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## Eco-Theology in Islamic Thought: Religious Moderation and Organizational Roles in Mining Management in Indonesia

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<p><b>Article History</b></p> <p><b>Received:</b> 25 October 2024</p> <p><b>Revised:</b> 01 December 2024</p> <p><b>Accepted:</b> 01 December 2024</p> <p><b>Published:</b> 08 December 2024</p> <p><b>Keyword:</b> Eco-Theology; Environment; Mining: Religious Moderation;</p> <p>Copyright (c) 2024 Taufik Hidayatulloh, Theguh Saumantri</p> 	<p>With the increasing irresponsible exploitation of natural resources, environmental damage has become increasingly concerning, particularly in the mining sector, which has a broad impact on ecosystems and the livelihoods of surrounding communities. The environmental crisis caused by mining activities in Indonesia demands a new approach to more sustainable resource management. This study aims to explore the role of religious moderation from the perspective of eco-theology, which has the potential to offer solutions for natural resource management. Eco-theology provides spiritual principles that can be integrated into environmental policies, creating a balance between economic interests, ecology, and societal well-being. This research is a literature review employing a descriptive analysis method. The results show that eco-theology offers a relevant framework for shifting the paradigm of mining management from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism. Religious organizations have great potential to promote sustainable mining management by incorporating spiritual values into environmental practices. Religious moderation serves as a foundational pillar in strengthening ecological awareness, improving the relationship between humans and nature, and encouraging sustainable development aligned with religious principles.</p>

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## Introduction

Indonesia, as a country rich in natural resources, particularly in the mining sector, faces significant challenges in the management of these resources, which have considerable environmental impacts. While the mining industry contributes substantially to the economy, issues such as ecosystem degradation, pollution, and deforestation are often overlooked. The corruption case in the tin mining sector in the Bangka Belitung Islands, which resulted in environmental damage amounting to IDR 271.06 trillion, highlights the destruction of forests and land, emphasizing the need for a deeper understanding of the environmental consequences involved (Anitasari, 2024).

National news has highlighted the granting of permits to religious organizations to participate in the supervision and management of the environment, including in the mining sector. This permit reflects the recognition of the important role that religious organizations play in promoting sustainable natural resource management based on religious values. The two largest religious organizations, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, have been given priority for Special Mining Business License Areas (WIUPK) by the administration of President Joko Widodo through Government Regulation No. 25 of 2024, acknowledging the historical role of religious leaders in the fight for independence (Indonesia, 2024).

The Chairman of PBNU, Yahya Cholil Staquf, stated that the mining concession granted by the government is crucial for NU to support its religious and social activities, including the thousands of educational institutions they manage. NU plans to manage the mine through cooperatives involving its members by forming a limited liability company (PT). Gus Yahya also emphasized that NU has professional personnel ready to manage the mining operations, but the concession must be located in areas that do not disrupt the local community. Additionally, the management of the mine must take into account the moral responsibility towards the environment and the welfare of society (Setiawan, 2024).

The Central Board of Muhammadiyah has received a mining permit from the government, based on the consideration that Indonesia is not yet fully prepared for an energy transition and still relies on coal to prevent an energy crisis. Azrul Tanjung, Chairman of the Environmental Council of PP Muhammadiyah, explained that Muhammadiyah plans to operate the mine while beginning the energy transition with a commitment to responsible mining practices. They will implement a "green mining" program, including land rehabilitation and reforestation post-mining, as well as empowering local communities. Additionally, Azrul noted that this permit might also be granted as a form of government recognition for Muhammadiyah's contributions to the nation (Redaksi, 2024).

Religious organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah play a crucial role in shaping societal views and behaviors. Beyond empowering their members and improving community welfare, they act as a bridge between religious teachings and sustainable environmental management. Given the environmental impact of mining, their involvement adds religious, moral, and ethical dimensions, ensuring mining practices prioritize environmental preservation and societal well-being. A comprehensive and integrative approach is needed in resource management, one that balances economic gains with social and environmental considerations. Religious moderation, which rejects extremism, is increasingly relevant and can be applied by integrating religious values with responsible economic practices, promoting balance between economic growth, environmental sustainability, and

social welfare.

The concept of Eco-theology emerged as a response to the need for a holistic approach in balancing human needs with environmental preservation, grounding actions in the spiritual and moral values of religion. Religious teachings, such as those in Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, and Buddhism in Indonesia, support environmental conservation, exemplified by the Islamic concept of "khalifah," which teaches that humans are stewards of the earth (Iswanto, 2017). While the involvement of religious organizations in mining management has sparked debate, this study will focus on a theoretical analysis of the interaction between religion and humans in natural resource management.

Previous research on Eco-theology in Indonesia has predominantly focused on theoretical studies, agricultural issues, and water resource management, while attention to the mining sector remains limited. For example, the study by (Mardhiah et al., 2014a) concluded that Islam has an ecology-oriented theology, with NU and Muhammadiyah, through LPBI-NU and the Environmental Council of PP Muhammadiyah, playing important roles in environmental conservation through community-rooted programs. Meanwhile, (Aditama et al., 2023) examined the concept of eco-theology from a philosophical perspective within Islam and Christianity, analyzing the role of religious organizations in environmental management. This research concluded that both Islam and Christianity emphasize humanity's role as stewards of the environment, environmental justice, divine responsibility, collectivism, and spiritual values in ecology. In Islam, the role of collectivism is strongly evident through organizations like Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah, with the primary differences lying in doctrinal foundations and organizational movements.

However, studies specifically linking Eco-Theology, religious moderation, and mining management in Indonesia remain scarce. This research is expected to contribute new insights to the discourse by focusing on how religious organizations can serve as agents of change in promoting more environmentally and socially responsible mining practices.

## Research Method

This study employs a literature review method, focusing on the collection and analysis of data from various relevant sources such as books, scholarly journals, articles, research reports, and other documents related to the research topic (Miles et al., 2014). This method is supported by a qualitative-descriptive approach, aimed at providing a deep and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation, particularly regarding the role of religious organizations in the management of mining in Indonesia.

In the initial stage of the research, the researcher identifies theories and constructs a conceptual framework by reviewing various relevant theories, particularly those related to eco-theology and religious moderation, in order to establish the foundational ideas for analysis. Although this study is based on a literature review, the data collection process involves mapping various documents related to the practices produced by religious organizations in mining management, such as activity reports, case studies, and relevant research. In addition, the study also includes indirect observation of policies and practices implemented by religious organizations, as well as their impact on environmental management related to mining operations.

After the data has been collected, the researcher proceeds to the data analysis stage, which is conducted descriptively, following the guidelines proposed by (Consuelo, 2013), to provide a systematic and factual overview of the phenomenon under investigation. In this analysis, the researcher performs thematic analysis, focusing on the relationship between religious values and mining management practices, and linking these findings to Islamic theology concepts related to ecology. In the final stage, the researcher synthesizes and interprets the findings, illustrating the impact of the role of religious organizations in mining management. The results of this analysis are expected to provide an overview of the contribution of religious organizations in managing mining operations sustainably in accordance with religious teachings.

## Results and Discussions

### *Eco-theology in Religious and Environmental Practice*

Eco-theology is a discipline that examines the relationship between nature and theology, aiming to identify benefits for both the environment and human life. Etymologically, eco-theology is derived from two words: ecology and theology. Ecology, borrowed from the Greek language, consists of "oikos" (home or dwelling) and "logos" (thought or theory). In Arabic, ecology is referred to as 'ilm al-bi'ah, meaning home or place of residence (Ali & Muhdor, 2013). Marthinus Ngabalin explains that ecology is understood as a branch of science that studies the "Home" or "habitat" of various organisms and the interactions between organisms and their environment (Ngabalin, 2020). On the other hand, theology in this context refers to the study of divine aspects, including the study of God's nature and His relationship with the universe. The term theology, derived from the Greek word *theologia*, is similarly expressed in English as *theology* (Berger, 2010).

Eco-theology represents an innovative and productive form of theology in the development of theological thought within Islamic studies. Generally, eco-theology originates from the premise of examining the relationship between human religious paradigms and the environmental crisis (Borrong, 2019). In the context of Islam, eco-theology is understood as a religious belief system that addresses environmental issues in accordance with Islamic teachings. This theological concept can be applied as a theological guide in the management of the environment and natural resources (Ridwanuddin, 2017).

The universe is understood as a home for all creatures, fostering awareness of the importance of harmonious relationships among beings in accordance with their respective roles. These relationships aim to prevent widespread damage. Theology serves as a foundation for achieving harmony, with the understanding that all creatures are interconnected as creations of God, responsible for maintaining the balance of nature. The contextualization of theology in environmental studies addresses the issue of environmental degradation, with eco-theology reflecting the relationship between God, humans, and nature in the face of the environmental crisis (Fios, 2013).

Therefore, ecology is understood as the study of the environment, while theology is the study of God or belief in the Divine. When these two concepts are discussed together, an understanding emerges regarding the relationship between God, humans, and the environment. A dialogue among these three elements is necessary to ensure that ecology not only examines the relationship between humans and the environment but also provides a philosophical and moral foundation for

human behavior. Additionally, this dialogue is essential to ensure that theology continues to serve as a moral guide in caring for the environment where humans coexist. It is important to note that, historically, theology has often focused solely on defining God and truth, which has sometimes led to unproductive debates, as the focus was on justifying individual beliefs (Aditama et al., 2023).

Islam, as the majority religion in Indonesia, is often expressed through two major Islamic organizations: Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah. Since its establishment, NU has identified itself as an organization that preserves traditions and the nation's noble cultural values, reflected in the principle "*al-Muhafazatu 'ala al-qadim al-salih wa al-akhidhu bi al-jadid al-aslah*" (maintaining the good old traditions and adopting better new ones) (Darajat, 2017). On the other hand, Muhammadiyah is a movement of *dakwah* (preaching) and *tajdid* (renewal). As outlined in the *Risalah Islam Berkemajuan*, Muhammadiyah emphasizes the formation of a truly Islamic society, not only through the enhancement of individual piety but also through social piety, focusing on community empowerment as part of its mission (Sandiah, 2022).

Both of these Islamic mass organizations consistently advocate for Islamic moderation, both through the educational institutions they manage and through their socio-political-religious activities (Nasikhin et al., 2022). NU emphasizes the importance of providing moral guidance to Muslims, particularly its followers (*nahdliyyin*), in raising environmental awareness through the issuance of religious decrees (*fatwas*). Additional steps have been taken, such as the establishment of the *Bank Sampah Nusantara* program. However, culturally, these *fatwas* are often seen as having limited impact without formal support from environmental policies and political frameworks that promote sustainable development. Without such support, it is challenging to achieve a direct influence on society and to create a binding "force" that engages the broader community. Nevertheless, NU's ecological *fatwas*, formulated through the Bahtsul Masa'il forum, are highly strategic in addressing Indonesia's environmental crisis, reflecting NU's strong socio-historical commitment to sustainable development in the country (Mufid, 2020).

One of the institutions focused on environmental issues is the Nahdlatul Ulama Disaster Management and Climate Change Institute (*Lembaga Penanggulangan Bencana dan Perubahan Iklim Nahdlatul Ulama - LPBI NU*). This institution serves as NU's structural and organic representative in implementing policies and programs related to disaster management, climate change, and environmental conservation. The establishment of LPBI NU was approved during the 32nd NU Congress in Makassar in 2010. The institution's vision is "To realize a community that is resilient and adaptive to disasters, environmental degradation, and climate change."

On the other hand, Muhammadiyah has the *Pedoman Hidup Islami Warga Muhammadiyah* (PHIWM), a set of Islamic values and norms derived from the Qur'an and Sunnah that guide the behavior of Muhammadiyah members. One of its principles states that the environment, as part of Allah's creation and mercy, must be cultivated, preserved, and not destroyed (Permadi et al., 2022). Every Muslim, especially members of Muhammadiyah, has the obligation to conserve natural resources and ecosystems to maintain ecological processes that support life, protect the diversity of genetic resources and various ecosystems, and ensure that natural resource management is conducted in a controlled and sustainable manner.

In 2000, Muhammadiyah formulated an environment-based movement that includes (1) environmental theology, (2) environmental education integrated into schools and \*pesantren\* (Islamic boarding schools), and (3) training for faith-

17 based environmental movement leaders. This initiative is part of the mission of the Muhammadiyah Environmental Council, aimed at developing environmental education to foster awareness and eco-friendly behavior, positioning Muhammadiyah as a pioneer in environmental preservation efforts. One of the manifestations of Muhammadiyah's progressive Islam in its second century is its active involvement in addressing ecological crises at regional, national, and global levels (Mustofa, 2023).

As part of Islam's development in its second century, Muhammadiyah has demonstrated a strong commitment to addressing ecological crises at various levels. While the renewal era was marked by a rejection of stagnation and Islamic formalism, in this second century, Muhammadiyah's movement focuses on environmental advocacy closely tied to human existence. One such initiative is an awareness-raising program aimed at increasing environmental consciousness among Muhammadiyah members (Mardhiah et al., 2014). This program is designed to carry out campaigns on environmental management and preservation, with the goal of enhancing environmental awareness and promoting eco-friendly behavior among Muhammadiyah members.

### **Self-Critique of the Role of Religion and Environmental Protection**

In the 21st century, all religions face a common challenge: how to preserve and strengthen their noble and universal values amidst the rapid and massive tide of modernization. The intense exchange of global cultures has triggered significant socio-cultural changes, making the world seem smaller and more interconnected. Humanity's boundless desires are increasingly facilitated by sophisticated and instant market products, further intensifying this shift (Rider, 2010).

Information technology and media have further reinforced market culture, permeating all layers of society, including religious communities. In this context, many things, including religion and its symbols, can be commodified and commercialized. The rapid pace of social and economic transformation has led to the destabilization of religious identity within religious communities (May et al., 2014). In response to this instability, many individuals seek new moral sources through religion. Simultaneously, products related to spirituality are increasingly marketed, catering to consumers seeking a more personal religious identity within the "spiritual market" (Fealy, 2018). These factors contribute to the commodification and commercialization of religion.

6 In simple terms, commodification is the process where faith and religious symbols are transformed into merchandise that can be bought and sold for profit. Greg Fealy, in his book, explains that the commercialization of religion occurs when religious teachings or symbols are treated as commodities that can be sold for profit (the turning of faith and its symbols into a commodity capable of being bought and sold for profit) (Fealy, 2018). In this context, commodification refers to the shift from 11 an object's use value to its exchange value, meaning that goods or concepts are no longer valued for their utility but rather for what they can be sold for in the market.

According to (Kalia, 2023) her research explains that the commodification of religion reflects a shift from deep spiritual meaning towards economic and material functions. When religion and its symbols are traded in the marketplace, core values

2 that should form the foundation of religious teachings—such as devotion to God, social responsibility, and moral virtue—risk becoming distorted. Religious symbols, rituals, and even religious lifestyles are turned into consumable products, not only for adherents but for anyone interested in purchasing and experiencing spiritual

offerings.

Religion, which should serve as a spiritual and moral guide, is now often treated as a commodity that can be bought and sold. This phenomenon goes beyond the commercialization of religious symbols in products; it also involves the simplification of religious values into individual consumer products tailored to market demands. This trend illustrates the increasing privatization of religion and spirituality, where individuals are no longer tied to larger religious communities but instead shape their religious identities based on personal preferences (Hidayatulloh et al., 2023). Spiritual products such as books, seminars, digital apps, and religious pilgrimages are designed to fit modern, fast-paced, and instant lifestyles.

In this context, there is a risk that essential religious values, such as social justice, empathy, and responsibility towards others and the environment, may be overshadowed by a focus on personal satisfaction and economic gain.

The commodification of religion can reduce its teachings to merely fulfilling individual needs, rather than serving as a source for broader social and spiritual transformation. The challenge for religious communities and leaders is to balance using technology and media to spread religious teachings while avoiding the trap of commercialization that could obscure core values. In a modern capitalist system, this commodification is driven by market logic, where profitable aspects of religion are emphasized. As a result, religious identity is shaped more by consumer choices in the spiritual marketplace than by tradition or moral commitment, potentially weakening religion's role as a transformative force in society (Douglas Crow, 2015).

When religion is treated as a commodity, the sacred values underlying it become vulnerable to degradation. This commodification process places religion within the logic of the market, where aspects deemed "marketable" are prioritized over those that truly reflect spiritual essence. The repackaging of religious symbols for market appeal turns religious practices into products that can be consumed based on consumer preferences (Saumantri, 2023). As a result, religion experiences a banality and a dilution of meaning, losing the spiritual depth that should be at the core of its teachings.

Furthermore, the corruption of spirituality becomes an increasing problem when religion is used as a tool for worldly interests, particularly in the context of political and economic power. Those with economic and political influence exploit religion to strengthen their legitimacy and achieve their goals, often disregarding the negative impacts on society and the environment. A clear example is the granting of mining concessions to religious organizations, illustrating how the commodification of religion can cause significant harm not only to spiritual aspects but also to social and ecological sustainability (Ramadhan, 2019).

Religion, which fundamentally aims to provide moral and ethical guidance, risks losing its transformative role when drawn into market mechanisms. This not only undermines the integrity of religion but also threatens the sustainability of communities and the environment that religious teachings are meant to protect (Saumantri, 2022). When religious institutions are co-opted by the interests of large corporations, particularly through corrupt practices, the moral and ethical values upheld by religion risk becoming distorted. Religion, which should serve as a pillar of justice and societal welfare, is instead used to legitimize actions that contradict its teachings. This demonstrates how religion can be instrumentalized to reinforce narratives that benefit the economic and political elite, with little regard for the broader impact on society (Linge, 2017).

Granting mining concessions to religious organizations is a risky move that opens the door to further politicization and commercialization of religion. This creates a moral dilemma for religious institutions, which may be tempted by promises of material gains but risk damaging their integrity in the eyes of their followers. Ultimately, the negative impact extends beyond the erosion of public trust in religious institutions to the environment itself, which becomes increasingly vulnerable to exploitation, justified by the misuse of religious arguments.

### **Religious Moderation: Reorienting Religion, Humanity, and Nature**

In the contemporary era, the relationship between religion, humanity, and nature has gained increasing attention, particularly in addressing global challenges such as climate change, resource exploitation, and environmental degradation. Severe environmental damage and its impact on human life call for a shift in thinking that incorporates ethical and theological dimensions, not just scientific ones. The environmental ethics movement has emerged in response to the secular anthropocentric view supporting capitalism, offering a culture-based approach that emphasizes the limits of natural resources, the balance of nature, and the importance of maintaining a harmonious relationship between humans and the environment.

In the perspective of religious moderation, the relationship between humans and nature is not merely one of utilization but also an ethical relationship governed by religious values that emphasize harmony and sustainability. Some have highlighted the importance of religion in social life, encouraging activists and movements to reassert its significance. Among social scientists, there has been a growing interest in directing studies toward the sociology of religion. Stark proposed the rational choice theory, suggesting that humans instinctively seek to explain worldly phenomena, including those beyond empirical observation, through a supernatural lens (Stark, 2017). The evolution of religion is driven by human interaction with supernatural forces, such as God, mediated by religion as a rational means to maximize benefits and avoid losses in life (Klimova, 2020).

Religion transforms life through a constructivist approach, where religious values concerning the environment are internalized by individuals as part of their subjective reality. These values become central to one's self-concept, which is then used to shape and construct objective reality, including the natural environment. When religion serves as a guide in shaping human relationships with nature, ethical behavior and a sense of responsibility toward the environment naturally emerge. Religion emphasizes the importance of preserving nature because it holds intrinsic value that must be respected, thereby deepening the often overlooked connection between humans and the environment (Makmur et al., 2021).

The environment, as God's creation, is a complex system involving interactions between natural components and reflects God's will to teach humanity about His oneness and greatness. Environmental degradation is often caused by human actions that disregard their ecological impact. Religion plays a crucial role in shaping human behavior to preserve and protect the environment (Ilyas, 2018).

Religious moderation in the relationship between humans and nature is becoming increasingly important amid the global environmental crisis. Recognized as one of the greatest challenges of this century, this crisis has led to natural disasters, climate change, global warming, and declining quality of life, all of which threaten the sustainability of the planet. Experts believe that the environmental crisis is largely driven by the anthropocentric paradigm, where humans view themselves as

the center of the universe, leading to excessive exploitation of nature without regard for ecological balance (Sukarna, 2022).

An adaptive attitude towards social, cultural, and natural environments shapes an individual's character to appreciate nature and maintain life's balance. Habits play a crucial role, as they refine human capabilities through the practice of good behaviors. The anthropocentric view, where humans strive to dominate nature without considering its balance, is cautioned against in QS. Al-Rum [30]: 41, which describes the destruction on earth as a result of human actions.

This verse emphasizes that the primary cause of the environmental crisis is human actions that dominate (*taskhir*) and exploit nature without considering the balance of benefit (*maslahat*) and harm (*mafsadat*). As a result, recurring disasters, such as seasonal floods and forest fires, continue to pose threats. Environmental damage from mining activities in Indonesia has become a serious issue, affecting both the environment and local communities. The exploitation of natural resources, such as coal, nickel, gold, and other minerals, is often carried out without regard for environmental sustainability. The direct impacts of mining include deforestation, water pollution, loss of biodiversity, and soil degradation.

Unsustainable mining leads to deforestation, which plays a crucial role in carbon absorption and regulating the water cycle. This results in floods, landslides, droughts, and disruption of ecosystems and local livelihoods. Water pollution from mining waste also threatens aquatic life and reduces access to clean water for communities. Environmental damage from mining is common in resource-rich regions such as Kalimantan, Sumatra, and Papua. In Kalimantan, coal mining has destroyed tropical forests and polluted rivers, while in Sulawesi and Papua, nickel and gold mining has damaged ecosystems, destroyed wildlife habitats, and created conflicts with indigenous communities. This damage highlights the need for a moderate approach to natural resource management, balancing economic use with environmental sustainability in line with ethical values and religious teachings.

Environmental experts such as Ali Yafie, Mudhofir Abdullah, and Sukarni argue that environmental crises, including natural disasters, stem from poor relations between humans and nature, where humans tend to dominate and exploit nature without considering the consequences. In the context of religious moderation, the principle of *mashlahat* is crucial in maintaining balance between humans and the environment. *Mashlahat*, often equated with *al-maqashid al-syar'iyah*, is a concept of goodness used to prevent environmental damage by protecting religion, life, intellect, progeny, and property (Herlina, 2021). Yusuf al-Qaradhawi emphasizes that protecting the environment is as important as protecting religion, and harming the environment is akin to desecrating the sanctity of religion. He links *mashlahat* with the value of *ihsan* (doing the best) (Al-Qaradhawi, 2017). Exploring the meaning of *ihsan* in the Qur'an, particularly in QS. Al-Isra [17]: 7, reveals values of benefit and responsibility.

The concept of *ihsan* in the Qur'an, as explained in QS. Al-Isra [17]: 7, encompasses the values of benefit and responsibility, which include the relationship between humans and God, fellow humans, and nature. Doing good towards nature is rewarded with goodness, freshness, and beauty. Ali Yafie argues that protecting the environment is crucial for the future and for addressing the current environmental crisis. Therefore, environmental preservation can be incorporated into the *maqashid al-shariah* under the term *Hifzh al-Bi'ah* (Yafie, 2016).

According to Izz al-Din bin Abd al-Salam, the concepts of *mashlahat* and its opposite, *mafsadat*, in the traditions of Islamic jurisprudence, theology, and ethics

give rise to the concept of *ishlah*, which means "to improve, preserve, and protect," while its opposite, *ifsad*, means "to corrupt." The concept of *ishlah* is linked to *ifsad* in the context of the earth, as mentioned in QS. Al-A'raf [7]: 56.

The word *ishlah* and its derivatives are mentioned 181 times in the Qur'an, emphasizing the importance of protection and improvement. In contrast, the term *ifsad* refers to destructive actions, as expressed in verses that prohibit harm to the earth. In the context of religious moderation, the principles of *mashlahat* and *ishlah* should be applied in everyday environmental conservation (Zulkayandri, 2017). Hubungan antara manusia dan alam seharusnya beralih dari paradigma antroposentrisme, yang fokus pada eksplorasi, ke paradigma ekosentrisme yang ramah lingkungan. Paradigma ekosentrisme memandang manusia dan lingkungan sebagai entitas yang saling terkait. The relationship between humans and nature should shift from an anthropocentric paradigm focused on exploitation to an ecocentric paradigm that is environmentally friendly. The ecocentric paradigm views humans and the environment as interconnected entities. In line with Nasr's perspective, the anthropocentric theory regarding the concept of *khalifah* as *al-'alam al-shaghir* (microcosm) should be reinterpreted to accommodate broader interests, namely the universe as *al-'alam al-kabir* (macrocosm). Therefore, human views of nature must change, based on the values of *mashlahat*, *ishlah*, and *ihsan*. As the most perfect beings on earth, humans have the responsibility as *khalifah* to protect and preserve the environment (Nasr, 2004).

Preserving nature is a responsibility that is not easy, especially considering the ongoing exploitation and the neglect of the moral rights of ecosystems by modern humans. Sayyid Hossein Nasr argues that environmental issues cannot be solved solely through a scientific-technological approach; they require a spiritual approach as well (Nasr, 1976). The current ecological crisis is attributed to a lack of spirituality and ethical values in addressing environmental problems. Self-restraint from the greed that often drives humans to fulfill their needs, which are actually false desires, is key to saving the earth. Religious perspectives that teach contentment with what one has stand in stark contrast to modern human desires, which tend to be insatiable (Restu Aulad Al-Fattaah et al., 2023).

A solution to the environmental crisis lies in the resacralization of nature and science (*scientia sacra*). This involves reviving metaphysical principles both in the universe and within science itself. Sacred science, unlike secular science, which operates within a framework of materialism and secularism, views nature as a sacred reality (*vestigia dei/ayatullah*) rather than merely profane (Widiyanto, 2017). By restoring the sacred value to both nature and science, we can address the modern civilizational crisis, which includes the environmental crisis and the spiritual crisis.

Humans must view nature as an integral part of life, where nature and its contents glorify Allah in their own ways. As part of the natural world, humans are tasked with maintaining balance (*tawazun*) in accordance with the concept of \**khalifatullah fi ardh\** in the Qur'an, which designates humans as stewards responsible for caring for the earth with the intellect bestowed upon them by Allah. Unfortunately, humans often end up harming nature. In the context of religious moderation, the principles of *mashlahat* (benefit), *ishlah* (improvement), and *tawazun* (balance) are essential. These principles require humans to act for the common good, restore the environment, and maintain harmony between human needs and the sustainability of nature. This approach emphasizes the spiritual and moral responsibility of humans in preserving ecosystem balance for the long term.

## Conclusion

Eco-theology in Islam emphasizes the importance of a harmonious relationship between God, humans, and nature as a shared responsibility in maintaining environmental balance. Islamic organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah play a key role in applying the values of religious moderation for environmental preservation, through fatwas, social programs, and environmental education. These two organizations not only teach ecological awareness within the framework of Islamic theology but also encourage concrete actions in the sustainable management of natural resources, making eco-theology a moral and social foundation in addressing the environmental crisis in Indonesia.

In this contemporary era, religion faces significant challenges due to modernization and commodification, where its spiritual values are increasingly commercialized for economic gain. This process transforms religion into a personal consumption product, diminishing its depth and undermining its role as a moral guide. The main challenge for religion is to maintain a balance between utilizing technology to spread religious teachings without sacrificing its spiritual essence and morality. Religious moderation views the relationship between humans and nature as an ethical relationship that involves religious values to create harmony and sustainability. In addressing the environmental crisis, triggered by natural exploitation and climate change, religion plays a crucial role in shaping responsible human behaviour toward nature. The concepts of *mashlahat*, *ishlah*, and *tawazun* teach the importance of balancing the use of nature with the preservation of ecosystems, along with the understanding that humans, as *khalifah* (stewards) on Earth, have a moral duty to care for and preserve nature.

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