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Bio-prospecting in the Pharmaceutical Field: A Maqasid Al-Shari'ah Perspective

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Abstract

Bio-prospecting refers to the search for new sources of biodiversity with social and economic significance, particularly within the pharmaceutical sector, where its role is the most prominent. Situated within the broader framework of environmental protection and sustainability, bio-prospecting intersects with various related concepts, including biodiversity, conservation, natural resources, natural products, ethical conduct, traditional knowledge, drug discovery, intellectual property rights, and the green economy. While Islamic scholarship has extensively addressed environmental protection and sustainability, academic discourse on bio-prospecting from an Islamic perspective remains scarce. This paper aims to explore the Qur'anic perspective on bio-prospecting through a review of relevant literature. It applies the Maqasid methodology for the following: (1) identify Qur'anic concepts relevant to bio-prospecting, and (2) determine the missing link between conventional and Islamic-based approaches to bio-prospecting. The study finds that Qur'anic principles such as stewardship (khalifah) and trusteeship (amanah) provide an ethical framework for resource utilization. Maqasid al-Shari'ah is identified as the critical bridge connecting conventional bio-prospecting with an Islamic worldview. Halal science emerges as a practical pathway for implementing Maqasid-based bio-prospecting, particularly in guiding ethical and sustainable pharmaceutical research and drug development. This approach aims to fulfill humanity's role as stewards of the Earth while seeking mardhatillah (the pleasure of Allah), thus harmonizing scientific innovation with spiritual accountability. ©

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