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**RESETTING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HUMAN AND NATURE:
RELIGION AND THE NEW COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES**

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Abstract: In an increasingly digital era, the spread of negative content on social networks and online platforms has become an increasingly profound issue, especially in religious aspects. This study examines the evolving dynamics between religion and new media technologies and their combined impact on humans' relationship with nature. As society becomes increasingly connected through digital media, the role of religion in shaping environmental ethics and behavior becomes increasingly important. This research aims to explore how religion and new media technologies intersect and have the potential to change our relationship with the environment. This research examines how society understands information and communication technology. How do Indonesian people, especially in Bali Province, understand the spread of negative content and the benefits of technological developments for religious and human relations. The method used in this research is a quantitative approach using Microsoft Excel to collect data and using SPSS version 26 software to process the data. The total number of respondents was 92 people. Univariate analysis is used to see each variable's frequency and percentage. The research was conducted in Bali Province around September 2023. The study revealed that 73% of the respondents had more than six years of experience using the Internet. Additionally, 59 respondents acknowledged their proficiency with technological usage. Efforts to enhance digital literacy in society are necessary due to the misuse of technology by a few individuals. Another critical aspect to consider is the religious perspectives regarding technology in the digital age.

Key words: digital era, religion, communication, human and nature, technology.

1. Introduction

The phenomenon of religious life in the current era has undergone many changes. The presence of information technology has succeeded in transforming conservative religious practices into something new (Tawaqal and Meltareza 2022, 209). Exposure to ideas and values on social media shapes Millennials' religious views. The widespread presence of gadgets has given this generation a unique way of life, even in the realm of religion. The millennial generation is known for its intelligence, love of technology, modern lifestyle, practicality, and efficiency, which ultimately influences the form of da'wah (Ihsani and Febriyanti 2021, 24). Communication facilities and mass media, which previously experienced slow development, have now experienced significant changes, so the current era is called the information and communication era (Dalimunthe et al. 2023, 2). According to BPS data from the 2022 Susenas poll, 66.48% of Indonesians accessed the Internet in 2022, up from 62.10% in 2021. This high level of Internet penetration indicates the environment's openness to information as well as the public's acceptance of technical innovations and changes. The rapid development of mobile phones must be linked to Indonesia's large number of Internet users. By 2022, the number of Indonesians who own a mobile phone is expected to reach 67.88%. This number has increased compared to the conditions in 2021, which reached 65.87% (BPS 2023).

Digital technology has influenced almost every aspect of human life. These changes include communicating, gathering information, accessing resources, and sharing ideas. In that context, religion and human life issues are increasingly being reflected in the digital world (Campbell 2012, 67). On the other hand, the emergence of social networks and content-sharing platforms has become a forum for spreading extremist views and content contrary to religious values. This raises philosophical questions about how society should respond to and resolve these challenges from a religious and ethical perspective (Ihsani and Febriyanti 2021, 34; Bietti 2020, 2). Dialogue and debate are ubiquitous in modern society, especially on various social media platforms. Regardless of their educational background or level of expertise, online users engage in discussions and even mock and/or belittle the religious beliefs of others with little or no remorse (Sumaryani and Yogiswari 2023, 1).

As technology becomes increasingly complex, the issue of the relationship between technology and religion gains prominence. The rapid development of science and technology is accompanied by a significant number of people who coexist with technology (Dalimunthe et al., 2023, p. 5). Additionally, media technology can facilitate an understanding of theology and reflect religious sensitivities. Technological

media plays a crucial role in shaping and maintaining religious practices while also facilitating religious understanding (Blondheim and Rosenberg 2017, 44). Blondheim & Rosenberg (2017, 45) also explain that media technology shapes religious experiences, allows people to participate in religious practices from a distance, and facilitates communication between people who share the same beliefs.

The role of religion in the digital era has undergone significant changes. In the digital era, religion is more easily accessible via the internet and social networks. However, on the other hand, the digital era also brings new challenges to religion, such as the spread of false information and the negative influence of social networks. Therefore, religion must adapt to the digital era and utilize communication technology to strengthen religious messages and expand their reach.

Media technology has been used as a parable or metaphor to understand complex religious concepts. Therefore, media technology is essential in shaping and maintaining religious practices and facilitating religious understanding. The rapid spread of information and communication activities across multiple media platforms, particularly social networks, has become a source of concern. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the problem, with several false news articles regarding the virus's origin and transmission circulating online (Yang and Tian 2021, 2; Valencia-Arias et al. 2023, 2).

Social media platforms (whether trusted by users or not) have emerged as the primary channel for transmitting content that penetrates social reality (Pérez-Escoda et al. 2021, 3; Valencia-Arias et al. 2023, 2). In this context, religion also plays an essential role in shaping human perceptions of nature. Many religions teach about human responsibility towards nature, view nature as a divine creation, and encourage environmental protection and respect. On the other hand, new communication technologies can raise awareness of environmental issues, support sustainable action, or separate humans from nature. As a result of this transformation, it has become increasingly important to understand how religion and new communications technologies interact and how these interactions influence humans' relationship with nature. This research aims to discover how people understand technology and communication use in the digital era. The study presents demographic information pertaining to age, education, internet usage experience, occupation, monthly expenses, and internet plan expenses of the participants. It also discusses respondents' understanding of technology.

1.1. Religion in new era

Religion often becomes a tool for individuals to reflect and search for meaning. Religious practice and reflection can help individuals understand themselves, overcome challenges, and achieve personal and spiri-

tual growth (Villani et al. 2019, 2, 8). Religion influences the way individuals interact in social contexts. In many societies, religion promotes mutual respect, care for others, and solidarity within the community. Religion can also be the basis for forming specific communities and social groups. Therefore, it is important to provide religious education to all individuals in order to effectively confront global challenges (Seriadi et al 2023; Wika et al 2023, 2).

Other aspects of life, such as the economy, society, and education, are interdependent and form relationships with religion. Religion and economic activity in the context of meeting basic needs, such as religion, impact career choices based on the value systems to which they are applied. Religion has had an indirect impact on attitudes, social values, networks, and norms. Religion's presence as a transcendent reality provides believers with a moral code. In general, religion encourages a sense of duality by highlighting the importance of respecting each individual's unique path and acknowledging that their actions are guided by moral principles such as safety, forgiveness, and obedience, which are akin to religious teachings. Consequently, the core values of this religion become intricate and emphasize the significance of showing respect for both individuals and communities. Religion also influences individual and collective decision-making. The connection between religion and health may or may not align with the religious tenets, such as an individual's choice of medical procedures, such as blood transfusions. In other health-related situations, such as end-of-life decisions, religion serves as a guiding factor in determining whether to continue life or respect the wishes of those caring for terminally ill patients.

In addition, extensive networks also facilitate affordability at the local level. The legitimacy of the source of authority by the community to religious leaders also facilitates the mobilization of the masses to remain at home and not have to attend worship meetings. Unlike official declarations or judgments, religious leaders frequently have a strong message that is rapidly accepted by their followers. Therefore, religious leaders can influence the community so that they can listen to health recommendations during the pandemic. Purified languages, which can contain patience, mystery, suffering, the hope of limitations, surrender, purpose, and divine redemption, can help people in out-of-control situations (Pargament 1996, 222). Perhaps because of that, just after this pandemic went global in March 2020, the search for prayer rose significantly, and even those who claimed not to be religious participated. It can be said that when an unclear situation occurs, it can potentially cause significant anxiety, as it is today.

Religion helps people communicate on both sides. For example, community members regularly meet for a common purpose. What binds members of a community may include, among other things, shared myths, legends, values, morals, and customs (Ottuh and Jemegbe 2020, 4).

2. Materials and Methods

This study employs quantitative methodologies, including primary and secondary data. The demographic information of respondents is contained in primary data (age, gender, status, education level, occupation, internet experience, monthly expenses, and internet quota costs). Secondary data describes the level of Internet use in the research location, especially in Bali province (see Table 1). Researchers made observations in the research field to collect data and distributed questionnaires to respondents. This research was conducted on communities that met the criteria in Bali Province. A total of 92 respondents were selected from the population.

Table 1. Percentage of Population Who Accessed Information and Communications Technology

Regency/Municipality	Type of Activity		
	Using mobile phone	Using computer*	Internet access**
Jembrana	89.53	10.57	70.10
Tabanan	75.73	12.72	66.16
Badung	85.83	27.03	79.68
Gianyar	80.69	17.62	67.28
Klungkung	78.70	13.09	65.85
Bangli	75.09	13.01	62.66
Karangasem	75.32	5.66	54.08
Buleleng	83.57	7.83	59.91
Denpasar	91.32	20.84	84.51
Total	83.51	15.94	70.59

*) Includes P.C./Desktop/Laptop/Notebook/Tablet

***) Including Facebook, Twitter, BBM, WhatsApp)

Source: (BPS - Statistics of Bali Province 2023)

This quantitative method used SPSS version 26 software to perform statistical calculations. This study utilized univariate analysis to calculate the quantities and percentages of age, education level, socio-economic status, internet usage experience, monthly expenses, internet quota, and respondents' comprehension of technology. The percentage of respondents who understand technology is derived using a typical Likert scale response, with strongly disagree being worth one point, disagree being worth two points, agree being worth three points, and strongly agree being worth four points. Researchers collected questionnaires from respondents who met the inclusion criteria in this study. After collecting the

data, the researcher used Microsoft Excel software to collect it and process it in SPSS version 26 software. After processing the data, the researcher explained it in narrative form. The research was conducted in September 2023 with a total of 92 respondents.

3. Results

Table 2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n=92)

Variables	Mean	n(%)
Age	17 – 22 years	
17 – 22 years		40(43.5)
23 – 28 years		13(14.1)
29 – 34 years		9(9.8)
35 – 40 years		7(7.6)
41 – 46 years		8(8.7)
47 – 52 years		3(3.3)
53 – 58 years		7(7.6)
>58 years		5(5.4)
Education		
Bachelor		27(29.4)
Master/Graduated		17(18.5)
Doctorate/Post Graduated		8(8.7)
Senior High School		40(43.5)
Experience using the Internet		
1 – 3 years		3(3.3)
4 – 6 years		21(22.8)
>6 years		68(73.9)
Status		
Not married yet		54(58.7)
Never been married		2(2.2)
Married		36(39.1)
Monthly expenses		
<Rp 1,000,000		31(33.7)
IDR 1,000,000 – IDR 3,000,000		26(28.3)
>Rp 3,000,000		35(38)
Internet quota		
<Rp 50,000		9(9.8)
IDR 50,001 – IDR 100,000		38(41.3)
IDR 100,001 – IDR 200,000		23(25)
>Rp 200,000		22(23.9)

Based on Table 2, the average age of respondents in this study was 17 – 22 years, with 40 respondents. A total of 40 respondents had a final education of Senior High School. In addition, 68 respondents had experience using the Internet for more than six years and were unmarried (54). The monthly expenses for 35 people range from more than IDR 3,000,000, with an internet quota for 38 people of IDR 50,001 – IDR 100,000/month. The conversion of IDR to USD on November 06, 2023, at 09:00 Universal Time Coordinated (UTC) (1 USD = 15.581 IDR).

Table 3. *Understanding of Technology (n= 92)*

Questions	Responses			
	S.D.	D	A	S.A.
Know how ICT software and hardware work and digital operating systems.	1	12	59	20
Communicate and build national insight when interacting in the digital space.	-	2	62	28
Realizing the importance of protecting and securing personal data	-	-	14	78
Can adapt, reason, and prioritize digital ethics/netiquette	-	1	37	54
Understand the impacts and losses of spreading hoax content.	-	3	39	50
Trust the information I get on social media/applications	25	55	10	2
Use all channels, notably social media, discussion forums, smartphones, and numerous online services, to produce content, collect, share, and communicate.	1	12	65	14
Take advantage of the features offered by each social networking site and master the essential functions of each existing feature.	-	20	59	13
Understand all sorts of cybercrime, including the features of bogus websites (phishing), email fraud, and others.	-	19	60	13
Only reveal your online identify when absolutely necessary to avoid something unwanted.	-	5	52	35
Know how to create content on various online applications and platforms	1	23	57	11
Organize and share information content to make it easier to disseminate	3	26	52	11
Capable of searching, filtering, and selecting relevant information from the Internet	-	2	54	36

Participate in the exchange of fascinating or personal ideas and multimedia information through blogs, forums, wikis, and other similar platforms.	2	24	55	11
Be careful and responsible for the content I distribute	-	-	52	40
When I find hoax information/content, I will report the hoax content through the reporting facilities/features available on the media where the hoax content is found.	-	1	57	34
Commit not to spreading hoax content.	-	-	31	61
Know and be able to distinguish content that is a hoax.	-	2	59	31
Participate in preventing the spread of hoax content.		1	52	39
Able to negotiate ideas with others in the group in the digital space.	-	8	68	16
Able to think critically when dealing with information in the digital space.	-	4	66	22

SD: strongly disagree, D: disagree, N: neutral, A: agree, S.A.: strongly agree

Based on Table 3. Understanding of technology, as many as 59 respondents agreed they already knew how software and hardware systems work in the digital era. A total of 62 respondents also stated that they were able to communicate and build positive interactions through social media. In addition, 78 respondents strongly agreed to safeguard and protect their data when playing social media.

A total of 57 respondents also explained that they were aware and able to reason and prioritize ethics and etiquette when playing social media. This means that technologically literate people also know the importance of being ethical when using social media (Bietti, 2020, 215; Tavani, 2016, 21) . Therefore, 50 respondents thought they were aware of the negative impact of spreading negative content via social media or any media. Fifty-five percent of those polled did not believe the information they obtained from social media. Aside from that, ten respondents agreed on the information they obtained via social media.

Sixty-five percent of those polled agreed that they could use social media to create content, gather and share information, and communicate online. At the same time, 59 thought they knew the features of social media and mastered the functions of each feature on social media. Not surprisingly, 60 respondents agreed that they were aware of all types of cybercrime, all the characteristics of harmful content (phishing), fraud via email, or other damaging content.

Thus, 52 respondents agreed they would display their identity on social media sparingly, and 54 agreed to search, filter, and select the needed internet sites. A total of 55 respondents agreed to participate in spreading ideas or suggestions in various discussion forums on the Internet. However, 52 respondents stated that they need to be careful and rational about the content they distribute.

When they found false information, 57 respondents would report the hoax content through the reporting facilities/features available in the media, and 61 respondents were committed not to spreading hoax content. On the other hand, 59 respondents agreed that they knew and could distinguish hoax content. Meanwhile, 52 respondents participated in preventing the spread of hoax content. Sixty-eight respondents stated that they agreed to negotiate ideas with other people in the group in the digital space, and 66 respondents agreed to be able to think critically when dealing with information in the digital space.

4. Discussions

Based on the research results in Table 3, 31 respondents agreed to commit to not spreading hoax news. It also explained that as many as 54 respondents agreed that they could search, filter, and select information on the Internet that suited their needs. This statement is reinforced by other research, which shows that active action in correcting fake news is positively related (*p-value* 0.05) to confidence in spreading harmful content (Valencia-Arias et al. 2023, 5). Indeed, social media is currently a trend in all levels of society, from teenagers to adults (Leggett 2017, 1). Today, social networks are undeniably the most popular mass media. Social networking is a media that is ranked first compared to other media (Tawaqal and Meltareza 2022, 211). Prior research found that the majority of respondents (75%) spend more than three hours each day interacting with technology, excluding school responsibilities (Harriman et al., 2020, 5).

Excessive use of social media will result in two things. Firstly, it will have a toxic impact on oneself, such as anger, harsh criticism, hatred towards other groups, cyberbullying, and racism (Harriman et al. 2020, 2; Wachs and Wright 2018, 8; Wright, Harper, and Wachs 2019, 1). The positive impact, on the other hand, is described as a beneficial process that makes individuals feel more comfortable carrying out acts of kindness online than in person, although in some cases, this can lead to negative scenarios (Harriman et al. 2020, 4; Lapidot-Lefler and Barak 2015, 2). Many of these activities may be the reason why the Internet can have such different, even opposing, effects on religion. In this case, how cyberspace works depends on how the person behaves on the Internet. This means that social media cannot be monolithic and uniform in all situations and

we also need to think about how to use social media. As a result, the Internet can encourage both patience and despair, depending on how the Internet is managed (Arzroomchilar 2022, 101).

Social media and video-sharing platforms have enabled religious leaders and communities to spread spiritual messages and teachings quickly and widely. This helps maintain and expand the scope of religion. In addition, technology allows religious rituals such as prayer, fasting, and meditation to be carried out online. This helps individuals to carry out religious activities even though they are not at the actual place of worship.

The negative impact of religious issues in the digital era is the rise of religious insults. This may involve using offensive language, offensive memes, or messages insulting to other religions (Castano-Pulgarín et al. 2021, 4). Even though communicating virtually, communication ethics must still be applied (Ihsani & Febriyanti 2021, 6). Based on the research results in Figure 1, it shows that social media is the media that produces the most negative content (70.7%). In line with research conducted in Spain, only around 27% of people trust news that comes from social media (Madrid Press Association 2023, 1). As a result, social networks such as Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube play an important role in social and human relations, as well as the rapid broadcast of news, text messages, video clips, and varied information that interests a person in everyday life, helping to popularize their use (Radwan 2022, 2).

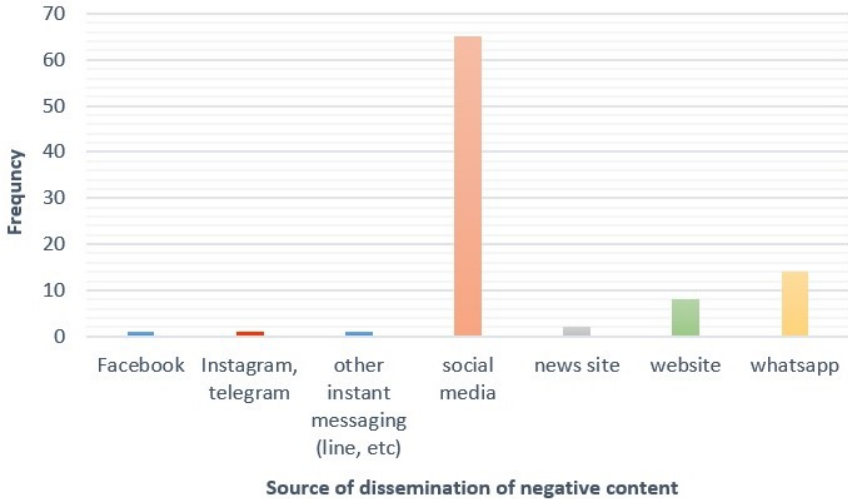


Figure 1. Dissemination of negative content

Wach & Wright (2018, 5) stated that as many as 53.7% (n = 761) of respondents had known or observed at least one case of harmful content spread on social media. The research results found that an observer of online hate was significantly related to the behavior of distributing hate content (p=0.007), while the research results also explained that observers

of online hate tended to spread more negative content on social media ($p < 0.01$).

Social networks are a place to share stories, all forms of activity, and emotional outbursts in posts and images, which often go beyond existing ethics. Social networks are no longer a means of sharing information but only a place to share emotions. If mental improvement is not followed by technological advancement, then technological progress will be inversely proportionate to mental patterns. Morality is frequently related with a person's morality in social life (Ihsani and Febriyanti 2021, 26). In contrast to direct communication, communication via social media or relying on sophisticated technology does not waste time; social media users can communicate 24 hours a day without stopping (KhosraviNik and Esposito 2018, 51). Due to its frequent use by many people, in this study, 52 respondents agreed that they would not spread harmful content on social media. In contrast, 55 respondents agreed that they would exchange interesting or personal ideas and multimedia information through blogs, forums, wikis, and other similar platforms.

For users of cyberspace, phenomenologically speaking, all websites, Twitter feeds, or Facebook pages seem equal from the start. In this sense, there is an asymmetry between the cyber world and the current world in terms of the logic of knowledge acquisition. While in real life, to acquire knowledge, we often start from the author (whom she considers an authentic source) and then the content, in the online world, things happen in a different direction (Arzroomchilar 2022, 105).

To reduce the negative impacts of using technology, digital literacy is needed so that people do not quickly spread harmful content to other people. Digital culture is a modern societal invention that introduces numerous secular or non-traditional cultures that contradict fundamental religious values (Purnama et al. 2022, 2). Many previous studies argue that society needs digital literacy activities. Digital skills are needed in various fields, including education, work, and everyday life, as many tasks and activities have now been digitized. A lack of digital literacy can cause serious problems, such as not being able to get a job, online fraud, the spread of misinformation, and potential privacy issues (Rastati 2018, 69; Wahid and Wardatun 2023, 9; Hess 2023, 260). Based on the results of previous research, a person's digital literacy is significantly related ($p < 0.000$) to negative prejudice towards other people and significantly associated with the spread of hatred and exposure to hoax news ($p < 0.000$) (Muhid et al. 2019, 149).

This communication technology has a significant impact on religion. Religion has changed shape, popularity, and plurality in tandem with the advancement of communication technology. Every change in communication technology has an impact on changes in religion. However, the impact of communication technology on religion can be both positive and negative. Examining the impact of changes in communications technology

on religion has excellent theoretical and practical value (Zhao 2024). The applicability of this method to religious populism may be demonstrated in three main areas of research: concepts of religious identity, power, and community, which typically characterize how religion is experienced and understood in various digitally mediated situations (Campbell and Evolvi 2020, 10; Solahudin and Fakhruroji 2020, 8).

Finding a balance between online and offline life is critical in an increasingly digitally connected culture. Religion can help us live meaningful lives in the digital age by teaching us values like family, community, and balance. The importance of ethics and religion in the digital era affects individuals and society in this increasingly complicated context. Religion and ethics give a strong moral foundation in the face of rapid technological development, ensuring that we continue to act with honesty, kindness, and responsibility in the new world. The globe is becoming more technologically connected (Parish 2020, 5; Solahudin and Fakhruroji 2020, 6).

Although religion and technology serve distinct purposes, they both have a profound impact on society and our way of life. The meeting of religion and technology happens throughout human history and is critical to human social, cultural, and ideological growth (Selvia 2023,1). As we know, the increasing sophistication of technology will give rise to various societal reactions. With social media, all types of activities can be carried out by everyone, including religious activities (Tawaqal and Meltareza 2022, 211). This study reveals that spiritual communication and spiritual communication are vital agents in any social change and that these things have made society's life harmonious regarding human welfare, behavior, mind, soul, economy, and culture (Ottuh and Jemegbe 2020, 8).

Overall, technological advances can significantly impact various aspects of human life, including how we communicate, work, learn, and interact with the world around us. Technological advances can also affect the economy, politics, and the environment. Technological advances can sometimes bring enormous benefits, such as more accessible access to information and medical advances. However, technological advances can also negatively impact job loss due to automation, dependence on technology, and privacy and security issues (Blondheim and Rosenberg 2017, 47).

5. Conclusion

The impact of today's digital technology on the lives of individuals and communities is clear, if not unprecedented. According to the findings of the study, if people get fake news, they should filter it rather than quickly broadcast it. People must be digitally literate in order to prevent fake news from spreading further. Technology, religion, and effective

communication are vital in today's ever-changing digital environment for connecting and talking online. Technology has dramatically changed the media landscape by allowing us to connect with people worldwide through digital platforms. Digital literacy is a critical capability needed in the digital era to participate effectively and responsibly in an increasingly connected society. One effort to deal with this problem is with digital literacy activities. Digital education, awareness, and literacy efforts are important steps in preparing individuals to face the challenges and opportunities of this digital era.

Social media, instant messaging apps, and other online platforms have facilitated fast and easy communication and opened the door to spreading harmful misinformation. It is essential to use technology wisely, being aware of its associated risks, especially regarding privacy and security. Religious values such as tolerance, empathy, and ethical communication may be essential in how individuals behave online. People who adhere to positive religious values tend to be more careful in communicating online and can better contain the spread of harmful content. However, religious values can also be misused to justify support for extremist or discriminatory views. Good communication requires listening, speaking respectfully, and understanding the other person's point of view. Good communication in the digital era requires the ability to distinguish between legitimate information and misinformation, as well as avoiding unproductive online conflicts. Encouraging a positive and inclusive communication culture on digital platforms is essential, including rejecting the spread of harmful content and pursuing meaningful dialogue.

New communications technologies have opened the door to more innovative approaches to understanding and preserving nature. The internet and social media have increased awareness of environmental issues, mobilization of collective action, and global engagement in environmental protection efforts. On the other hand, some conflicts arise when technology competes with the spiritual dimension in humans' relationship with nature. This article underscores the importance of understanding the role of religion and technology in the context of environmental protection. Collaboration between religion, philosophy, social sciences, and technological sciences is important in formulating practical solutions to global environmental challenges. Through joint efforts, we can understand better ways to restart the relationship between humans and nature and, in so doing, keep our planet sustainable for future generations.

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