



## Islamic Holistic Approach to Ecology: An Examination of Al-Ghazali's Thought in the Context of Contemporary Environmental Ethics

Ahmad Zain Sarnoto<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Universitas PTIQ Jakarta, Indonesia

email: [ahmadzain@ptiq.ac.id](mailto:ahmadzain@ptiq.ac.id)<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

*This study examines the ecological dimensions of Al-Ghazali's thought in Ihya' Ulum al-Din through a conceptual hermeneutic approach and comparative analysis with contemporary environmental ethics. The objective is to reconstruct the ontological, ethical, and cosmological foundations of Islamic ecology based on the integrated concepts of Tawhid, Khalifah, and Mizan, and to assess their relevance within modern sustainability discourse. This research employs a non-empirical qualitative design relying on classical textual analysis and contemporary environmental literature. The findings indicate that Tawhid establishes an ontological unity of creation, Khalifah constructs a framework of human moral responsibility as trustees of the earth, and Mizan articulates cosmic balance as a normative principle of ecological stability. The integration of these three concepts produces a holistic ecological model that resonates conceptually with planetary boundary theory and sustainability ethics, while remaining grounded in a theocentric metaphysical foundation. The study concludes that Al-Ghazali's ecological thought is not only historically significant but also theoretically constructive for global environmental ethics. Its main contribution lies in the systematic reconstruction of Islamic ecology as an alternative paradigm in contemporary environmental studies.*

**Keywords:** Al-Ghazali, Islamic Ecology, Tawhid, Khalifah, Mizan.



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## INTRODUCTION

The accelerating degradation of global ecological systems has positioned environmental sustainability as one of the most urgent intellectual and practical concerns of the twenty-first century, particularly as empirical assessments by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 2023) demonstrate that anthropogenic pressures have already exceeded critical thresholds in multiple Earth systems, thereby destabilizing climatic, hydrological, and biospheric equilibria at planetary scale. This condition has been further theorized within Earth system science through the articulation of the “safe operating space for humanity,” which identifies quantified planetary boundaries whose transgression risks irreversible environmental tipping points (Rockström et al., 2009). Within this global context, environmental ethics has undergone significant epistemic expansion, shifting from narrowly technocratic sustainability models toward more integrative frameworks that incorporate psychological, cultural, and spiritual dimensions of human–nature relations, as evidenced by empirical findings linking nature relatedness with pro-environmental behavior and ecological concern (Nisbet, Zelenski, & Murphy, 2009). Such developments indicate a growing recognition that ecological crises are not solely technical failures but also reflections of deeper ontological and ethical orientations toward nature, thereby opening analytical space for religious and philosophical traditions to re-enter environmental discourse as normative knowledge systems rather than peripheral cultural narratives.

Within Islamic intellectual discourse, environmental ethics has increasingly been framed as a retrieval of classical cosmological and juridical resources capable of responding to modern ecological collapse, where scholars argue that Islamic thought contains an underdeveloped but structurally coherent environmental worldview grounded in concepts such as stewardship, balance, and divine trust (Haq, 2001). This trajectory has been further expanded through socio-ecological readings that emphasize Islam's potential contribution to conservation ethics and sustainability governance, particularly through its moral injunctions against environmental harm and its embedded principle of moderation in resource utilization (Kula, 2001). Contemporary scholarship has also highlighted the contextual urgency of integrating religion and ecology in diverse Muslim societies, particularly in Southeast Asia, where ecological degradation intersects with socio-religious life-worlds in ways that necessitate localized theological responses (Bagir, 2015). Parallel developments in applied Islamic

practice, including eco-Sufi movements, demonstrate how spiritual traditions can inform lived environmental ethics through experiential religiosity and communal ecological awareness, suggesting that Islamic ecological thought is not merely theoretical but also performative within social institutions (Khikamuddin & Ainiyah, 2024). At the epistemological level, recent reinterpretations of classical Islamic thinkers such as Al-Ghazali further reinforce the possibility of knowledge integration, where religious epistemology is increasingly read as compatible with contemporary interdisciplinary frameworks (Poya & Rizapoor, 2023), while pedagogical analyses also emphasize how Al-Ghazali's ethical framework continues to inform value-based education in Islamic contexts (Jalaldeen & Al-Hidabi, 2025), alongside moral philosophical interpretations that reaffirm his relevance for addressing modern ethical fragmentation (Irfani, Iqbal, & Nugraha, 2025).

Despite this growing body of scholarship, existing literature remains marked by several conceptual and analytical limitations that constrain the development of a fully coherent Islamic environmental ethic grounded in classical thought. The dominant tendency has been to treat Islamic ecological ethics either as a derivative of modern sustainability discourse or as a normative extraction of Qur'anic principles without sufficiently engaging the systematic philosophical architecture of classical scholars, thereby producing fragmented interpretations that lack internal theoretical integration. Even studies that address Islamic environmentalism more directly often prioritize jurisprudential or policy-oriented dimensions while neglecting metaphysical and epistemological foundations that structure ethical reasoning in classical Islamic thought, resulting in a conceptual disjunction between ethical prescriptions and their ontological justification. Furthermore, although Al-Ghazali is frequently cited as a moral authority, his ecological implications are rarely theorized in a systematic manner, leading to selective readings that emphasize spiritual ethics while overlooking the structural coherence of his worldview as an integrated system of knowledge, morality, and cosmology. This fragmentation reflects a broader inconsistency in the literature, where Islamic environmental ethics is simultaneously presented as universally applicable yet methodologically under-theorized, thereby limiting its capacity to engage in meaningful dialogue with contemporary environmental philosophy.

The persistence of these limitations generates an urgent need for a more rigorous intellectual reconstruction of Islamic ecological ethics that is capable of bridging classical philosophical traditions with contemporary environmental paradigms. In the context of escalating ecological instability and the intensification of climate-related risks documented at the planetary level, the absence of a coherent theoretical framework grounded in Islamic intellectual heritage represents not only an academic gap but also a missed opportunity for normative innovation within global sustainability discourse. The challenge is particularly acute given the increasing demand for culturally and religiously grounded environmental ethics that can mobilize moral agency across diverse societies, especially within Muslim-majority contexts where religious legitimacy plays a central role in shaping collective behavior. This situation underscores the necessity of moving beyond interpretive fragments toward a holistic reconstruction that can integrate metaphysical, ethical, and ecological dimensions into a unified analytical framework capable of addressing both conceptual clarity and practical applicability.

Within this intellectual landscape, the present study positions itself as a systematic effort to reconstruct Al-Ghazali's ecological thought as a holistic philosophical system rather than a collection of isolated ethical statements, thereby situating his work within the broader genealogy of environmental ethics while maintaining fidelity to its original epistemological structure. Unlike prior approaches that either modernize Islamic ethics through external frameworks or extract normative principles without structural analysis, this research seeks to demonstrate that Al-Ghazali's thought already contains an internally coherent ecological ontology grounded in divine unity, human trusteeship, and cosmic balance, which can be analytically mapped onto contemporary sustainability paradigms without reducing its theological depth. By situating Al-Ghazali within comparative environmental ethics, the study also contributes to reconfiguring the boundaries between religious philosophy and environmental science, thereby enabling a more integrated understanding of how pre-modern intellectual traditions can inform contemporary ecological theory. This positioning allows the research to operate at the intersection of intellectual history, normative ethics, and environmental philosophy, offering a multi-dimensional contribution to both Islamic studies and global environmental discourse.

The primary objective of this research is to develop a comprehensive analytical framework that articulates Al-Ghazali's ecological thought as a structured system of environmental ethics and to examine its relevance within contemporary ecological paradigms such as sustainability science, deep

ecology, and systems-based environmental governance. Methodologically, the study employs a philosophical-hermeneutic approach to textual analysis combined with comparative conceptual mapping in order to reconstruct the internal coherence of Al-Ghazali's ecological worldview while situating it within modern theoretical frameworks of environmental ethics. Theoretically, the study contributes to Islamic intellectual history by repositioning Al-Ghazali as a foundational thinker in ecological ethics, while simultaneously advancing environmental philosophy by introducing a theologically grounded alternative to dominant secular paradigms of sustainability. Methodologically, it further proposes an integrative model of analysis that bridges classical hermeneutics with contemporary interdisciplinary comparison, thereby offering a novel approach for studying pre-modern ethical systems in relation to global ecological challenges.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a non-empirical qualitative research design grounded in philosophical hermeneutics and conceptual analysis, as the primary objective is not to generate field-based or statistical data but to reconstruct and critically interpret the ecological dimensions embedded within Al-Ghazali's intellectual corpus in relation to contemporary environmental ethics. The primary data sources consist of classical Islamic texts authored by Al-Ghazali, particularly *Ihya' Ulum al-Din* and *Mizan al-'Amal*, accessed through authoritative Arabic editions and established English translations, alongside secondary scholarly literature in Islamic studies, environmental philosophy, and sustainability ethics. The selection of sources follows purposive criteria emphasizing textual authenticity, scholarly recognition, and relevance to ecological, ethical, and metaphysical themes. Complementary contemporary theoretical works in environmental ethics, including sustainability science and ecological philosophy, are used as comparative reference points to establish analytical resonance between classical Islamic thought and modern environmental paradigms.

The analytical procedure employs a hermeneutic-comparative framework, structured around iterative textual interpretation guided by Gadamerian hermeneutics, where meaning is derived through continuous movement between part and whole within Al-Ghazali's corpus and its broader intellectual context. The analysis proceeds through three interrelated stages: thematic coding of ecological concepts (such as Tawhid, Khalifah, and Mizan), interpretive reconstruction of their philosophical and ethical significance, and comparative mapping against contemporary environmental ethics frameworks. Analytical rigor is ensured through source triangulation between primary texts and multiple strands of secondary scholarship, as well as through reflexive interpretive consistency checks to minimize anachronistic readings. Rather than relying on statistical validity or reliability measures, methodological trustworthiness is established through coherence of interpretation, textual fidelity, and systematic comparison across theoretical domains, ensuring that the reconstructed framework remains both academically defensible and conceptually grounded within Islamic intellectual tradition.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Tawhid as Ecological Ontology in Al-Ghazali's Thought and Its Contemporary Environmental Correlates

The ecological ontology embedded in Al-Ghazali's concept of Tawhid emerges as a foundational axis through which the relationship between divinity, nature, and humanity is structurally unified within a single metaphysical horizon, where existence is not fragmented into secular and sacred domains but rather understood as a continuous manifestation of divine unity. Within this interpretive frame, ecological reality is not merely a physical system but a semiotic field of divine signs that demands ethical attentiveness and reflective cognition, a view that resonates with contemporary reconstructions of Islamic epistemology emphasizing integrative knowledge structures (Poya & Rizapoor, 2023). The hermeneutic reconstruction of Al-Ghazali's texts indicates that nature is conceptualized as an ontological extension of divine attributes, thereby repositioning environmental engagement as a form of theological recognition rather than instrumental rationality. Such a metaphysical positioning creates a structural divergence from modern anthropocentric environmental paradigms that reduce nature to resource systems, while simultaneously establishing a moral ontology that aligns ecological responsibility with spiritual accountability.

The interpretive mapping between Tawhid and ecological ethics reveals a structured parallelism with contemporary planetary-scale environmental concerns, particularly those articulated within Earth

system governance frameworks that emphasize systemic interdependence and threshold stability. The following analytical matrix demonstrates the conceptual correspondence between Al-Ghazali's Tawhid ontology and contemporary ecological paradigms:

**Table 1. Comparative Ontological and Ethical Structures of Tawhid-Based Ecology and Contemporary Environmental Ethics**

Conceptual Dimension	Tawhid-Based Ecology (Al-Ghazali)	Contemporary Environmental Ethics
Ontological Status of Nature	Manifestation of divine unity	Interdependent ecological system
Human Position	Steward within divine order	Agent within Earth system
Moral Foundation	Theocentric accountability	Scientific-risk responsibility

This table illustrates that while modern environmental frameworks prioritize systemic equilibrium and risk governance, Al-Ghazali's Tawhid embeds ecological balance within a transcendental moral structure that redefines environmental harm as metaphysical disintegration of unity. The synthesis of these frameworks reflects that ecological degradation, within the Tawhid paradigm, is not merely functional disruption but ontological disorder that violates the coherence of divine order (Haq, 2001). Such a reading extends environmental ethics beyond utilitarian sustainability models toward a metaphysically grounded normative system that integrates ontology, ethics, and cosmology.

Further interpretive analysis demonstrates that Tawhid functions not only as a metaphysical doctrine but also as an epistemological principle that governs how knowledge of nature is constructed and validated within Islamic intellectual tradition. This epistemic structure aligns with arguments that Islamic knowledge systems inherently resist fragmentation between empirical observation and spiritual cognition, thereby producing a unified interpretive field in which environmental phenomena are simultaneously physical and symbolic (Poya & Rizapoor, 2023). In this regard, ecological observation is not value-neutral but is embedded within a theological semiotics that interprets natural order as communicative evidence of divine coherence. Such integration contrasts sharply with secular environmental science, which typically excludes metaphysical interpretation from ecological analysis, thereby limiting its normative scope in addressing value-based environmental behavior.

The ethical implications of Tawhid-based ecology are further reinforced when examined through contemporary environmental behavioral studies, which demonstrate that ecological concern is significantly influenced by cognitive and affective connectedness to nature (Nisbet, Zelenski, & Murphy, 2009). Within Al-Ghazali's framework, such connectedness is not merely psychological but ontological, as human consciousness is positioned within a continuum of divine manifestation that dissolves strict subject-object dichotomies in environmental perception. This conceptualization suggests that environmental ethics grounded in Tawhid may produce deeper motivational structures for ecological responsibility than externally imposed regulatory frameworks. The alignment between internalized spiritual ontology and external environmental behavior thus constitutes a critical analytical bridge between classical Islamic thought and contemporary environmental psychology.

The integration of Tawhid into ecological discourse also reveals implicit structural affinities with contemporary critiques of environmental degradation at planetary scale, particularly those emphasizing systemic imbalance and threshold transgression as central ecological risks (Rockström et al., 2009). While planetary boundary theory operates within a scientific epistemology, its normative implications concerning systemic balance mirror Al-Ghazali's metaphysical insistence on unity as the condition of cosmic stability. The divergence lies not in the recognition of ecological limits but in the grounding of those limits, where Tawhid situates them within divine ontology rather than biophysical measurement alone. This distinction underscores the potential of Islamic ecological thought to contribute an alternative normative foundation to global environmental governance discourse.

The hermeneutic analysis further indicates that Tawhid functions as a regulating principle for ethical coherence across multiple domains of environmental interaction, including consumption,

production, and resource distribution. Within this framework, ecological imbalance is interpreted as a manifestation of ethical disintegration, where material excess corresponds to spiritual fragmentation, a view consistent with broader Islamic critiques of overconsumption and environmental wastefulness (Kula, 2001). This interpretive structure allows environmental ethics to be conceptualized not as an external regulatory system but as an extension of internal moral discipline. Consequently, ecological sustainability becomes inseparable from spiritual integrity, producing a unified ethical architecture.

The relational structure between Tawhid and ecological consciousness also finds resonance in contemporary Islamic ecological scholarship, which emphasizes the interconnectedness of religious worldview and environmental responsibility in Muslim societies (Bagir, 2015). However, the present analysis extends this discourse by demonstrating that Tawhid is not merely a cultural or religious motivation for environmental action but a comprehensive ontological system that structures perception, cognition, and ethical judgment. This repositioning challenges reductionist interpretations that treat Islamic environmental ethics as derivative of modern sustainability paradigms, instead asserting its independent philosophical coherence. Such coherence provides a robust conceptual foundation for integrating Islamic thought into global ecological theory.

The analysis further reveals that Tawhid-based ecology inherently resists dualistic separations between sacred and profane domains, thereby collapsing the conceptual divide that often structures modern environmental governance systems. In contrast to secular frameworks that compartmentalize ecological management within technical domains, Al-Ghazali's framework embeds environmental responsibility within universal metaphysical order. This structural integration enhances the normative depth of ecological ethics by linking environmental action to existential meaning. The implication is that ecological degradation becomes not only a policy failure but a disruption of existential coherence.

At the interpretive level, Tawhid also operates as a cognitive principle that shapes epistemic humility toward nature, recognizing the limits of human knowledge in comprehending divine order. This epistemological restraint contrasts with modern technocratic approaches that assume complete human mastery over ecological systems. The resulting ethical posture encourages precautionary engagement with nature grounded in reverence rather than domination. Such an orientation aligns indirectly with precautionary principles in environmental governance while exceeding them in metaphysical scope.

The cumulative analysis of Tawhid demonstrates its capacity to function as a comprehensive ecological ontology that integrates metaphysical unity, ethical responsibility, and epistemological coherence within a single interpretive framework. This structure provides a foundational basis for reconstructing Islamic environmental ethics as a theoretically rigorous alternative to fragmented modern ecological paradigms. The synthesis further indicates that Tawhid is not merely a theological doctrine but a systemic principle capable of informing contemporary environmental thought across disciplinary boundaries.

### **Khalifah as Ethical Stewardship and the Structuring of Environmental Responsibility in Al-Ghazali's Framework**

The concept of Khalifah in Al-Ghazali's intellectual architecture functions as a normative principle that reconfigures the human position within the ecological order from one of dominion to one of entrusted stewardship, where agency is inseparable from moral accountability before divine authority. Within the hermeneutic reading of *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, human beings are positioned as moral intermediaries who are granted temporary custodianship over natural resources, thereby transforming environmental interaction into an ethically charged responsibility rather than a utilitarian entitlement (Ramin, 2025). This interpretive structure aligns with broader Islamic ecological discourse that emphasizes stewardship as a foundational principle of environmental ethics, while simultaneously distinguishing it from modern anthropocentric governance models that prioritize instrumental efficiency over moral obligation (Haq, 2001). The Khalifah framework therefore establishes an ontological hierarchy in which ecological agency is embedded within a divinely regulated moral order rather than autonomous human rationality.

The analytical reconstruction of Khalifah reveals its structural compatibility with contemporary sustainability frameworks, particularly those emphasizing intergenerational justice and environmental governance accountability. The following comparative matrix illustrates the conceptual correspondence between Al-Ghazali's Khalifah doctrine and modern environmental stewardship paradigms:

**Table 2. Comparative Ethical and Governance Dimensions of Khalifah in Islamic Ecology and Contemporary Sustainability Frameworks**

Analytical Dimension	Khalifah (Al-Ghazali)	Contemporary Sustainability Ethics
Nature of Authority	Delegated divine trust	Institutional governance mandate
Ethical Orientation	Moral accountability before God	Regulatory compliance and responsibility
Temporal Scope	Earthly life + afterlife accountability	Intergenerational sustainability

This table demonstrates that while contemporary sustainability frameworks rely on institutional and procedural accountability mechanisms, Khalifah introduces a transcendent accountability structure that extends ethical consequences beyond temporal governance systems. The inclusion of eschatological responsibility significantly alters the motivational structure of environmental ethics, as ecological behavior is evaluated not only in terms of social impact but also in terms of metaphysical consequences (Irfani, Iqbal, & Nugraha, 2025). This dual-layered accountability framework introduces a normative depth absent in secular sustainability discourse, thereby expanding the ethical horizon of environmental governance.

The conceptualization of Khalifah also reflects a broader epistemic integration within Al-Ghazali's thought, where ethical responsibility is inseparable from spiritual cultivation and moral refinement. Within this framework, stewardship is not merely a functional duty but an expression of inner ethical development, where ecological responsibility is directly linked to the purification of the self from excess and moral corruption (Ghoni, 2026). Such integration aligns with interpretations of Al-Ghazali's moral philosophy that emphasize the unity between spiritual discipline and social responsibility, suggesting that environmental ethics cannot be separated from broader ethical formation processes. This internalization of ecological responsibility distinguishes Khalifah from externally imposed regulatory systems, embedding it instead within the moral psychology of the individual.

The hermeneutic analysis further indicates that Khalifah operates as a mediating concept between metaphysical principles and practical ecological governance, thereby translating abstract theological doctrines into actionable ethical frameworks. Within this structure, human beings are not autonomous agents but morally accountable trustees whose actions must reflect divine intentionality in maintaining ecological balance. This mediating function is particularly significant in contemporary environmental discourse, where governance systems often struggle to integrate normative ethical principles with operational environmental policies. Al-Ghazali's framework resolves this tension by embedding governance within a moral ontology that prescribes both intention and action.

The ethical implications of Khalifah become more evident when examined in relation to contemporary environmental degradation patterns, particularly those identified in global ecological assessments that highlight systemic overexploitation of natural resources (IPCC, 2023). Within the Khalifah paradigm, such overexploitation is interpreted not merely as policy failure but as ethical betrayal of a divine trust, thereby elevating environmental harm to the level of moral transgression. This interpretive shift reframes ecological crisis as a consequence of ethical dislocation rather than purely technological or economic imbalance. The result is a normative reorientation of environmental responsibility toward moral rectitude.

The relational structure between Khalifah and ecological governance also demonstrates significant resonance with Islamic conservation ethics, which emphasize regulated use of natural resources through juridical and moral constraints (Kula, 2001). However, Al-Ghazali's contribution extends beyond legalistic regulation by embedding conservation ethics within a broader metaphysical worldview that integrates spiritual accountability with ecological stewardship. This integration enhances the conceptual depth of environmental ethics by linking institutional governance with individual moral transformation. The resulting framework thus operates simultaneously at personal, social, and metaphysical levels.

The Khalifah principle also aligns with contemporary empirical findings in environmental psychology that demonstrate the role of moral identity and environmental connectedness in shaping pro-environmental behavior (Nisbet, Zelenski, & Murphy, 2009). Within Al-Ghazali's framework, however, such behavioral orientation is not primarily psychological but theological, as moral identity is derived from the recognition of divine trust rather than social or cognitive constructs. This distinction underscores the depth of motivational structure embedded within Khalifah, where environmental responsibility emerges from ontological recognition rather than external behavioral conditioning. The implication is that stewardship is sustained through internalized moral obligation rather than external incentives.

The interpretive mapping of Khalifah further reveals structural parallels with contemporary sustainable development frameworks, particularly those emphasizing governance accountability and ecological responsibility at institutional levels. However, Khalifah extends these frameworks by introducing a metaphysical dimension of accountability that transcends institutional temporality. This extension reconfigures environmental governance as a morally continuous process rather than a temporally bounded policy mechanism. Such continuity reinforces the enduring ethical nature of ecological stewardship.

At the epistemological level, Khalifah also functions as a cognitive framework that shapes human perception of environmental responsibility, where knowledge of nature is inseparable from moral obligation toward it. This integration reflects broader Islamic epistemological traditions that reject strict separation between knowledge and ethics, instead emphasizing their unity within a holistic worldview (Poya & Rizapoor, 2023). As a result, ecological knowledge becomes inherently normative, shaping not only understanding but also ethical conduct. This epistemic unity strengthens the coherence of environmental ethics within Al-Ghazali's framework.

The cumulative analysis demonstrates that Khalifah constitutes a multidimensional ethical structure that integrates metaphysical trust, moral accountability, and ecological responsibility into a unified framework of environmental stewardship. This structure offers a comprehensive alternative to fragmented modern environmental governance systems by embedding ecological responsibility within a coherent moral ontology. The Khalifah principle therefore operates as a foundational pillar in reconstructing Islamic environmental ethics as a systemically integrated and philosophically grounded approach to ecological sustainability.

### **Mizan, Ecological Equilibrium, and the Ethics of Environmental Balance in Al-Ghazali's Thought**

The concept of Mizan in Al-Ghazali's intellectual framework operates as a cosmological and ethical principle that regulates the order of creation through the idea of divinely instituted balance, where every dimension of existence is governed by proportional harmony rather than arbitrary expansion or uncontrolled excess. Within the interpretive structure of *Ihya' Ulum al-Din*, Mizan is not merely a physical metaphor but a metaphysical law that binds ethical conduct, ecological stability, and cosmic order into a unified system of equilibrium that reflects divine intentionality (Ruhullah & Ushama, 2024). This conceptualization positions environmental disruption as a violation of ontological balance rather than a purely material distortion, thereby elevating ecological degradation to a moral and metaphysical crisis. Such a framing resonates with broader Islamic intellectual traditions that interpret natural order as an expression of divine proportionality embedded within creation (Ramin, 2025).

The structural relevance of Mizan becomes clearer when compared to contemporary ecological governance frameworks that emphasize planetary thresholds and systemic stability as prerequisites for sustainability. The following analytical table illustrates the conceptual correspondence between Al-Ghazali's Mizan and modern ecological equilibrium models:

**Tabel 3. Mizan as a Principle of Ecological Equilibrium: A Comparative Analysis between Islamic Cosmological Ethics and Contemporary Earth System Governance**

<b>Analytical Dimension</b>	<b>Mizan (Al-Ghazali)</b>	<b>Contemporary Ecological Governance</b>
Core Principle	Divinely ordained balance	Systemic ecological equilibrium
Nature of Disorder	Moral and metaphysical excess	Biophysical system destabilization

<b>Analytical Dimension</b>	<b>Mizan (Al-Ghazali)</b>	<b>Contemporary Ecological Governance</b>
Regulatory Logic	Ethical moderation (Iqtisad)	Planetary boundary compliance

This comparative structure indicates that while modern ecological science defines balance through measurable thresholds and system dynamics, Mizan frames equilibrium as an ethical necessity grounded in divine order, thereby integrating normative judgment into ecological analysis (Rockström et al., 2009). The implication of this divergence is significant, as it transforms ecological imbalance from a technical anomaly into a violation of ethical proportionality. Within this framework, environmental sustainability becomes inseparable from moral discipline, where ecological excess reflects ethical deviation rather than merely inefficient resource use.

The hermeneutic reconstruction of Mizan further reveals its embeddedness within Al-Ghazali's broader ethical theory of moderation, particularly the principle of Iqtisad, which governs human behavior through the regulation of excess and deficiency. This ethical moderation extends beyond individual conduct to encompass collective ecological interaction, thereby positioning environmental sustainability as a manifestation of moral equilibrium in human action. Such integration reflects interpretations of Al-Ghazali's moral philosophy that emphasize the unity of ethical behavior across personal, social, and environmental domains (Irfani, Iqbal, & Nugraha, 2025). The result is a holistic ethical system in which ecological balance is inseparable from human moral formation.

The Mizan principle also demonstrates significant analytical resonance with contemporary sustainability science, particularly frameworks that conceptualize Earth systems as dynamically balanced yet vulnerable to nonlinear disruptions. Within this context, ecological crises such as climate change and biodiversity loss are interpreted as manifestations of systemic imbalance triggered by human overreach beyond ecological thresholds (IPCC, 2023). Al-Ghazali's framework, however, introduces a normative dimension to this analysis by interpreting such imbalances as consequences of ethical transgression rather than purely anthropogenic pressure. This ethical reframing enhances the interpretive depth of ecological analysis by linking systemic instability to moral causality.

The relational structure between Mizan and ecological ethics also aligns with Islamic jurisprudential traditions that emphasize proportionality and moderation in legal and social conduct. Within these traditions, environmental harm is conceptualized as a form of excess that disrupts both natural and social equilibrium, thereby necessitating corrective ethical intervention (Kula, 2001). Al-Ghazali's contribution lies in extending this juridical principle into a cosmological framework where balance becomes a universal law governing both nature and morality. This extension significantly broadens the scope of environmental ethics by embedding it within a comprehensive metaphysical system.

The interpretive analysis further indicates that Mizan functions as a cognitive framework that shapes human perception of environmental limits, where awareness of balance becomes a guiding principle for ethical decision-making. This cognitive orientation is consistent with empirical findings in environmental psychology, which demonstrate that perceived connectedness to nature influences ecological responsibility and behavioral restraint (Nisbet, Zelenski, & Murphy, 2009). Within Al-Ghazali's framework, however, this awareness is not merely psychological but ontological, as balance is perceived as an inherent property of existence rather than an external environmental condition. This ontological grounding strengthens the normative force of ecological restraint.

The integration of Mizan with contemporary environmental paradigms further reveals its compatibility with global sustainability frameworks that emphasize systemic resilience and adaptive capacity. However, Mizan diverges from these frameworks by embedding resilience within a moral-ontological structure rather than a purely functional or technical system. This distinction allows environmental balance to be understood as both a scientific and ethical imperative, thereby bridging normative and empirical dimensions of ecological governance. The result is a more comprehensive understanding of sustainability that integrates value and system dynamics.

At the epistemological level, Mizan reinforces Al-Ghazali's broader theory of integrated knowledge, where understanding of nature is inseparable from ethical cognition and spiritual awareness (Poya & Rizapoor, 2023). This integration challenges modern epistemic divisions between scientific analysis and ethical interpretation, proposing instead a unified cognitive framework in which knowledge of ecological systems inherently includes normative judgment. Such integration enhances

the coherence of environmental ethics by eliminating the separation between descriptive and prescriptive domains. The implication is that ecological knowledge is always already ethical knowledge.

The cumulative analysis demonstrates that Mizan functions as a comprehensive principle of ecological equilibrium that integrates cosmological order, ethical moderation, and cognitive awareness into a unified framework of environmental balance. This structure provides a robust alternative to fragmented modern ecological models by embedding sustainability within a coherent metaphysical and ethical system. The principle of Mizan therefore constitutes a central pillar in reconstructing Islamic environmental ethics as an integrated and normatively grounded approach to global ecological challenges.

## CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that Al-Ghazali's ecological thought constitutes a coherent and systematically integrated framework in which Tawhid, Khalifah, and Mizan function as interconnected principles forming a unified ontology of human–nature relations. Tawhid establishes the metaphysical foundation of ecological unity, positioning nature as a manifestation of divine oneness, while Khalifah defines human existence as a moral trusteeship grounded in accountability toward the Creator, and Mizan articulates the principle of cosmic equilibrium as the governing logic of ecological order. The interrelation of these three constructs reveals that environmental degradation is not merely a technical or material disruption but an ethical and metaphysical rupture within the divinely ordained order of existence. When positioned within contemporary environmental ethics, this framework demonstrates notable conceptual convergence with sustainability theories, particularly in its emphasis on balance, responsibility, and systemic integrity, while maintaining a distinct theocentric foundation that differentiates it from secular ecological paradigms. Accordingly, Al-Ghazali's ecological vision offers a philosophically robust alternative model that integrates spirituality, ethics, and cosmology into a unified normative structure capable of enriching contemporary global environmental discourse.

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