

# *Ali Yafie's Environmental Fiqh: The Contribution of Nusantara Ulama Thought in Responding to Indonesia's Ecological Crisis*

## **Fikih Lingkungan Ali Yafie: Kontribusi Pemikiran Ulama Nusantara dalam Merespons Krisis Ekologi Indonesia**

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### **Abstract**

This paper aims to analyze the construction of environmental fiqh pioneered by Ali Yafie from ontological, epistemological, and axiological perspectives, and how it is relevant to addressing the complex ecological issues in Indonesia. This study is a qualitative research based on a library research using a descriptive-analytical approach and content analysis to examine systematically the conceptual framework developed by Ali Yafie. The results of the study indicate that, ontologically, Yafie views the environment as an integral part of human life, and thus its existence must be preserved. Epistemologically, Yafie reconstructs the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* from the *ḍarūriyyāt al-khams* to the *ḍarūriyyāt al-sittah* by adding *ḥifz al-bī'ah* (environmental protection), thus showing that protecting the environment is a primary need for everyone. Axiologically, Yafie formulates fundamental principles that are important guidelines for every human being in protecting the environment, such as prioritizing *ḥifz al-nafs*, limiting consumption (*ḥadd al-kifāyah*), maintaining ecosystem balance, and recognizing that all creatures are noble (*muḥtaram*). These findings indicate that environmental fiqh is a revolutionary concept that combines normative principles with practical legal systems, thus giving rise to the legal ruling that preserving environmental sustainability is a *fard kifāyah* (collective responsibility). Thus, the environmental fiqh formulated by Yafie is highly relevant to environmental conservation efforts in Indonesia.

**Keywords:** *Environmental Fiqh, Ali Yafie, Nusantara Islamic Scholars, Environmental Conservation*

### **Abstrak**

Tulisan ini bertujuan menganalisis konstruksi fikih lingkungan yang dirintis oleh Ali Yafie ditinjau dari dimensi ontologis, epistemologis, dan aksiologis, serta bagaimana relevansinya dalam menjawab persoalan ekologis di Indonesia yang semakin kompleks. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif berbasis studi kepustakaan dengan pendekatan deskriptif-analitis. dan *content analysis* untuk mengkaji secara sistematis konstruksi pemikiran yang dikembangkan oleh Ali Yafie. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa secara ontologis, Yafie memandang bahwa lingkungan merupakan bagian integral dari kehidupan manusia, sehingga harus dijaga keberadaannya. Secara epistemologis, Yafie merekonstruksi kerangka *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* dari

*darūriyyāt al-khams* menjadi *darūriyyāt al-sittah* dengan menambahkan *hifz al-bī'ah* (perlindungan lingkungan hidup), sehingga menunjukkan bahwa menjaga lingkungan merupakan kebutuhan primer bagi setiap orang. Secara aksiologis, Yafie merumuskan prinsip-prinsip dasar yang menjadi pedoman penting bagi setiap manusia dalam menjaga lingkungan, yaitu memprioritaskan *hifz al-nafs*, pembatasan konsumsi (*hadd al-kifāyah*), keseimbangan ekosistem, serta seluruh makhluk adalah mulia (*muḥtaram*). Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa fikih lingkungan ini merupakan sebuah gagasan revolusioner yang mampu mengkombinasikan tataran normatif dengan sistem hukum praktis, sehingga melahirkan hukum bahwa memelihara kelestarian lingkungan adalah fardu kifayah (tanggung jawab kolektif). Dengan demikian, fikih lingkungan yang dirumuskan Yafie memiliki relevansi yang kuat dalam upaya konservasi lingkungan di Indonesia.

**Kata kunci:** *Fikih Lingkungan Hidup, Ali Yafie, Ulama Nusantara, Konservasi Lingkungan*

## Introduction

The global ecological crisis, marked by environmental degradation, climate change, and the excessive exploitation of natural resources, has become a serious issue requiring an interdisciplinary response, including from a religious perspective. In Islam, teachings of human responsibility as *khalīfah fī al-arḍ*, the principle of *mīzān* (balance), and the prohibition of *fasād fī al-arḍ* indicate that concern for environmental sustainability has a strong normative foundation.<sup>1</sup> However, in academic discourse, environmental studies in Islam have developed more within the framework of ethics and theology and have not yet been fully formulated into operational Islamic law (*fiqh*).

Several previous studies have shown that concern for the environment in Islam has long been developed through various approaches. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, for example, sees the environmental crisis as part of the spiritual crisis of modern humanity, which has lost its awareness of the sacrality of nature.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, Yusuf al-Qaradawi developed the concept of *ri'āyah al-bī'ah* as part of various Islamic studies such as tauhid, tasawuf, *fiqh*, *usul al-fiqh*, and *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*.<sup>3</sup> In the Indonesian context, Mujiono Abdillah emphasizes the importance of theological awareness in responding to

<sup>1</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Islam & Lingkungan*, Tangerang Selatan: Lentera Hati, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Man and Nature: The Spiritual Crisis of Modern Man*, London: Unwin Paowrbacks, 1990, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> Yusuf Qaradhawi, *Ri'āyah Al-Bī'ah Fi Syariah Al-Islām*, Kairo: Darus Syuruq, 2001.

environmental crises, although his approaches are still dominated by ethics and theology.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, a number of contemporary fiqh studies have begun to link the concept of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* with environmental issues; however, these studies generally remain conceptual in nature and have not yet developed into systematic and operational fiqh formulations.<sup>5</sup> This indicates a need to develop a framework for environmental fiqh that is not only normative but also practical in addressing contemporary ecological issues.

It is in this context that Ali Yafie's thought becomes important to discuss. As one of Indonesia's Muslim scholars and intellectuals known for his ideas on social fiqh, Yafie<sup>6</sup> has shown great concern for contemporary issues, including the environmental crisis. His contribution in this area can be seen in his book "*Merintis Fiqih Lingkungan Hidup*" (Pioneering Environmental Fiqh), which not only discusses environmental ethics but also formulates the environment as an integral part of the objectives of Sharia. With his book, he reconstructs the concept of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* from *ḍarūriyyāt al-khams* to *ḍarūriyyāt al-sittah* by adding *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* as a primary necessity.<sup>7</sup> This idea demonstrates an effort to shift the environmental discourse from ethics to a fiqh framework that has normative power in determining religious practices.

A review of previous research on Yafie's thought finds several studies that have discussed his ideas from various perspectives. Yulianto (2017), for example, discusses the ten foundational principles

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<sup>4</sup> Mujiono Abdillah, *Agama Ramah Lingkungan Perspektif Al-Qur'an*, Jakarta: Paramadina, 2001.

<sup>5</sup> M Hasan Ubaidillah, "(Formulasi Konsep Al- Maqasid Al-Shari'ah Dalam Konservasi Dan Restorasi Lingkungan)," in *Al-Qanun: Jurnal Pemikiran Dan Pembaharuan Hukum Islam*, vol. 13 no. 1 Tahun 2010; M Khusnul Khuluq, "Hifz Al-Bi 'Ah as Part of Maqashid Al-Shari'Ah and Its Relevance in The Context of Global Climate Change," in *Indonesian Journal of Interdisciplinary Islamic Studies (IJIIS)*, vol. 7 no. 2 Tahun 2025, <https://doi.org/10.20885/ijiis.vol7.iss2.art3>.

<sup>6</sup> Born in Donggala, Central Sulawesi, on September 1, 1926/ Safar 23, 1345 H. He was the chairman of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) from 1990 to 2000. He passed away on February 25, 2023. Syaifullah, "Mengenal Sosok Almaghfurlah KH Ali Yafie," in *Jatim.Nu.or.Id*, t.tp.: t.p., 2023, Diakses pada 25 March 2026.

<sup>7</sup> Ali Yafie, *Merintis Fiqih Lingkungan Hidup*, Jakarta Selatan: Ufuk Press, 2006, p. 224.

of Ali Yafie's social fiqh<sup>8</sup>; meanwhile, a study by M. Fathulbmu (2007) highlights environmental ethics in Ali Yafie's thought.<sup>9</sup> Another study by Rifqiya Hidayatul Mufidah (2016) examines the discourse on environmental fiqh by comparing the thought of Ali Yafie and Mujiono Abdillah,<sup>10</sup> while Fathorrahman (2020) examines Ali Yafie's social fiqh in response to the context of the New Orde regime.<sup>11</sup> In addition, there are studies that examine Ali Yafie's environmental fiqh in the context of the implementation of Islamic law; however, these studies are still mostly descriptive and have not yet positioned it as a systematic intellectual framework.<sup>12</sup>

However, based on these various studies, it can be concluded that analyses of Yafie's environmental fiqh are still partial and have not yet fully examined it as a conceptual project within Islamic law. These studies generally emphasize descriptive, comparative, or environmental ethical aspects and have not explicitly examined the epistemological reconstruction aspect of Yafie's approach to developing environmental fiqh. Thus, there is a gap in research regarding the interpretation of Yafie's thought as a paradigm shift from environmental ethics toward operational normative fiqh.

Based on this gap, this article aims to analyze Yafie's environmental fiqh as a form of progressive and contextual conceptualization of Islamic law in response to the ecological crisis in Indonesia. The focus of this study is how the construction of environmental fiqh formulated by Yafie is examined from ontological, epistemological, and axiological dimensions, as well as its relevance in addressing increasingly complex ecological issues. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the development of contemporary fiqh

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<sup>8</sup> Y Yulianto, "Mabadiâ Asyroh Nalar Fikih Sosial Ali Yafie," in *SHAHIH: Journal of Islamicate Multidisciplinary*, vol. 2 no. 1 Tahun 2017 hal. 21–36, <https://doi.org/10.22515/shahih.v2i1.725>.

<sup>9</sup> M Fathulbmu, "Etika Lingkungan (Studi Atas Pemikiran Ali Yafie)," Yogyakarta: Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, 2007.

<sup>10</sup> Rifqiya Hidayatul Mufidah, "Diskursus Pemikiran Fikih Lingkungan Ali Yafie Dan Mujiono Abdillah," in *Supremasi Hukum: Jurnal Kajian Ilmu Hukum*, vol. 5 no. 1 Tahun 2016, <https://doi.org/10.14421/sh.v5i1.1998>.

<sup>11</sup> F Fathorrahman, "Corak Pemikiran Fikih Sosial Kh. Ali Yafie Dalam Merespons Program Pemerintah Di Era Orde Baru," in *KODIFIKASIA Ученителни: STAIN Ponorogo*, vol. 14 no. 1 Tahun 2020 hal. 123.

<sup>12</sup> Muhammad Wafi Abdillah, "Actualization of Ali Yafie's Ecological Fiqh in The Dynamics of Indonesian Muslim Thought," in *Al'Adalah*, vol. 26 no. 1 Tahun 2023 hal. 89–100.

studies, particularly in formulating an Islamic legal paradigm that is responsive to the environmental crisis.

### **Method**

This study is a qualitative study based on library research that focuses on the analysis of the construction of environmental fiqh in the thought of Ali Yafie. The primary data for this study is Yafie's major book *Merintis Fikih Lingkungan Hidup* while the secondary data includes books, scientific journal articles, academic works, and previous research discussing environmental fiqh, *maqāṣid al-sharʿah*, and the thought of Yafie.

Data collection was conducted through documentary research by tracing, cataloging, and classifying relevant sources. Subsequently, the data were analyzed using the qualitative content analysis model as developed by Klaus Krippendorff.<sup>13</sup> The analysis was conducted through several stages, namely: (1) identification of units of analysis in the form of concepts, arguments, and propositions related to the environment in Yafie's work; (2) categorization of data into the three dimensions of the philosophy of science, namely ontology, epistemology, and axiology; (3) interpretation of the relationships between concepts to identify the structure of thought and patterns of argumentation used by Yafie; and (4) drawing conclusions regarding the construction of environmental fiqh as formulated by him.

The analysis of primary data was conducted through an in-depth reading of the text *Merintis Fikih Lingkungan Hidup* to identify the conceptual foundations and legal arguments employed by Yafie. Meanwhile, secondary data was analyzed comparatively and contextually to map Yafie's position within the discourse of contemporary environmental fiqh, while also assessing the contributions and distinctiveness of his ideas compared to those of other Islamic environmental thinkers.

As an interpretive framework, this study employs a philosophy of science approach encompassing ontology, epistemology, and axiology. The ontological dimension is used to examine Yafie's views on the nature of the environment and its relationship with humanity. The epistemological dimension is used to examine the sources, methods, and processes of *ijtihad* underlying the reconstruction of

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<sup>13</sup> Klaus H Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, London: Sage Publications, 2004.

*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* into *ḍarūriyyāt al-sittah* through the addition of the concept of *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah*. The axiological dimension is used to analyze the values, objectives, and practical implications of environmental fiqh in efforts to conserve the environment. Through this framework, Yafie's thought is understood not only as a normative concept but also as an intellectual construct that is relevant in addressing contemporary ecological crises.

### **The Ontology and Epistemology of Environment Fiqh by Ali Yafie**

Global technological advancements and economic progress have led to massive development. However, this development process often has negative consequences in the form of environmental damage. Natural resources are exploited without regard for sustainability, giving rise to various ecological problems. This situation is further complicated by humans' dominant view of nature, in which nature is seen merely as an object that can be freely exploited for human benefit.

Based on this reality, Yafie seeks to make the environment not only a technical issue, but a way of life rooted in religious values. Yafie presents an ontological perspective that positions the environment as an integral part of human life. The environment is no longer understood as a secondary entity, but rather as a primary necessity (*ḍarūriyyāt*) whose sustainability must be safeguarded, including the earth/land, water, air, and the ecosystems within them.<sup>14</sup>

There are two fundamental principles that form the ontological foundation of Yafie's thought. First, *rabbal-'ālamīn*. The Quran states at the beginning of its opening surah that Allah is the god of the universe. This means that Allah is not only the god of human beings, but the god of all entities in the universe. Humans and all entities in the universe stand on equal standing in front of Allah SWT as His creatures. Second, *rahmah li al-'ālamīn*. Humans have been entrusted by Allah to act with mercy toward all entities in the universe, not just toward other humans.<sup>15</sup>

This perspective forms the foundation for the development of environmental fiqh, in which the protection of the environment is positioned on the same level as the protection of other fundamental aspects of human life. Thus, efforts to preserve the environment are not

<sup>14</sup> Ali Yafie, *Merintis Fiqih Lingkungan Hidup, ...*, pp. 38–41.

<sup>15</sup> Ali Yafie, *Menggagas Fiqih Sosial: Dari Soal Lingkungan Hidup, Asuransi Hingga Ukhuwah*, Bandung: Mizan, 1994, pp. 10–15.

only an ethical choice, but also a fundamental necessity that determines the very survival of humanity itself.

In general, Yafie views fiqh as a guide for humanity to respond to the realities of life more effectively (*hayātan thayyibah*). There are four main topics of discourse in fiqh: *a* (guidelines for the relationship between humans and God); *a* (guidelines for human relationships with one another); *al-munākahah* (guidelines for human relationships within the family); and *al-jināyah* (guidelines for human social interactions aimed at safety). Fiqh studies themselves are always based on the values of utility (*al-maslahah*), justice (*al-'adālah*), mercy (*al-rahmah*), and wisdom (*al-hikmah*).<sup>16</sup> It is on this basis that he presents fiqh as a perspective for addressing environmental issues. He observes that environmental issues are deeply connected to the discussions of fiqh. Thus, this perspective is expected to guide Muslims in understanding environmental issues and their management.

Presenting fiqh as a perspective for understanding environmental issues is a progressive idea. Looking at the dynamics of Islamic scholarship from 1972<sup>17</sup> until Yafie presented his idea of environmental fiqh<sup>18</sup>, efforts to integrate environmental issues into the framework of Islamic law (fiqh) were still relatively limited. In fact, within the Islamic tradition, fiqh has a strategic position as a normative system that controls various aspects of Muslim life, adapting to changes over time and place. The absence of fiqh formulations that specifically address environmental issues means that the ecological values formulated in environmental ethics and theology have not yet fully attained operational normative force.

The development of environmental fiqh by Yafie is inseparable from the epistemological foundation used in constructing its legal framework. In this way, he uses *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* as the primary approach to addressing contemporary ecological issues.<sup>19</sup> This approach demonstrates that environmental fiqh does not come from a

<sup>16</sup> Ali Yafie, *Merintis Fiqih Lingkungan Hidup, ...*, pp. 41–43.

<sup>17</sup> The first United Nations Conference on the Human Environment was held in 1972 in Stockholm. Admin, "United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, 5-16 June 1972, Stockholm," in <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/environment/stockholm1972>, t.tp.: t.p., no date.

<sup>18</sup> Through his book "*Merintis Fiqih Lingkungan Hidup*" (Pioneering Environmental Fiqh) in 2006

<sup>19</sup> Ali Yafie, *Merintis Fiqih Lingkungan Hidup, ...*, p. 158.

purely normative source, but rather through an intellectual construction rooted in the Islamic legal tradition.

*Maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* is understood as the primary objectives of Islamic law, which are oriented toward the welfare of humanity, both in the short term and the long term.<sup>20</sup> Within this framework, Islamic law is not only understood textually but also substantively, taking into account the purposes and wisdom behind the legislation.<sup>21</sup> The *maqāṣid* approach allows for the development of Islamic law that is more responsive to social change, including in addressing environmental crises. Thus, the application of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* becomes an important bridge between religious texts and the ever-evolving ecological reality.

By applying *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, that is the *maslahah* approach, Yafie seeks to develop environmental fiqh as a discipline with a clear methodological foundation. Environmental fiqh is no longer understood as part of the study of Islamic law, but rather as a systematic study in response to ecological issues. This indicates that the development of environmental fiqh is part of an epistemological transformation within Islamic law, which seeks to make religious values the foundation for building sustainable ecological awareness and practices.

Within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, Imam al-Shatibi classified the *maslahat* into three levels<sup>22</sup>:

#### 1. *Ḍarūriyyāt* (Primary Needs)

The *maslahat* at this level is the most fundamental and primary reference in the implementation of Islamic law, as it is closely related to the survival of humanity and religion. If these needs are not satisfied, it will lead to the corruption or destruction of life. There are five fundamental *maslahats* known as the *ḍarūriyyāt al-khams*, including religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*), family (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*), and intelligence (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*). Al-Syatibi explains that *al-ḥifẓ* (preserving the *maslahat*) has two sides, *min jānib al-wujūd* (the side of existence) by fulfilling them, and *min jānib al-'adam* (the side of non-existence) by preventing their actualization. Al-Syatibi states that the preservation of acts of worship, *al-'ibādah*, (prayer, fasting, zakat, etc.),

<sup>20</sup> Abu Ishaq Al-Syatibi, *Al-Muwāfaqāt Jilid 2*, t.tp.: Dar Ibni Affan, 1997, p. 9.

<sup>21</sup> Muhammad Tahir Ibn Asyur, *Maqāṣid Al-Syarī'ah Al-Islāmiyyah Jilid 3*, Qatar: Kementerian Wakaf dan urusan Agama Islam, 2004, pp. 36–37.

<sup>22</sup> Abu Ishaq Al-Syatibi, *Al-Muwāfaqāt Jilid 2*, ..., pp. 17–23.



basic human needs (food, clothing, and housing) and transactions, *al-mu'āmalah*, are included in *min jānib al-wujūd*, that is, by implementing them. Meanwhile, matters of criminal law, *al-jināyah*, (hadd, qisas, etc.) are included in both categories, *min jānib al-wujūd* and *min jānib al-'adam*, meaning they are carried out when a violation occurs and efforts are made to prevent them from being carried out by avoiding their causes.

## 2. *Ḥājīyyāt* (Secondary Needs)

The *maslahat* at this level is the need to alleviate hardship (*raf' al-dhayaq*). If unfulfilled, it does not lead to harm, but rather causes difficulty and hardship. An example of the *maslahat* at this level is the existence of *rukhsah* (ease) in performing acts of worship for the sick, such as the permission not to fast during Ramadan.

## 3. *Tahsīniyyāt* (Tertiary Needs)

The *maslahat* at this level consists of supplementary needs aimed at achieving perfection. If these needs are not satisfied, there are no serious consequences; rather, it results in imperfection. An example is performing voluntary acts of worship, such as giving charity.

Based on the framework above, particularly regarding the aspect of *Ḍarūriyyāt*, the concept of *maslahat* as understood in the implementation of Islamic law is always oriented toward five fundamental aspects. No one has yet included environmental issues as part of these fundamental aspects. Yet, environmental degradation is now occurring on a massive scale across the globe and is impacting the sustainability of our way of life.

Observing that environmental degradation is now becoming increasingly massive across the globe, Yafie recognizes the importance of protecting and preserving the environment for every individual. Yafie classifies the urgency of protecting the environment as a fundamental (primary) need for everyone, which, within the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*, is classified as *Ḍarūriyyāt*.<sup>23</sup> This means that protecting the environment is closely linked to the survival of humanity and religion. If this need is not satisfied, it will lead to the deterioration or destruction of life.

Through the *maslahah* approach, Yafie reconstructs the concept of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* from the *ḍarūriyyāt al-khams* to the *ḍarūriyyāt al-*

<sup>23</sup> Ali Yafie, *Merintis Fiqih Lingkungan Hidup, ...*, p. 224.

*sittah* by adding *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* (environmental protection).<sup>24</sup> Although Yafie does not explain this in detail, only in the endnotes of the book's conclusion, what he has formulated from the beginning points toward this conclusion. This concept is not merely an innovation, but rather born from an *ijtihād* rooted in the awareness that the environment is an integral part of human life, not a secondary entity. Environmental issues are the responsibility of religious people and a mandate from God entrusted to them to protect it.

This reconstruction of the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* has very significant implications. By positioning the environment as a primary necessity for human survival, protecting the environment is no longer merely a moral and ethical recommendation regarding the environment, but rather becomes an obligation with legal consequences in Islam. Damaging the environment can be viewed as a distraction from the purpose of Sharia, as it has the potential to damage or destroy the sustainability of life as a whole.

Regarding environmental conservation, al-Qardhawi explains in the introduction to his book "*Ri'āyah al-Bī'ah fī Shari'ah al-Islām*" that the term *ri'āyah* is considered preferable to the term *himāyah*. The term *himāyah* is focused on protecting the environment from factors that could destroy it (*min jānib al-'adam/al-salb*). Meanwhile, the term *ri'āyah* is focused on protecting the environment from its own degradation and ensuring its sustainability / existence (*min jānib al-wujūd* and *min jānib al-'adam*). This aligns with what al-Syatibi explained regarding the concept of *ḍarūriyyāt*, that *al-ḥifẓ* (preserving the *maṣlaḥat*) has two sides, *min jānib al-wujūd* (preserving its existence) and *min jānib al-'adam* (preventing). By including *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* in the concept of *ḍarūriyyāt*, it can be concluded that environmental protection is not merely about preventing its destruction, but also about ensuring its sustainability.

Through his reconstruction of the *ḍarūriyyāt al-sittah*, Yafie not only responds to the environmental crisis but also establishes a new epistemological framework within Islamic jurisprudence by making the environment part of the primary objectives of Sharia. Yafie not only innovates by expanding the scope of the *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* but also brings about a paradigmatic transformation in Islamic law. This demonstrates that the environmental *fiqh* pioneered by Yafie has a

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<sup>24</sup> Ali Yafie, *Merintis Fiqih Lingkungan Hidup, ...*, p. 224.

strong conceptual foundation and is highly relevant in addressing contemporary ecological issues.

### **The Axiology of Environmental Fiqh: The Application of Values in Daily Life**

As part of his implementation of environmental fiqh, Yafie formulated a number of basic principles to serve as guidelines for environmental conservation. These principles demonstrate that the environmental fiqh he has formulated is not only theoretical but has a clear practical orientation in the lives of Muslims. There are six basic principles of obligation for environmental conservation<sup>25</sup>, they are:

1. The protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) as the basis for environmental protection

Ali Yafie identifies the protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) as the primary foundation of the *ḍarūriyyāt al-khams*, because without life, humans cannot practice their religion, develop their intellect, continue their lineage, or manage their property. In Yafie's view, the protection of life is not limited to human biological survival but encompasses all elements that sustain life. Therefore, the natural environment is a vital component that must be protected, as environmental degradation directly impacts human health, safety, and the continuity of life.

2. Life in this world is a bridge to the afterlife (*akhīrah*).

Yafie views worldly life and the afterlife as two interconnected realities. The world is a space for humans to perform good deeds, while the hereafter is the place where humans will be held accountable for all their actions. From this perspective, the relationship between humans and the environment has moral and spiritual dimensions. Preserving nature is part of the good deeds for which one will be held accountable before God, whereas damaging the environment is a form of deviation from humanity's responsibility as a creature entrusted with a sacred duty.

3. Production and consumption are limited to what is necessary (*ḥadd al-kifāyah*)

From Yafie's perspective, Islam does not prohibit people from enjoying worldly life, but regulates it so that the fulfillment of needs does not exceed reasonable limits. The concept of *ḥadd al-kifāyah* emphasizes that consumption must be within the bounds of necessity and not driven by excess (*isrāf*). This principle has ecological relevance

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<sup>25</sup> Ali Yafie, *Merintis Fiqih Lingkungan Hidup, ...*, pp. 163–89.

because excessive consumption will increase the exploitation of natural resources and generate more waste. Thus, limiting consumption is part of the effort to maintain environmental balance.

#### 4. Maintaining Harmony and Balance in the Ecosystem

Yafie emphasizes that nature was created by Allah within a balanced system, and every element has a function in sustaining life. Damage to one part of the ecosystem will affect the overall balance. Therefore, humans must not treat nature in an exploitative manner but must consider long-term sustainability in every activity involving the use of natural resources.

#### 5. All creatures are noble (*muḥtaram*)

In the concept of fiqh, all creatures have *muḥtaram* status, meaning they possess a value that must be respected and protected. While humans are permitted to utilize nature, this must not be in a manner that causes destruction, extinction, or disruption to the ecosystem. This principle demonstrates that environmental protection in fiqh is not solely oriented toward human interests but also encompasses respect for all creatures as part of the ecosystem.

#### 6. Humans are the stewards of nature who determine its sustainability

As beings with special dignity (*al-karāmah al-insāniyyah*), humans have the role of stewards of the earth and bear responsibility (*taḳlīf*) for their actions. Humanity's capacity for choice (*ikhtiyār*) and action (*kasb*) endows them with a moral responsibility toward the environment. Therefore, preserving the environment is a fulfillment of humanity's trust as stewards of the earth, whereas actions that harm the environment are a breach of that trust.

These are the six fundamental principles formulated by Yafie for environmental conservation. These principles demonstrate that the environmental fiqh pioneered by Yafie does not just focus on theory, but has also developed into a systematic axiological framework that serves as a guide for human behavior toward nature.

Furthermore, other than these principles, Yafie also directly integrates them into the study of fiqh, one of which is worship, where almost all fiqh studies follow the same structure, beginning with the chapter on *ṭahārah* (purification). One of the fundamental aspects of this chapter is the discussion of water as the primary media for purification, which can have implications for the state of purity and the validity of a Muslim's worship. In this context, environmental issues regarding

water pollution are no longer understood as ecological issues, but rather as legal issues that determine the validity of worship.

In classical fiqh, the quality of water is classified into four categories that determine its purity and suitability for use in daily activities and worship. In his book, Yafie not only explains what is found within the framework of classical fiqh, but also reinterprets it as part of this formulation of environmental fiqh.<sup>26</sup>

**First**, clean and purifying water (*tāhir muṭahhir*). There are seven sources of pure water (*mā' muṭlaq*) that are very good for the needs of all living creatures, including for the needs of worship. These seven sources are rainwater, seawater, river water, well water, spring water, snow, and dew. Essentially, these seven types of water are the primary sources of life as well as legal forms of purification for worship. Therefore, everyone is obligated to safeguard, protect, and preserve the purity of this water from contamination. Polluting this water not only causes ecological problems but also disrupts the performance of worship. Preserving the purity of this water is part of environmental conservation and, at the same time, the fulfillment of the basic rights of all living creatures.

**Second**, water that is clean and purifying but makruh to consume (*mā'u musyammas*), that is, water that has been heated under the sun in a specific container, making it potentially harmful to health. This water may be used for ritual purification but is dangerous if consumed. In this case, fiqh considers not only the aspect of purity but also the utility / *maslahat*.

**Third**, water that is clean but cannot be used for purification (*mā'u musta'mal*), that is, water that has already been used to clean something or has changed in quality (taste, smell, or color) due to mixing with other materials. In this context, Yafie relates this to contemporary phenomena such as water pollution caused by industrial/factory waste. Yafie states that water mixed with industrial/factory waste, even if it does not contain impurities (*najīs*) or dangerous substances, is not suitable for ritual purification.

**Fourth**, contaminated water or impure water (*mā'u mutanajjis*), which is water that has been contaminated by *najīs* (substances considered dirty in Islam) or substances dangerous to health. Yafie

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<sup>26</sup> Ali Yafie, *Merintis Fiqih Lingkungan Hidup, ...*, pp. 191–94.

classifies water that has been mixed with industrial waste and contains dangerous substances that can harm health into this category.

From these four classifications, it is evident that the environmental fiqh proposed by Yafie has a strong conceptual framework for addressing environmental issues. Yafie has successfully integrated classical fiqh with contemporary issues, so that water pollution is not merely viewed as an ecological issue but has direct consequences in fiqh law, specifically, it affects the validity of worship. Therefore, any industrial activity or any other activity that may pollute water is considered a violation of environmental ethics and Islamic law.

In addition to water, Yafie also discussed other elements such as soil (*al-Sha'id*) and air (*al-rīḥ*). In his presentation, he also stated that if the air we inhale or the soil we walk on is contaminated with dangerous substances, it will affect the quality of water. Water that rains down from the clouds or comes out of the ground will contain substances harmful to health. This means that such water is also classified as impure (*najīs*) and cannot be used for ritual purification.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, maintaining water quality must go together with maintaining the quality of the soil and air, because in reality, all these elements are created in an interconnected manner.

To conclude this discussion on environmental fiqh, Yafie determines that the obligation to preserve the environment is a *fardh kifāyah*. This *fardh kifāyah* is not to be understood as an obligation that can be fulfilled solely by a group of people, but rather as a social obligation/ collective obligation. This means that every individual, group, and company has a responsibility to preserve the environment. On this point, Yafie emphasizes that the government, as the entity entrusted with managing the affairs of the people, has the primary responsibility to protect the environment. The public is responsible for assisting in these efforts. As long as the environment remains polluted, all parties bear the sin.<sup>28</sup> This legal ruling is a progressive move by Yafie, as it elevates environmental issues to the level of a matter of religious law.

### **Ali Yafie's Progressive Paradigm of Environmental Fiqh in the Context of Indonesia's Ecological Crisis**

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<sup>27</sup> Ali Yafie, *Merintis Fiqih Lingkungan Hidup, ...*, p. 194.

<sup>28</sup> Ali Yafie, *Merintis Fiqih Lingkungan Hidup, ...*, p. 200.

In the context of the development of Islamic environmental thought in Indonesia, Yafie's concept of environmental fiqh can be understood as a progressive paradigm that arises from previous intellectual traditions while giving new direction to the development of Islamic law. To understand this progressive character, it is important to place Yafie's thought within the trajectory of the development of Islamic environmental discourse in Indonesia, particularly by comparing it with the thought of Mujiyono Abdillah, which emerged in an earlier period.

In *Agama Ramah Lingkungan Perspektif Al-Qur'an* (2001), Mujiyono Abdillah frames environmental issues within a theological framework. He emphasizes the integral relationship between God, humanity, and nature as a single cosmic unity that must be maintained in harmony. Environmental degradation is viewed as a consequence of humanity's loss of awareness regarding the mandate of *khalīfah* entrusted by Allah to humanity. Therefore, the solutions offered are more directed toward the cultivation of ecological ethics and spirituality through the internalization of Qur'anic values.<sup>29</sup> This approach makes a significant contribution to developing ecological awareness among Muslims, particularly through the strengthening of theological and moral dimensions in the relationship between humanity and the environment.

Different from Abdillah, Yafie does not stop at developing theological and ethical awareness, but shifts environmental issues into the domain of Islamic law. Through the concept of *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah*, Yafie seeks to position environmental protection as part of the objectives of sharia that must be protected. In fact, he proposes expanding the concept of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* from the five primary necessities (*al-ḍarūriyyāt al-khams*) to six primary necessities (*al-ḍarūriyyāt al-sittah*) by incorporating environmental protection as an inseparable element of human welfare. Within this framework, environmental conservation is no longer understood merely as a moral recommendation, but as a religious obligation with legal consequences. It is this shift in orientation from a theological approach toward a fiqh approach that demonstrates the progressive character of Yafie's thought within the discourse on the environment in Indonesian Islam.

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<sup>29</sup> Mujiyono Abdillah, *Agama Ramah Lingkungan Perspektif Al-Qur'an*, ...

This progressive character became increasingly evident as the development of Islamic environmental thought after Yafie showed a trend consistent with the direction he had pioneered. M. Quraish Shihab, for example, in *Islam dan Lingkungan* (2023) emphasizes the importance of Qur'anic principles such as balance (*mīzān*), the prohibition against causing corruption (*fasād fi al-arḍ*), and humanity's responsibility as stewards of the earth.<sup>30</sup> Although the primary focus remains on strengthening ethical and Qur'anic foundations, these ideas indicate a growing attention to environmental issues in contemporary Islamic thought.

Thus, if Abdillah represents the phase of strengthening theological-ecological awareness, then Yafie marks the phase of transforming environmental issues into a more operational framework of Islamic law. Meanwhile, the thought of Shihab demonstrates that concern for the environment continues to develop in various approaches to contemporary Islamic scholarship. Within this trajectory of development, Yafie occupies a significant position as one of the pioneers who successfully shifted environmental issues from the realm of ethics and spirituality to the realm of fiqh and the objectives of sharia. It is this position that keeps Yafie's environmental fiqh relevant and progressive in addressing Indonesia's ecological challenges to this day.

Talking about environmental issues in Indonesia, the country is among those with the highest levels of environmental degradation in the world. The quality of soil, water, and air has declined significantly due to pollution from industrial and household waste.<sup>31</sup> However, community efforts to preserve the environment have been overwhelmed by the ongoing destructive forces. In this context, the government's development policies play a key role. The rise of extractive industries, such as the proliferation of extractive industries, such as mining, large-scale plantations, energy, and infrastructure, is a major cause of various ecological disasters.<sup>32</sup>

Focusing on water issues in Indonesia, the National Water Quality Index (IKA) reached 54.78 in 2024. This situation indicates that the issue

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<sup>30</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Islam & Lingkungan*, ...

<sup>31</sup> Admin, "Data Kerusakan Lingkungan: Fakta, Dampak, Dan Upaya Pemulihan," in *Indonesia Environment and Energy Center*, t.tp.: t.p., 2025, Diakses pada 27 March 2026.

<sup>32</sup> Adam Kurniawan and Dkk, *Environmental Outlook 2025: Melanjutkan Tersesat, Atau Kembali Ke Jalan Yang Benar*, Jakarta: Eksekutif Nasional WALHI, 2025.



of water pollution in Indonesia can no longer be viewed solely as a technical issue of environmental management, but has become a social, economic, health, and even religious issue. Data from the Ministry of Environment shows that based on the results of water quality monitoring for the first half of 2025 at 4,482 monitoring points across 1,482 rivers, 70.7% of locations were found to be polluted.<sup>33</sup> Various rivers in Indonesia face alarming levels of pollution, such as the Citarum River in West Java, which has long been known as one of the most polluted rivers due to the accumulation of industrial, domestic, and agricultural waste.<sup>34</sup> Although its water quality has decline, the river is still utilized by the community for various needs, such as agricultural irrigation, fisheries, and certain household activities. Additionally, the Brantas River in East Java, which is a source of water for millions of people, also faces pollution from domestic and industrial waste that impacts the quality of raw water.<sup>35</sup> These conditions indicate that water pollution has become a real problem that directly impacts people's lives and the sustainability of ecosystems.

From Yafie's perspective on environmental fiqh, water pollution not only impacts the environment and health but also has religious implications, as water is an essential means for performing acts of worship. Yafie classifies the status of polluted water based on the level of pollution. Water that is polluted but not harmful can still be used for specific needs and is categorized as *mā'u musta'mal*, whereas water polluted by dangerous substances that destroy its basic qualities is categorized as najis water, which must not be used or consumed. This classification demonstrates that water pollution is not merely an ecological issue but also has legal consequences in the religious life of

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<sup>33</sup> Admin, "Menteri LH: Sungai Bersih Kunci Masa Depan," in *Kementerian Lingkungan Hidup / Badan Pengendalian Lingkungan Hidup Republik Indonesia*, t.tp.: t.p., 2025, Diakses pada 27 March 2026.

<sup>34</sup> Admin BBC, "Lima Tahun Citarum Harum: Sungai Penting Yang Masih Jadi 'Kakus Raksasa' Karena Limbah Tinja - BBC News Indonesia," in <https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/articles/cye4prp60l5o>, t.tp.: t.p., no date, Diakses pada 8 June 2026; Admin Waste4change, "Sungai Tercemar Sebagai Salah Satu Sumber Sampah Laut: Studi Kasus Sungai Citarum - Artikel Dan Berita Pengelolaan Sampah Dari Waste4Change," in <https://waste4change.com/blog/sungai-tercemar-sebagai-salah-satu-sumber-sampah-laut-studi-kasus-sungai-citarum/>, t.tp.: t.p., no date, Diakses pada 8 June 2026.

<sup>35</sup> Muhammad Favian and Felix Fernanda, "Dampak Sampah Rumah Tangga Terhadap Kualitas Air Sungai Brantas Di Kota Malang," vol. no. Tahun 2025 hal. 180–89.

society. The relevance of this concept becomes more apparent when linked to Indonesia's National Water Quality Index (IKA), which stood at 54.78 in 2024, indicating that the quality of Indonesia's water resources still faces serious challenges. Thus, environmental degradation cannot be separated from the disruption of the fulfillment of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* related to the protection of life (*ḥifẓ al-nafs*) and the protection of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*).

The relevance of Yafie's ideas is increasingly evident in the Indonesian context, which faces various ecological issues, such as river pollution, the waste crisis, and flooding. These conditions demonstrate that environmental degradation has affected various aspects of people's lives. In this situation, environmental fiqh, which integrates moral awareness and legal consequences, offers a relevant approach by making environmental conservation part of religious responsibility, both individually and collectively.

Nevertheless, the concept of environmental fiqh initiated by Ali Yafie still has a number of limitations. These limitations do not lie in its ontological or epistemological foundations, but rather in the scope of its axiological elaboration, which remains relatively limited. As a concept that Yafie himself refers to as a "pioneering idea," the discussion of environmental fiqh is primarily focused on issues of water, environmental pollution, and their implications for religious practices, particularly within the context of *ṭahārah*. Through this discussion, Yafie successfully demonstrates that environmental pollution not only impacts health and ecosystem sustainability but also affects the practice of religion.

However, the wide scope of the concept of *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* proposed by Yafie actually opens up opportunities for its further development into other areas of fiqh. One other environmental issue relevant to the current context in Indonesia is the phenomenon of food waste. Indonesia is among the world's largest producers of food waste, and this waste often increases during religious moments such as Ramadan and Eid al-Fitr. This phenomenon can be analyzed through Ali Yafie's framework of environmental fiqh, particularly the principle of *ḥadd al-kifāyah*, which emphasizes meeting needs proportionally and avoiding excess (*isrāf*). From this perspective, it can be applied to the context of fasting, not merely as refraining from food and drink during the day, but also as refraining from food waste during iftar and suhoor. For in

essence, fasting teaches humans empathy, not only toward fellow humans but also toward the environment.

Furthermore, the relevance of Yafie's environmental fiqh is evident in the development of contemporary Islamic law in Indonesia. One example is Fatwa No. 6 of 2025 issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), which prohibits the dump of waste into rivers, lakes, and the sea. Although it does not directly refer to Yafie's thought, the fatwa aligns substantially with the environmental fiqh paradigm he proposed, which positions environmental conservation as part of the public interest carrying religious legal consequences.

Overall, Yafie's environmental fiqh constitutes a significant contribution to the development of Islamic law responsive to the ecological crisis. Through the concept of *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah*, Yafie successfully integrates environmental issues into the framework of fiqh and the objectives of sharia. Although it still requires further development to address various contemporary ecological issues, his ideas remain relevant as a foundation for the development of Islamic law that is more contextual and oriented toward environmental sustainability.

## Conclusion

Ali Yafie's thoughts on environmental fiqh do not stand as a separate concept, but rather as a structured system of thought that encompasses well-established ontological, epistemological, and axiological foundations. Ontologically, this concept is based on Yafie's view that the environment is not a secondary object but an integral part of human life, and thus its existence must be preserved. Epistemologically, Yafie adopts fiqh as a framework, and through his *ijtihād*, he reconstructs the framework of *maqāṣid al-sharī'ah* from the *ḍarūriyyāt al-khams* to the *ḍarūriyyāt al-sittah* by adding *ḥifẓ al-bī'ah* (environmental protection). This demonstrates that protecting the environment is a fundamental (primary) need for everyone. And from an axiological perspective, Yafie formulated six basic principles that serve as important guidelines for every human being in protecting the environment. At the level of practical law, Yafie integrated classical fiqh with contemporary phenomena, which resulted in a law stating that preserving the environment is a *fard kifāyah* (collective responsibility).

This is a revolutionary idea from an Indonesian Muslim scholar. His ideas are highly relevant for addressing environmental issues in Indonesia specifically, and global environmental issues in general. The

approach he offers does not stop at the normative level but extends into practical legal systems. Although Yafie claims that his environmental fiqh is still in its initial stages, his ideas have already provided a new direction for responding to environmental issues that are becoming increasingly complex.

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