and accountability. This provides a robust epistemic foundation for a stewardship-based environmental ethic, positioning humanity as a guardian entrusted with the care and management of nature rather than as an absolute owner free to exploit it.

### **Empirical–Observational Reasoning in the Concept of *Fasād* (QS al-Rūm [30]:41)**

The verse declares: “Corruption (*al-fasād*) has appeared on land and sea because of what the hands of people have earned...”

In interpreting *al-fasād* (corruption or destruction), Ibn ‘Āshūr’s epistemology moves decisively toward empiricism and observation. While acknowledging interpretations that limit *fasād* to moral or theological corruption such as polytheism, he refuses to confine its meaning to this dimension alone. Instead, he explicitly defines *fasād* as the deterioration of conditions on land and sea (*sū’ al-ahwāl fī al-barr wa al-baḥr*) that affects resources upon which human life depends (Ibn ‘Āshūr, n.d.).

To clarify this definition, Ibn ‘Āshūr offers concrete, empirically observable examples. Corruption on land (*fasād al-barr*) manifests in crop failure, the death of livestock, the migration of wild animals due to drought, and the outbreak of plagues such as locusts and disease. Corruption at sea (*fasād al-baḥr*) appears in the disruption of maritime benefits, including declining fish stocks, pearls, and coral, as well as the increasing frequency of storms that hinder navigation (Ibn ‘Āshūr, n.d.).

This empirical orientation is fundamental. Ibn ‘Āshūr effectively links “the deeds of human hands” to tangible ecological consequences. The verse, in his reading, is not merely an abstract moral warning but a statement about ecological causality. His epistemology encourages readers not only to reflect theologically but also to observe the natural world and recognize how human actions exploitation, pollution, and injustice directly contribute to environmental degradation. This provides an epistemic foundation that resonates strongly with contemporary environmental ethics grounded in empirical evidence and scientific observation.

### **Rational–Metaphorical Reasoning in the Concept of *Mizān* (QS al-Raḥmān [55]:7–9)**

These verses state: “And He raised the heaven and set the balance, so that you may not transgress the balance. And establish weight with justice and do not diminish the balance.”

In interpreting *al-mizān* (balance or scale), Ibn ‘Āshūr displays the culmination of his rational–metaphorical and maqāṣid-oriented epistemology. While acknowledging that the primary meaning of *mizān* refers to a physical instrument of measurement (*ālat al-wazn*), he does not confine the concept to this literal sense. Through careful reasoning, he elevates its meaning to a universal principle, identifying *mizān* metaphorically with justice (*al-‘adl*) (Ibn ‘Āshūr, n.d.).

Ibn ‘Āshūr constructs his argument by linking two divine cosmic acts: the raising of the heavens (*rafa‘a al-samā’*) and the establishment of the balance (*wada‘a al-mizān*). The elevated heavens symbolize a perfectly ordered cosmos governed by precise laws, while justice represents the fundamental principle sustaining that cosmic order. According to Ibn ‘Āshūr, God has placed this principle of justice and balance upon the earth as a moral trust entrusted to humanity (Ibn ‘Āshūr, n.d.).

Consequently, the command not to transgress the balance (*allā taṭṭibhaw fī al-mīzān*) and not to diminish it (*lā tukb'sirū al-mīzān*) no longer refers merely to honesty in commercial transactions. In Ibn 'Āshūr's interpretation, it becomes a universal prohibition against all actions that disrupt systems of justice and balance, whether social or ecological. His epistemology thus transforms verses about weighing scales into a profound principle of environmental ethics: humanity is commanded to preserve ecological balance because it reflects the cosmic equilibrium established by God.

Taken together, the analysis of these three concepts demonstrates that Ibn 'Āshūr's epistemology is far from a purely textualist approach. He consistently integrates textual authority (*Bayānī*) with *Burbānī* instruments, including rational–critical reasoning, empirical observation, and *maqāṣid*-oriented metaphorical reasoning. It is precisely this epistemic synthesis that enables Ibn 'Āshūr to produce interpretations that are ecologically relevant and capable of responding to contemporary environmental challenges.

### **Axiological Convergence and Environmental Ethics**

The comparative analysis between the epistemological foundations of Western thought and the methodological praxis of Ibn 'Āshūr's Qur'anic hermeneutics reveals the presence of substantial points of epistemic convergence. This convergence should not be understood as a historical–causal relationship in which Ibn 'Āshūr consciously adopted Western philosophy. Rather, it represents a parallel intellectual trajectory, wherein the *burbānī* (rational–demonstrative) epistemology he developed within the matrix of the Islamic intellectual tradition finds a methodological alignment with the modes of reasoning that underpin modern scientific and philosophical discourse. It is precisely this alignment that constitutes the enduring relevance of *al-Taḥrīr wa al-Tanwīr* in responding to the contemporary ecological crisis.

These points of convergence may be analytically mapped across three principal domains: (1) rational–critical methodology; (2) empirical–observational validation; and (3) ethical–teleological orientation.

### **Rational–Critical Methodological Convergence**

One of the foundational pillars of modern Western epistemology is rationalism, which prioritizes reason (*ratio*) and logical inference as primary instruments for the acquisition and justification of knowledge (Karimaliana et al., 2023). Although Cartesian rationalism has been widely criticized for generating a problematic subject–object dualism, its core methodological demand for logical coherence and the rejection of contradiction remains a *conditio sine qua non* of scientific and philosophical inquiry (Toon, 2025).

An analogous rationalist spirit is clearly manifest in Ibn 'Āshūr's hermeneutical method (*manhaj*). His analysis of the concept of *khalīfah* in QS al-Baqarah [2]:30 provides definitive evidence of this orientation. He refuses a passive acceptance (*taqlīd*) of the literal meaning of “successor.” Through the deployment of reason (*'aql*) and critical theological reasoning, he undertakes a logical deconstruction of this interpretation. Ibn 'Āshūr argues that, from a rational standpoint, the Divine cannot be “replaced” (*istikhlāf*) on earth, since God's existence is absolute, non-spatial (*lā yaḥṭullu fī al-arḍ*), and never subject to absence.

This rational–critical operation leads him to conclude that the term *khalīfah* must be understood metaphorically (*majāz*), referring instead to a “manager” or “trustee” (*mudīr, al-taṣarruf fī mamlūkātihī*) who acts in accordance with a divine mandate (Ibn 'Āshūr, n.d.). At this juncture, Ibn 'Āshūr's *burbānī* epistemology converges with rationalist principles in its commitment to logical and theological coherence.

The implications for environmental ethics are transformative. By positioning reason as a central interpretive instrument, Ibn 'Āshūr liberates the concept of *khalīfah* from mystical abstraction or interpretations that might legitimize fatalism or tyrannical authority. Instead,

he reframes it as a functionally accountable concept. The environmental ethic derived from this interpretation is not dogmatic but grounded in rational accountability and stewardship, emphasizing responsibility over domination.

### **Empirical–Observational Convergence**

Another central pillar of Western epistemology is empiricism, which posits sensory observation and experience (*tajribah*) as the fundamental basis of knowledge (Warf, 2025). Despite its early Baconian orientation toward anthropocentric mastery, empirical methodology has become the driving force of modern science, including ecology, which investigates causal relationships within ecosystems (Daniel, 2021).

In his explication of *al-fasād* (QS al-Rūm [30]:41), Ibn ‘Āshūr demonstrates a striking convergence with empirical epistemology. Methodologically, he refuses to confine *fasād* to the moral–theological domain such as polytheism or sin as commonly found in classical annotations. Instead, he defines *fasād* explicitly as empirically observable damage within physical and material reality (*sū’ al-aḥwāl fī al-barr wa al-baḥr*) (Ibn ‘Āshūr, n.d.).

The evidence he presents is entirely empirical and observational: crop failure (*ta’atṭul al-ẓar’ wa al-thimār*), livestock mortality, wildlife migration due to drought, and climatic anomalies that disrupt maritime navigation. Through Ibn ‘Āshūr’s interpretive lens, this verse is not merely a moral admonition but a clear statement of ecological causality. Human actions (*bimā kasabat aydī al-nās*) function as the independent variable that measurably produces ecological degradation as the dependent variable (Ibn ‘Āshūr, n.d.).

It is here that epistemic convergence becomes evident. Ibn ‘Āshūr validates the normative truth of revelation through observation of empirical reality. Consequently, his tafsīr provides strong theological legitimacy for modern environmental science. Contemporary scientific data such as WMO reports on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions or IPCC findings on climate change may thus be read as *tafsīr bi al-wāqī’* (interpretation through reality), representing contemporary empirical manifestations of the *fasād* described in the Qur’an.

### **Ethical-Teleological Convergence**

Western epistemology is not monolithic. In response to the ecological crisis, powerful internal critiques have emerged such as Heideggerian phenomenology, Deep Ecology, and the Ethics of Care that seek to shift the paradigm away from Cartesian-Baconian domination toward interconnectedness, care, and recognition of nature’s intrinsic value (Babu & Satya, 2024).

The third, and most fundamental, convergence occurs at this ethical-teleological level. Ibn ‘Āshūr’s *maqāṣidī* (teleological) approach is, at its core, an ethical framework oriented toward the realization of human and cosmic well-being (*jalb al-maṣāliḥ wa dar’ al-mafāsīd*). His emphasis on the objectives of Islamic law particularly the preservation of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) and property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*, which includes natural resources) may be characterized as a form of theocentric humanism, wherein human flourishing is situated within obedience to the divine order (Tabrozi, 2025).

This convergence reaches its apex in Ibn ‘Āshūr’s interpretation of *al-miẓān* (QS al-Raḥmān [55]:7-9). Through sophisticated rational–metaphorical reasoning, he elevates *miẓān* from a mere physical instrument of measurement (*alat al-waẓn*) to a universal principle of justice (*al-‘adl*) and cosmic balance.

First, his interpretation of *miẓān* as justice sustaining the cosmic order (*al-samā’ rafa’ abā wa waḍa’a al-miẓān*) aligns with Deep Ecology’s assertion that the universe possesses an inherent order and intrinsic value that must be respected. Second, the commands “do not transgress the balance” (*allā taṭṭghaw*) and “do not diminish the balance” (*lā tukh’sirū al-miẓān*) are interpreted as universal prohibitions against actions that disrupt balance, whether social or ecological. This resonates strongly with Heidegger’s critique of modern

technology, which reduces nature to a mere “standing-reserve.” Third, by framing *mīzān* as a trust that God has “placed” (*wada‘a*) upon humanity, Ibn ‘Āshūr constructs an ethics of care. Humans are obligated to preserve ecological balance as an expression of their responsibility toward the divine order (Ibn ‘Āshūr, n.d.).

The ethical implications are profound. Ibn ‘Āshūr provides an epistemological foundation drawn from sacred text for a holistic and non-anthropocentric environmental ethic. This ethic rejects the human–nature dualism and instead positions humans as moral agents responsible for safeguarding *mīzān* within an interconnected cosmic web of life.

In conclusion, the epistemological synthesis advanced by Ibn ‘Āshūr integrating textual authority (*bayānī*), rational demonstration (*burhānī*), empirical validation (*tajribah*), and teleological orientation (*maqāṣidī*) produces a dynamic hermeneutical model. This model is not only capable of constructive dialogue with modern science and philosophy but is also essential for providing a spiritual, moral, and epistemological foundation for an Islamic environmental ethic that is both textually grounded and contextually relevant.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis presented in this study, several key conclusions may be drawn. First, Ibn ‘Āshūr’s Qur’anic hermeneutics demonstrates a clear epistemic alignment with critical strands of Western thought through its integration of rational inquiry, empirical awareness, and ethical reflection in the interpretation of environmental verses. By emphasizing reason, experiential observation, and moral deliberation as essential components of understanding revelation, Ibn ‘Āshūr advances an interpretive model that is not merely textual but also contextual and responsive to the complexities of modern reality.

Second, Ibn ‘Āshūr’s *tafsīr* exhibits a high degree of relevance for contemporary environmental ethics. Through his interpretations of QS al-Baqarah [2]:30, QS al-Rūm [30]:41, and QS al-Raḥmān [55]:7–9, he articulates a coherent ethical vision centered on human responsibility as *khalīfah*, the prohibition of ecological destruction (*fasād*), and the imperative of maintaining balance (*mīzān*). Together, these principles provide a robust normative foundation for fostering ecological consciousness within Muslim societies in the modern era.

Third, this study affirms that Ibn ‘Āshūr offers an integrative hermeneutical paradigm that functions as a conceptual bridge between Islamic and Western epistemologies. By synthesizing textual authority with rational demonstration and empirical validation, his approach enables a constructive dialogue between revelatory values and modern scientific principles, rendering Qur’anic interpretation both transformative and practically applicable within contemporary socio-ecological contexts.

In light of these conclusions, this study also suggests several broader reflections for future engagement. Ibn ‘Āshūr’s interpretive framework holds significant potential for the development of ecological awareness within Islamic education, where environmental responsibility may be articulated as an ethical and spiritual obligation. Moreover, the normative insights derived from his *tafsīr* could inform value-based environmental discourse and policy deliberation within Muslim communities, particularly in relation to sustainable resource management. Future research may further extend this line of inquiry by examining other contemporary Qur’anic interpretations, thereby enriching the discourse on ecological hermeneutics and strengthening cross-cultural dialogue between Islamic and Western epistemological traditions in addressing global environmental challenges.

Overall, this study underscores the urgency of developing contemporary Qur’anic interpretations that are integrative and dialogical. Such approaches enable the Qur’an to be

understood not only as a sacred text but also as a living source of ethical guidance capable of contributing meaningfully to the resolution of ecological crises and the formation of a global environmental ethic.

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