



## **Ecological Religious-Cultural: New Direction of Ecological Paradigm in the Integration Frame of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and Tapanuli Indigenous Religious Concepts**

**Ibrahim Siregar**

Universitas Islam Negeri Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan  
e-mail: [ibrahim@uinsyahada.ac.id](mailto:ibrahim@uinsyahada.ac.id)

**Suheri Sahputra Rangkuti**

Universitas Islam Negeri Syekh Ali Hasan Ahmad Addary Padangsidempuan  
e-mail: [suheriray@gmail.com](mailto:suheriray@gmail.com)

### **Abstract**

*The ecological paradigm in this context refers to an approach that combines environmental principles with religious values and local wisdom in an effort to maintain ecological sustainability and build harmonious relationships between humans and nature. This study used an integrative approach with convergence analysis. In the mechanism of this approach, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and Tapanuli indigenous religious concepts are used in a complementary manner in building a paradigm to achieve ethical goals related to ecology. The result of the integration of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and the traditional religious concept of Tapanuli found that Mangholongi Bona Bulu as a new religious ethic in responding to ecology. The shift from a pseudo-paradigm to an objective is a necessity in building a sustainability ecology. This study makes an important contribution to the development of ecological-religious cultural theory and practice, as well as providing a deeper understanding of religious values and local wisdom in the context of the environment. The implications of this research are the importance of incorporating ecological perspectives in the development of sustainable policies and practices, as well as the need to explore and respect religious traditions and local wisdom in maintaining ecological balance and strengthening human relationships with nature.*

**Keywords: Religious-Cultural; *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*; Tapanuli; Religious Concepts.**

### **Abstrak**

Paradigma ekologi dalam konteks ini mengacu pada pendekatan yang menggabungkan prinsip-prinsip lingkungan dengan nilai-nilai agama dan kearifan lokal dalam upaya menjaga kelestarian ekologis dan membangun hubungan yang harmonis antara manusia dan alam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan integratif dengan analisis konvergensi. Dalam mekanisme pendekatan ini, konsep *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* dan adat tapanuli digunakan secara komplementer dalam membangun paradigma untuk mencapai tujuan etis terkait ekologi. Hasil integrasi *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* dan konsep keagamaan tradisional Tapanuli menemukan bahwa Mangholongi Bona Bulu

sebagai etika keagamaan baru dalam merespon ekologi. Pergeseran dari paradigma semu ke objektif adalah kebutuhan dalam membangun ekologi keberlanjutan. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi penting bagi pengembangan teori dan praktik budaya ekologis-agama, serta memberikan pemahaman yang lebih dalam tentang nilai-nilai agama dan kearifan lokal dalam konteks lingkungan. Implikasi dari penelitian ini adalah pentingnya memasukkan perspektif ekologis dalam pengembangan kebijakan dan praktik berkelanjutan, serta perlunya mengeksplorasi dan menghormati tradisi agama dan kearifan lokal dalam menjaga keseimbangan ekologis dan memperkuat hubungan manusia dengan alam.

**Kata Kunci: Agama-Budaya; Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah; Tapanuli; Konsep Keagamaan.**

## **Introduction**

Islam, as a religion, actually shows great concern for the universe (Guessoum 2010a). However, Muslim sources in the past did not specifically address the topic of ecology well. Traditional Islamic studies focus more on aspects of law, personal ethics, and man's relationship with God (Karimullah 2023). Older Muslim sources rarely discuss man's responsibility in preserving the universe. Issues such as natural resource management, sustainability, pollution, and environmental degradation are not specifically addressed within the framework of traditional Islamic thought. Nevertheless, it does not take away Islam's attention to the universe.

This was caused by the historical and social context that influenced the focus of Islamic studies at that time. In those days, people generally lacked environmental awareness and their top priority was to meet basic needs (Al-Marri, Al-Habaibeh, and Watkins 2018). Therefore, environmental issues were not a major concern in religious thought at the time (Mohidem and Hashim 2023). In such situations, religious studies tend to focus on aspects that are directly related to meeting basic needs and pressing social problems (Chater and Loewenstein 2023). In addition, current social, economic, and cultural changes can lead to a decrease in local knowledge possessed by indigenous peoples about their environment (Fernández-Llamazares et al. 2021). Modern education that focuses more on conventional scientific knowledge often ignores traditional knowledge possessed by indigenous peoples. As a result, rich local knowledge of ecology, natural resource management, and sustainable practices could be endangered.

Meanwhile, knowledge of indigenous values that have lived among indigenous peoples for centuries is knowledge that has been tested in maintaining ecological balance. Indigenous peoples have a deep understanding of local ecosystems, the species that exist within them, and the complex interactions between humans and nature (Wehi et al. 2023). This knowledge enables them to understand natural patterns, cycles, and interdependencies in ecology, as well as utilize them sustainably.

Several previous studies like al-Muhasibi (w 857), al-Qasim Ibn Ibrahim (w 860), al-Baqillani (w 1013), Ibn Hazm (w 1064), al-Ghazali (w 1111) dan al-Razi (1209) have explored the concept of *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah* (the purposes of *Shari'ah* in Islam) and how its principles can be applied in an ecological context (Ibn Ibrahim 1990). *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah* emphasizes the importance of maintaining sustainability, balance, and benefit for all God's creatures in environmental management (Hayat et al. 2023). But explicitly ecology has not been the main goal of *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah*. It is even positioned as a passive object that does not need to be involved in the conversation about the quality of the universe. M. Muthoifin et al. have explored the relationship between *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah* and customary values with efforts to maintain ecology (Muthoifin et al. 2024). Fachruddin Majeri Mangunjaya and Jeanne Elizabeth McKay may cover various aspects, such as understanding Islamic values in relation to the environment, indigenous peoples' local knowledge of ecosystems, and sustainable traditional practices (Mangunjaya and McKay 2012). In the context of *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah*, research has explored how concepts such as life maintenance, wealth maintenance, and environmental stewardship can be applied in environmental management practices. This involves understanding how these principles can provide guidelines for promoting sustainability, maintaining ecosystem balance, and preventing environmental damage.

Meanwhile, research has also looked at local knowledge and indigenous values related to ecology. It involves an understanding of indigenous peoples' traditional practices in natural resource management, biodiversity preservation, and man's relationship with nature. This indigenous knowledge often includes a deep understanding of local ecosystems, natural cycles, and sustainable ways of utilizing natural resources. In many studies, the integration of *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah* and customary values in an ecological context is examined as a holistic

approach to obtain more comprehensive insights and solutions in protecting the environment.

However, throughout the reading the author has not found a study related to the paradigm that discusses ecology by combining universal Islamic principles and sustainable local knowledge. In other words, the research seeks to integrate the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and the concept of Tapanuli indigenous religion to complement the study of ecological ethics which has been more influenced by pure theology. This research is expected to give a new color and complement the existing Islamic ecological studies. The focus of this research lies in efforts to bridge the relationship between humans and ecology contextually and harmoniously.

To answer the academic concerns described earlier, this study aims to develop a new paradigm that builds relationships between humans and ecology through the fusion of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* with the indigenous religious concept of Tapanuli. The approach used in this study is an integrative approach with convergence analysis. In the mechanism of this approach, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and Tapanuli indigenous religious concepts are used in a complementary manner in building a paradigm to achieve ethical goals related to ecology. Analysis was conducted to integrate *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and indigenous religious concepts using convergence, to look for certain elements of the two sources of knowledge that were seen as mutually reinforcing each other.

### ***Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and Tapanuli Triadic Cosmology as an Ecological-Religious Cultural Foothold**

Religion and culture become one foundation of life for society in general (Asha 2023). Similar to the people of Tapanuli, religion and culture have become one inseparable breath. In terms of anthropology, the Tapanuli community is seen as a society that upholds its cultural traditions until now. Although there were changes in some customary behaviors, they did not touch the most central heart of culture, namely its religious concept. Likewise with religion, in the southern part of the Tapanuli region that inhabits the west coast to the border of West Sumatra is a majority of Muslims (Zakaria 2022). The arrival of Islam as a new religion in the region gave a new complexion of civilization and Buddhism in the region

(Dirno 2023). The harmonious interaction of Islam and Tapanuli Customs is a fact that Islam and custom strengthen the outlook of life of the Tapanuli people, especially Southern Tapanuli. The view of life referred to here is the perspective of the Tapanuli people in interpreting their relationship with God, nature and humans.

Based on the harmonious interaction between Islam and the culture of the Tapanuli people, the author sees that it is influenced by the existence of mutually reinforcing philosophical perspectives between the two in understanding the triadic cosmology, namely God, nature and humans who overshadow religious concepts and the world view of Tapanuli society so far. Because the deepest layer of view of cosmology, both from the Islamic side and from the concept of indigenous religion is based on the same value, namely compassion (Huda et al. 2020). In religious language compassion is referred to as *rahmatan* and in traditional Tapanuli language it is referred to as *Holong*. Departing from the similarity of these basic meaning, although they have some differences related to their manifestation in the world of reality, between Islam and the traditional religious concept of Tapanuli still has the same goal, which is to realize affection. In this case, at least, triadic cosmology through an integration approach using convergence analysis between Islam and the indigenous religious concept of Tapanuli becomes the basis for ecology-religion as explained below.

### **God in the Frame *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* Integration and Tapanuli Religious Concepts**

The understanding of God is no longer limited to explaining the relationship between God and man (Harris 2023). But it is inevitable that the understanding of God also involves sociological consciousness, awareness of the search for the origin of religion and fulfillment of the need to form a strong personality. Even to some extent the understanding of God is related to man's outlook on life. In conjunction with fundamental ethical values, an understanding of God can also be approached philosophically (Joshi et al. 2023). Not to mention when viewed in relation to the function of divine teachings, especially Islam, which emphasizes more on a critical view of the ecological situation. From this it appears that an understanding of God cannot be approached with just one understanding. In other words, it needs a multi-dimensional approach.

Related to this, in understanding divinity, Edmund Husserl explained that understanding divinity in a completer and more fundamental picture with a non-particular-exclusive appearance must be accompanied by historical-empirical explanations. More clearly, the understanding of God is not only framed by a value-neutral attitude (understanding of God based on revelation), but also must be bound by value-laden (religious understanding of God influenced by anthropology).

Following the argument above, the understanding of God related to ecology in this study is seen from two things, namely, from the side of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and the concept of indigenous religion of Tapanuli. First from the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. The understanding of God is contained in a term known as *hifẓ ad-dīn* (protection of religion). Of course, the explanation of God, the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* perspective in this paper is no longer discussed in the protection paradigm (*hifẓ*) (Shofi, Bayhaki, and Hesani 2023). But the idea of divinity in the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* area that will be discussed here is to use the development paradigm (*taṭwīr*) (I. Siregar and Rangkuti 2023a). Understanding of God, the perspective that is used as the foundation or foundation of ecological religious-cultural is a 'personal' understanding of God. The personal God is described as an understanding of divinity that affirms a special force or power to strengthen man's belief in the constantly understandable nature of reality (May 2023). This idea of divinity will directly revive man's belief in the mystery of the universe as God's dominion and indirectly affirm the existence of a universe of certain reliability and consistency.

The hope that arises from the idea of divinity will strengthen confidence in the coherence and predictability of the universe contained in the scriptures. In reality, man cannot be sure and hope for his predictions of the universe by using his reasoning. However, man has the right to scientifically test what lies behind the mysteries of the universe by keeping the system of the universe as it is (I. Siregar and Rangkuti 2023b). In other words, God gave a pledge of allegiance to cosmic legalism. In this regard, *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* does not stop only in protecting *sharī'ah*, *aqīdah* and morals in the conventional view. However, it seeks to develop an understanding of divinity in a broader direction and can be developed reasonably. *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* by developing the idea of divinity from protection to development has relevance that man in order to fulfill his duty to prosper nature with his

right of initiative. Methodologically, the development of *hiġ ad-dīn* like the idea of divinity above, changed the direction of understanding of God that had been understood with a top-down approach (the text of revelation to reality) now became mutually integrated (Nekroumi 2023). In short, between God's revelation and ecology both have a role in spiritual growth, both in dimensions, *aqīdah*, *shari'ah* and morals.

Second from the religious side of Tapanuli custom. The understanding of God in the traditional religious concept of Tapanuli departs from animism, dynamism and paganism (Rangkuti 2021). However, factually the ideas or ideas of the Tapanuli indigenous religion are realized by respecting the universe. The arrival of Islam only changed the object of divinity which at first the deity of the Tapanuli people was the spirit of the ancestors into Allah Almighty (F. A. Siregar, Siregar, and Rangkuti 2023). The rest, only directed people's beliefs to realize Allah Almighty. Related to this, there are many derivatives of the idea of divinity of the Tapanuli people who really value the universe. Let's say for example the belief that creatures that exist in the universe, such as plants, rocks and even rivers have *Tondi* (spirits) connected to God in the *Banua Ginjang* (upper realm) (Rangkuti et al. 2022). In some rituals, Tapanuli people depend more on nature as a component of their rituals. By sacrificing some creatures that exist in the universe, say for example a few betel leaves and five small fish that live in the river illustrates how Tapanuli people really take care of the ecosystem, because in the guidance of their traditional rituals do not sacrifice ecological components on a large scale.

In addition, with the assumption that the universe also has its self, the people of Tapanuli believe that there will be bad effects or bad luck that arise if they do not take good care of the universe (McCubbin 2023). This assumption is because nature also makes offerings to the Almighty in its own way. Added to this is the belief that the Almighty residing in the *Banua Ginjang* (place of the almighty) will not accept the requests of humans residing in the *Banua Tonga* (nature of man) if they do not respect the universe or use it excessively and do not respect its existence (Pane and Purba 2024). The two perspectives above, look complementary. On the one hand, the *Maqāṣid al-Shari'ah* develops an understanding of God that can seriously affirm ecology as part of divinity. On the other hand, Tapanuli indigenous religion is part of a real attitude in responding to divine ecology.

The fusion of these two source patterns (*Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and Tapanuli indigenous religious concepts) reinforces the partial Islamic teachings frozen in the geological of religious thought due to the strong deductive logic in religious understanding. While deductive patterns do not allow or make room for cosmic studies (Tararoev, Horodyska, and Dolska 2024). In addition, the data of the universe captured by the scriptures thousands of years ago is constantly growing, even going faster from year to year. By utilizing the logical relationship between *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and Tapanuli indigenous religion, it can provide an epistemic answer to the question of why it should be based on *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and Tapanuli indigenous religion. Both of these footings can be expected to establish a strong preference for ecological ethics as they depart from the historical (cultural) existential effects present in human beings.

### **Humans in the Frame of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* Integration and Tapanuli Religious Concepts**

The study of man in the classical *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* view is largely based on necessity. This can be seen from *Kulliyāt al-khams* as initiated by al-Ghazali and his predecessors seem to still be trying to meet human needs from the inner and *ḥabīriyah* aspects (I. Siregar and Rangkuti 2023a). This view then links man to the fundamental reliability of the universe. Until now, knowledge about humans based on these needs is still an idealistic belief. If this view is continued and applied, then the result of the understanding of man will only focus on *mu'āmalāt*/eticho-legal.

The author sees that the understanding of humans needs to be reformulated by not only seeing humans in the perspective of pragmatism. Because of this, according to the author, it can give birth to ecological problems that are dangerous for the sustainability of the universe (Santarelli 2024). In addition, in Islamic history, the main orientation in the life of Muslim people is the fulfillment of *batīniyah* needs. Usually, *batīniyah* needs are met with *mabḍah* rituals such as prayer, fasting, Hajj and zakat. In addition to the *mabḍah* ritual, Muslims also carry out their servitude duties by multiplying the *ghairu mabḍah* ritual (Lachkar 2021). Nevertheless, the *ghairu mabḍah* ritual is still not out of the scope of worship in line with the *mabḍah* ritual above. Unfortunately, Islamic thinkers have never consciously faced



the fact that man today is a man living in such a rapid development of the cosmos (Irawan 2022). A development that appears different from the world images that shape and nurture traditional ideas of chaos. Today, it is necessary to rearrange fresh religious concepts in actual terms, including the concept of man. The 'man' must be viewed from three dimensions. First, *al-Insān ad-Dīniyah*, the religious dimension of man. In this dimension, humans are seen as being inseparable from religion. Religion in this respect is not a midwifery limited to a relationship with God alone. But the religious dimension in question is divinity with devotion to inward and outward motion. The meaning of inward motion is man's serious relationship with his god (Green 2023). While the outward movement is the implementation of man's relationship with God which must radiate outward across individual piety, such as social solidarity, resource development and ecological care.

*Al-Insān ad-Dīniyah* can be integrated with the value of *Hamoraon* (human existence for the Tapanuli community) (Yasir Hisam ad-Din Ahmad, 2023). *Hamoraon* is an outward movement or social role in the dimension of customs. Pragmatically, *Hamoraon* can be interpreted as a person of sufficient strength. That is, in the life of the Tapanuli people, starting from the interaction and rituals, customs cannot be separated from the need for funds. Therefore, in order to carry out their cultural and social roles, Tapanuli people must work and strive hard. *Hamoraon* for the people of Tapanuli is a requirement for social piety. This value is the main foundation for all its cultural actions. The integration of *al-Insān ad-Dīniyah* with *hamoraon* became mutually reinforcing. On the one hand, *al-Insān ad-Dīniyah* which leads to a more abstract impulse is then balanced by the concept of *Hamoraon* which looks more material and pragmatic into two bases for consideration of the act of responding to nature.

Second, *al-Insān al-Aqliyah*, the dimension of human reason. In this dimension, it must be realized that humans have a thinking device called reason or reason (Sualaiman, Baikey and Apsyary, 2023). The human ability to reason is a dimension that must be taken into account in seeing the human entity. If reason has entered the scope of human entities, then humans must also be recognized as entities that have the capacity to produce creativity (Dai 2020). Human capacity in activating his creative mind comes from inspiration, intuition, experience and high sensitivity based on *al-ma'ūnah al-ilāhiyah*. This second view can be

integrated with the value of *Hasanggapon* (human existence for the Tapanuli community). *Hasanggapon* is having self-esteem. For the people of Tapanuli, self-esteem becomes an unborn existence. Losing self-esteem means losing one's existence in the midst of society. Even more than that, for the people of Tapanuli *Hasanggapon* is the beginning of life. Because self-esteem in the view of the Tapanuli people is a person who understands genealogy, obeys regulations and laws. People who come out of these three mean people who are unable to maintain *Hasanggapon*. The integration between *al-Insan al-Aqliyah* and *Hasanggapon* became a new value for humanity. The creativity of reason encourages humans to see the coherence of the impact of human actions on nature itself. While *Hasanggapon* becomes a consciousness of moral considerations in treating the universe. Societies that go against the provisions

Third, *al-Insān al-Wāqī'iyah*, the dimension of human locus and tempus. Place and time are dimensions of inevitability for human beings (Shalih, 2023). Without considering this dimension when understanding man, man will be detached from himself. The most compelling reason for the inevitability of this dimension is the responsibility of humans who are agents of change on earth. The relationship between man and the place and time in which he is located is a dialectical relationship, in the sense of complementing, complementing, strengthening and utilizing each other (Van Stichel 2014). Even more than that, the relationship between the two can criticize and control each other. No matter how independent man is, he still cannot negate it, let alone eliminate the role and existence of place and time. With the change in the way of seeing 'humans' as above, the author believes that the understanding of 'humans' can be stared at comprehensively and realistically. In the sense that every fundamental structure of human experience exists in the above three concepts.

Furthermore, the understanding of humans in the traditional religious concept of Tapanuli seems to be understood through the structure-function side (Asaad, n.d.). In Tapanuli custom, humans are seen from their functions. A person who does not function or is useless to the life of his society means that he has no existence in the midst of his society. For the Tapanuli community, at least, there are three values that strengthen a person's identity as a human being. In the traditional religious concept of Tapanuli, the understanding of humans is based on a holistic and integrated view between humans and the universe. Humans

are seen as an inseparable part of the natural ecosystem, not as a separate or dominant entity over nature. Humans are seen as having a close relationship with nature and other living things. Human beings are considered part of an interdependent and interacting web of life. This understanding includes the belief that all living things have equal rights and dignity.

In addition, humans in the traditional religious concept of Tapanuli are also understood as social creatures. Human relationships are considered very important and are established based on the values of togetherness, mutual understanding, and mutual respect (Muda and Suharyanto 2020). Community and social solidarity are considered as important foundations in maintaining balance and harmony in society as well as with the surrounding nature. The understanding of humans in the traditional religious concept of Tapanuli also includes spiritual aspects. Humans are seen as connected to the supernatural and spiritual worlds (Pedlar 2023). Relationships with ancestors and ancestral spirits are considered important in maintaining balance and harmony in daily life. Overall, the understanding of humans in the traditional religious concept of Tapanuli describes humans as an inseparable part of nature, has strong social connections, and has a spiritual dimension that needs to be respected and considered in living a balanced and harmonious life. This is shown from the various traditional rituals carried out in Tapanuli. In general, the ritual is inseparable from attachment to the universe.

### **Nature in the Frame of Integration of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and Tapanuli Indigenous Religion**

The universe is a combination of various *jambar* (primary substance) causalities with *khala'* (space and time) dimensions that have the properties of al-'arad (axid) (Al-Jabiri 2009, 28). At this level, the universe is believed to be a creation with various possibilities because it is based on the logic of causality. The universe is something that was created and moved by God's will, not through the mechanism of causality. In other words, Ibn Hazm's view, the mechanism of order and motion of the universe would not change from God's provision in the *azāliyy* realm (Ḥazm, 'Alī ibn Aḥmad, and ibn 'Abd al-Karīm 2024, 263). Therefore, it is possible for God to create something in this universe without cause and effect occurring from natural mechanisms. Al-Ghazali divided everything created including

nature into two qualities, namely; *Mumkin al-wujūd* (may exist), *mumtani' al-wujūd* (may not exist). This argument seems to attempt to accommodate two opposing sides as above. For him, what may exist is what God may have created and vice versa what cannot exist is everything that God could not have created (al-Ghazali, n.d., 25–26).

This argument is more general, flexible and relative and is able to accommodate any view of nature based on divinity. The above thinking in the context of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, is to ensure that human interaction with nature is in accordance with the underlying Islamic principles. For example, protection of the natural environment and sustainability are part of safeguarding the soul and defending material possessions. Humans are expected to use natural resources wisely, not to damage or waste them, and avoid behavior that harms the environment and other lives. As a form of connection between humans and the universe, Nasr realized that the universe has a big contribution in human survival. Therefore, Nasr emphasized that the relationship of giving between humans and the universe must be maintained with science. Especially the science of ecology. So that humans are aware and strive to harmonize themselves with the universe (Nasr 1968, 81).

Qardhawy changed the meaning of man from the mention of the caliph in the function of ruling to the caliph in the function of prospering. For Qardhawy, protecting the environment (*bi'ah*) is as important as keeping *kulliyāt al-khams* (safeguarding religion, soul, reason, posterity and property) (Qaradāwī 2001, 19). The paradigm shift from mastering the environment to prospering was the beginning of the development of environmental fiqh initiated by Qaradāwī. From this paradigm shift, Qardhawy then adapted the text of the revelation to the current environmental reality which he referred to as the *Ihsani Ecology*. This Ihsani Ecological Paradigm seeks to provide a moral foundation for humans based on wayu texts (Qaradāwī 2001, 120). Because in Qaradāwī's view, ecological damage is caused by human behavior that comes out of God's guidance (Qaradāwī 2001, 44). Nidhal's view of verses relating to the universe laid down as *ẓanni* is an extension of the *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. Because according to him, the information of the text of revelation related to the movement of the universe is not something *qat'ī* because it is a mystery universe that moves and expands. While the sacred text only informs the universe using the reasoning of certain people at a certain time (*muqtaḍal hāl*) (Guessoum

2010b). Using a science-empirical approach to the text of revelation concerning the universe, Nidhal transformed the Islamic ecology that had ended in strengthening faith into an Islamic ecology oriented towards respecting the universe using science.

In line with the explanation above, the traditional religious concept of Tapanuli has a close relationship with understanding and respect for nature. In Tapanuli traditional religion, nature is considered a sacred source of life and inhabited by spirits. Nature is seen as God's creation that must be guarded and respected. In nature, there are various elements that are considered to have spiritual power, such as mountains, rivers, and certain trees. Tapanuli people believe that nature is the abode of ancestors and ancestral spirits that influence daily life. Tapanuli traditional religion involves a belief system, rites, and ceremonies performed by the community as a form of respect for ancestors and spirits. This concept centers on maintaining a harmonious relationship between man, nature, and the spirit world. The people of Tapanuli have a belief that nature must be maintained and respected. They avoid actions that can damage the ecosystem and violate the balance of nature. The community also upholds local wisdom in utilizing natural resources sustainably. Tapanuli indigenous religion is an integral part of the identity and life of the people in the region.

Traditional Tapanuli ceremonies are often carried out in a natural context. Many traditional ceremonies are performed in natural sanctuaries such as on mountain peaks, river banks, or under trees that are considered sacred. These ceremonies involve offerings to ancestors and spirits, as well as requests for blessings to protect and bless the Tapanuli people. Through this ceremony, they recognize and honor the spiritual power of nature. The people of Tapanuli have a belief that nature is home to ancestral spirits and other spiritual beings. Therefore, they try not to damage the environment by avoiding actions such as indiscriminate felling of trees, water pollution, or overexploitation of natural resources. The people of Tapanuli appreciate and maintain the natural beauty around them. Overall, Tapanuli customs view nature as a spiritual entity that must be respected and safeguarded. This close relationship reflects philosophies and values that promote harmony between humans and nature, as well as an understanding of human dependence on nature as a source of life.

### **Mangholongi Bona Bulu (Hifz al- Bī'ah): Cultural Ecological-Religious Ethics**

*Mangholongi Bona Bulu* is one of the famous Tapanuli traditional traditions, and in Tapanuli language, mangholongi means guarding, bona means dwelling, and bulu means dirt or waste. In this context, *Mangholongi Bona Bulu* can be interpreted as the practice of maintaining the cleanliness of the residence and the surrounding environment. The practice of *Mangholongi Bona Bulu* reflects the concern and responsibility of the indigenous people of Tapanuli towards the environment around where they live. Through the act of maintaining cleanliness and environmental health, they strive to create a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment for their own lives and those of future generations.

*Mangholongi Bona Bulu*, in a philosophical context, can be understood as a concept that reflects man's relationship with the natural environment and ecological ethics. This concept teaches important values in maintaining cleanliness, health, and environmental balance as an integral part of human life. In the philosophy of *Mangholongi Bona Bulu*, there are several principles and meanings that can be analyzed as a connection with nature. This philosophy recognizes the close connection between man and nature. Man is considered part of the larger realm, and therefore, has a moral responsibility to maintain the cleanliness and health of the environment in which he lives (Baral 2023). This understanding reflects a holistic view in which human well-being is inseparable from the well-being of nature. The concept of *Mangholongi Bona Bulu* also emphasizes the importance of maintaining ecological balance. Through hygiene practices, the indigenous people of Tapanuli strive to maintain the sustainability of the ecosystem and harmony between humans, animals, plants, and the environment as a whole. It reflects an understanding of the interdependence and harmony that exists in nature. The philosophy of *Mangholongi Bona Bulu* also involves an ethical dimension. The indigenous people of Tapanuli feel a responsibility to keep their surroundings clean and healthy, for both current and future generations. It reflects an awareness of the impact of human actions on the environment and the need to act responsibly as protectors of nature.

This concept can also relate to the dimension of spirituality in the lives of the indigenous people of Tapanuli. In protecting the environment, they involve ancestral spirits and *debata*, which shows the belief that environmental cleanliness and health are part of their

spiritual practice and beliefs. In addition, this philosophy also values ecological and cultural diversity, recognizing the importance of maintaining biodiversity and cultural diversity in harmony. Overall, the philosophy of *Mangholongi Bona Bulu* offers a perspective on how humans should live in balance and harmony with nature. He teaches values such as connectedness, balance, responsibility, and spirituality that are cornerstones in safeguarding and protecting the environment in which we live. *Mangholongi Bona Bulu*, as a traditional value of Tapanuli, is in line with the principles of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*. In *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, there are teachings and values similar to the concept of *Mangholongi Bona Bulu* in protecting the natural environment and sustainability. These religious practices can influence and strengthen the understanding and application of *Mangholongi Bona Bulu* in daily life. For example, in Pandumaan-Sipituhuta Village, North Tapanuli, North Sumatra, the Batak Toba people have long practiced the concept of *Mangholongi Bona Bulu* in the management of customary forests. This forest is not only a source of life for them, but it is also considered an ancestral heritage that must be guarded and preserved. Conflicts with companies that want to convert customary forests into plantations encourage communities to fight for their ancestral land rights. In this case, *Mangholongi Bona Bulu* is applied through collective action to maintain customary forests and maintain environmental sustainability for future generations.

On Samosir Island, the Batak people carry out agricultural practices based on local wisdom which is in line with the concept of *Mangholongi Bona Bulu*. They use traditional, environmentally friendly techniques, such as natural irrigation systems and crop rotation, which are inherited by ancestors. In addition, there are community initiatives to develop agriculture-based tourism, which promotes local products such as coffee and medicinal plants. This effort not only preserves ancestral land but also improves the economic welfare of the local community. In Laguboti, the concept of *Mangholongi Bona Bulu* is embodied in a collective effort to build and maintain a Batak traditional house, or *Bagas Bolon*. The construction of this traditional house involves mutual cooperation of all community members, which is seen as a form of respect for ancestors and cultural identity. *Bagas Bolon* not only serves as a place to live, but also as a center of social and spiritual activities that connect the community with their cultural heritage. The maintenance of this traditional

house is an important symbol in maintaining the sustainability of traditional values in the midst of modernization.

The young generation of Batak, who are members of various environmental organizations around Lake Toba, have developed various conservation programs to preserve the lake which is considered a *Bona Bulu* for the Batak community. These programs include tree planting, garbage cleanup, and environmental awareness campaigns. This initiative shows how the value of *Mangholongi Bona Bulu* is internalized and applied by the younger generation to ensure that Lake Toba remains a source of healthy and sustainable life. The case of customary land protection in Humbang Hasundutan Regency shows how the Batak people apply the concept of *Mangholongi Bona Bulu* to protect their rights to their ancestral land. When there is a threat from a company that wants to take over customary land for commercial purposes, the community resists through legal channels and peaceful actions. They adhere to the principle that ancestral lands are not only an economic source but also an integral part of their cultural identity and sustainability.

On the other hand, there is the concept of 'caliph' which teaches that man is appointed as God's sovereign or representative on earth, and has the responsibility to guard and protect His creation, including nature. This concept is in line with the understanding of *Mangholongi Bona Bulu* in maintaining shelter and environmental cleanliness as a moral responsibility required by Islamic religious teachings. Thus, religion can provide a strong foundation, values, and motivation for the indigenous people of Tapanuli in carrying out the practice of *Mangholongi Bona Bulu*. Ethical and spiritual values in religion can strengthen and strengthen commitment in maintaining the cleanliness and sustainability of the environment in which they live (Islam et al. 2022). It is important to note that although religion can influence the understanding and practice of *Mangholongi Bona Bulu*, this tradition can also exist and be practiced separately from formal religion. This is because *Mangholongi Bona Bulu*, as an indigenous tradition, can also involve elements of spiritual beliefs and practices peculiar to the indigenous people of Tapanuli, who are not always tied exclusively to the religions present in the region.



### **From Pseudo-Ecology to Objective Ecology: A New Direction of Cultural Ecology-Religion**

A paradigm shift in how we understand the relationship between people, the environment, and the religious and cultural dimensions is essential. Traditionally, the environment has often been viewed as a resource to be exploited without much thought for the long-term consequences for sustainability and ecological balance. This narrow perspective treats the environment as an object to be used rather than respected. However, a new approach—rooted in an ecological-religious-cultural perspective—emphasizes objective ecology, which recognizes the interdependence between humans, nature, and the spiritual dimension. Objective ecology understands that the environment is not merely a resource for human use but a life partner that must be respected and preserved. In this framework, the environment is seen as a manifestation of divine power or God's majesty. Many religious and cultural traditions hold that humans have a moral responsibility to protect and care for God's creation. This perspective acknowledges that humans are an integral part of nature and are tasked with the role of caliph, or steward, of the Earth. This new ecological-religious-cultural direction promotes the integration of religious, cultural, and environmental values into daily life, encouraging sustainable practices and fostering a deeper respect for biodiversity. It calls for a heightened sense of social responsibility in maintaining the balance of ecosystems, recognizing that the well-being of humanity is deeply interconnected with the health of the natural world.

In the new ecological-religious cultural direction towards objective ecology, there are several additions that can be made to strengthen the understanding and implementation of environmental protection practices: First, Develop Interdisciplinary Studies, to develop an objective ecological perspective, studies and research involving collaboration between natural, social, and humanities disciplines are needed. Through an interdisciplinary approach, we can gain a richer understanding of the relationship between religion, culture, the environment, and human behavior. Second, Dialogue between Religion and Science, In order to strengthen the perspective of objective ecology, there needs to be dialogue and cooperation between religious leaders and scientists. Discussions on religious responsibility in safeguarding the environment and scientific discoveries on sustainability can enrich

understanding and joint action for environmental protection. Three, Consumer Awareness: Sustainable consumption is an important part of objective ecology. People need to be made aware of the impact of their consumption on the environment. Educating consumers about the concept of sustainable production and consumption, as well as promoting the principles of reduction, recycling, and wise use, can reduce pressure on the environment. Four, Preservation of Local Knowledge, involving local knowledge, traditions, and cultural practices in safeguarding the environment can be an important part of objective ecology. Traditional knowledge of sustainable nature management can be respected and learned to develop local solutions relevant to local conditions. Five, Sustainable Development, Objective ecology also considers the impact of development on the environment. It is important to apply a sustainable development approach that considers economic, social, and environmental aspects in a balanced manner. This involves the wise use of natural resources, the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and the development of environmentally friendly technologies.

Through these additions, the perspective of *Mangholongi Bona Bulu* in the ecological-religious cultural context can be strengthened and implemented holistically. With a deep understanding of the relationship between people, nature, religion, and culture, we can take more effective action in maintaining the sustainability and balance of ecosystems, and protecting the lives and sustainability of future generations. By adopting a new ecological-religious-cultural direction, at least it can strengthen understanding and collective action to maintain environmental sustainability. It involves changing our mindset and behavior as individuals and society as a whole, by integrating religious, cultural, and environmental values in every aspect of life.

## Conclusion

This study proposes a new direction of ecological paradigm that integrates *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and the indigenous religious concept of Tapanuli. The results show that this integration can be a solid foundation for building harmonious relationships between humans and nature and maintaining ecological sustainability. This ecological paradigm involves environmental principles in *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah*, such as nature maintenance and ecological

balance, as well as Tapanuli indigenous religious values, such as respect for nature and cooperation between mankind. This study has important implications in the development of ecological religious-cultural theory and practice. The results of this study emphasize the importance of incorporating ecological perspectives in the development of sustainable policies and practices. The government and stakeholders can formulate environmental policies that include the values of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and Tapanuli customs as the basis for policy formulation. For example, policies on forest conservation, natural resource management, and sustainable development can be regulated by taking into account the principles of nature conservation (*Hifz al-Bi'ah*) in *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* and local values such as respect for ancestral land (*Bona Bulu*) in Tapanuli culture. This can be realized through regional regulations or programs issued by local governments that focus on environmental conservation based on local wisdom. While this study emphasizes the importance of including an ecological perspective in public policy, the implementation of this paradigm faces bureaucratic constraints, different interpretations of the law, and resistance from stakeholders who may prioritize economic gain. The results of this study recommend that indigenous groups can be encouraged to form natural resource management organizations that focus on conservation and sustainable use. The organization should work with local governments and conservation agencies to implement management practices that are in line with *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* principles and Tapanuli customs, such as prohibition of poaching, sustainable deforestation, and protection of springs.

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