

Theological Anthropocentrism: An Interpretation of Scripture and Semitic Theodicy in Overcoming the Environmental Crisis

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan melakukan eksplorasi dengan menawarkan teodisi sebagai landasan teologi antroposentris untuk mensucikan Tuhan dari segala citra buruk yang terjadi pada ciptaanNya serta kritik teologis terhadap pandangan teosentris yang memposisikan Tuhan dengan kehendak mutlakNya dapat berbuat apapun termasuk menciptakan dan mengizinkan krisis lingkungan terjadi, juga pandangan antroposentris yang memposisikan manusia dengan kehendak bebasnya telah menyebabkan terjadinya krisis lingkungan. Kontradiksi keyakinan terhadap Tuhan sebagai Dzat yang Mahasempurna dengan fakta adanya masalah kejahatan (ketidaksempurnaan) pada ciptaanNya merupakan perdebatan perennial yang sudah ada bersamaan dengan lahirnya agama-agama tersebut. Metode penelitian menggunakan kajian literatur dan analisis data menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif hermenutika. Hasil penelitian mendeskripsikan pandangan Alkitab dan al-Qur'an tentang kebebasan manusia dan menghadirkan perdebatan teodisi dari tradisional hingga modern dalam teologi Kristen dan Islam, tentang peran dan etika manusia terhadap alam atau lingkungan. Hasil penelitian diharapkan menjadi literasi teologis atau bahan argumentasi teologis atas perlunya intervensi manusia bersikap adil, baik, dan benar terhadap lingkungan. Intervensi ini selain sebagai wujud implementasi keimanan kepada Dzat yang Mahasempurna, juga sebagai tanggungjawab manusia sebagai agen moral pemelihara lingkungan.

Kata Kunci: *Teodisi, Teosentrisme, Antroposentrisme*

Abstract

This research aims to explore by offering theodicy as the basis for anthropocentric theology to purify God of all the bad images that occur creation of God, and theological criticism of the theocentric view which positions God with his absolute will to do anything, including creating and allowing environmental crises to occur also the anthropocentric opinion which positions humans with their free will has led to an environmental crisis. The contradiction of belief in God as the Most Perfect Essence with the fact that there is a problem of evil (imperfection) in creation of God that a perennial debate that has existed since the birth of these religions. These research method uses a literature review and data analysis using a qualitative hermetic approach. The results of the study describe the views of the Bible and the Qur'an about human freedom and present theodicy debates from traditional to modern in Christian and Islamic theology, about the role and ethics of humans towards nature or the environments. The results of the research are hoped it will become theological literacy or provide theological arguments for the need for human intervention to be fair, good, and true to the environment. Apart from being an implementation of faith in the Supreme Being, this intervention is also a human responsibility as a moral agent for protecting the environment.

Key Words: Theodicy, Theocentrism, Antropocentrism

Introduction

God as the Ultimate Reality with all the perfections of His nature which is the Most Perfect and Almighty is often interpreted as having absolute will over all of His creation. This belief in cases related to the problem of evil in nature can be misinterpreted by assuming that everything happens according to God's will and eliminates the role of humans. Such a concept of God's omnipotence and omniscience consciously harbors ambivalence because, at the same time, God becomes “stained” by the presence of evil or ugliness in His creation. While humans are “purified” in the name of destiny from all their endeavors and responsibility for these crimes or ugliness. Many of them take a leap of thought by spending energy in interpreting and looking for answers to why God wants natural crimes such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, floods, tsunamis, droughts, global warming, and so on, to occur. At the same time, the damage to nature is becoming more real and massive, thus affecting the quality of life of all living things.

The condition of the earth that is getting worse is not directly proportional to human awareness of the importance of immediately carrying out restoration. Humans are currently facing three environmental emergencies, namely loss of biodiversity, climate disruption, and increased pollution (Anoname, 2021: 1). This condition results in a crisis of natural resources which is

directly related to the quality of human life. Antonio Guterres Secretary General of the United Nations (UN) in commemoration of World Environment Day said, “We are destroying the ecosystems that support our society. We are at risk of losing our food, clean water, and other resources needed to survive (Anoname, 2021: 1).”

Research findings from many scientists in various disciplines show that climate change is real and very likely caused by humans. The latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) shows that leading climate scientists are now convinced that human activities have warmed the planet since the Industrial Revolution. (Alpay, Özdemir, and Demirbaş, 2013: 2). Human demand for ever-increasing resources is placing tremendous pressure on biodiversity. It is also directly related to the future safety, health, and well-being of humanity. Earth according to the Living Planet Report-World Wide Fund (Anoname, 2012: 2) takes 1.5 years to produce and replenish the natural resources that humans consume in one year.

The human population is increasing over time and has a direct impact on the availability of resources that the earth can provide. In addition to needing food and energy, life also requires a place to live and all its facilities and infrastructure. The conflicts triggered by land disputes and the resulting social problems are increasingly evident because the land area does not change (Wicaksono & Nugroho, 2015: 124). Poverty, unemployment, inequality in land tenure and use, environmental damage, food, and energy scarcity, and agrarian disputes and conflicts are clear examples caused by the scarcity of land and resources (Buchori et al., 2017: 384). The intensity of this problem is getting higher because it is exacerbated by the low level of human responsibility to solve it.

Environmentalists consider that the roots of the ecological crisis come from the structure of beliefs and values within humans (Sardar, 1985: 2018; Roswanto 2016: 221). This crisis is axiomatic because it resides in human beliefs and value structures that shape human relationships with nature, and with other living things. Man's superiority over nature makes him a conqueror rather than a nurturer. Humans seem to be the center of the macrocosm so all available resources are solely for humans. Mujiyono Abdillah's statement (2001: 222-223), is very appropriate to this context because the current ecological perspective tends to be anthropocentric, secularistic, and even atheistic. According to him, ecological behavior is largely determined by the form of beliefs held by the ecological community itself (Abrar, 2015).

This means that ecological issues are closely related to meta-ecology or eco-theology itself, that is, it comes from the beliefs that construct it.

The perspective of anthropocentrism in looking at nature according to several studies cannot be separated from the theological concepts of major religions or Semitic religions such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Lynn White Jr., a medieval historian, in the article “*The Historical Roots of Our Ecologic Crisis*” (1967: 1205) accused Christianity of being the most anthropocentric religion in positioning humans with nature. Then Harvey Cox, a theologian from Harvard, also accused the concept of creation theology called *imago Dei* (man as the image of God) in Christianity which separates nature from God and separates humans from nature as the root of anthropocentrism. This sharp separation is considered to make humans lose respect for nature. Nature is only to serve human interests and objects of exploitation (Fata, 2014: 134).

The theological doctrine that emphasizes human superiority over nature is also considered to occur in Islam. In Abdillah's research (2001: 290) anthropocentrism in Islam could be rooted in Muslim beliefs about humans as super-beings, the concept of human power over nature, and the concept of humans as *khalifah fi al-ardh*. This belief is considered to be able to create arbitrariness to exploit nature without being balanced by awareness of human responsibility for nature given by God. All the damage to nature caused by humans seems to be God's will, because everything that God has created is only for His perfect creation, namely humans.

The meaning of anthropocentrism in some of these views contains a paradox with the attributes of God who are far from imperfect. God as the Best and Most Holy Essence cannot simultaneously be the One who has bad and evil intentions. Natural damage such as floods, landslides, droughts, global warming, and so on are incidents that are contrary to the Essence of God Himself. Therefore, this study tries to present the theodicy concept which was absent or received less attention in previous studies. Theodicy contains anthropocentric theology doctrines because, in addition to purifying God from bad things that happen to nature, it also positions humans as creatures who are given the responsibility to make direct interventions in protecting nature. This research is important because it seeks to introduce the theodicy concept as an alternative perspective to rectify the reduction of anthropocentrism theology and become the basis of movement in tackling environmental damage.

Research Method

This research used the literature study. Data collection techniques were used to documentation methods. Data analysis in this study used the analytical method by Milles and Huberman in Sugiono (2009:16), which included data reduction, data presentation and conclusion drawing. Moleong (2005). In the qualitative descriptive method, the main research instruments are interviews, field notes, and other documentation described in narrative form based on creating a holistic picture and arranged in a scientific setting. Qualitative descriptive methods, the researcher collected, arranged, explained, and analyzed data (Moleong, 2005). Research findings from many scientists in various disciplines show that climate change is real and very likely caused by humans. The latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) shows that leading climate scientists are now convinced that human activities have warmed the planet since the Industrial Revolution. (Alpay, Özdemir, and Demirbaş, 2013: 2). Human demand for ever-increasing resources is placing tremendous pressure on biodiversity. It is also directly related to the future safety, health, and well-being of humanity. Earth according to the Living Planet Report-World Wide Fund (Anoname, 2012: 2) takes 1.5 years to produce and replenish the natural resources that humans consume in one year.

Research Finding

Dynamics of Human Relations with Nature

The relationship between humans and nature develops evolutionarily along with the development of human civilization itself. The environmental crisis, which today is very concerning, seems to strengthen the theory of evolution regarding the development of human thought which was formulated by Auguste Comte (2000: 228) into three stages, namely theological, metaphysical, and positive. In the last stage, humans are already independent in using their reasoning with the presence of positive sciences as well as marking the end or diminishing of theological and metaphysical thinking. Unfortunately, the last stage which is considered the culmination of the progress of human thought also marks a crisis of religiosity which has an impact on various areas of life, one of which is the worsening of human perceptions of the environment.

Robert P. Borrong (2003: 31-38) formulates human relations with nature into three developments. *First*, humans are in an equal position with nature. This attitude develops in traditional societies that live completely dependent on nature. Traditional communities in certain circumstances think that nature is much bigger than themselves so traditional rituals appear to respect the greatness of nature. *Second*, humans dominate and exploit nature. Humans at this stage show a passionate passion to conquer and exploit nature. Human relations with nature are no longer equal because nature is hierarchically below humans, even under certain conditions it is considered an opponent that must be conquered. *Third*, Nature rules over humans. This stage is a result of the second attitude. The excessive exploitation of nature and exceeding human needs without the same effort to restore it creates various disasters that threaten human life itself. Floods, landslides, droughts, global warming, and so on are clear examples of how nature is much bigger than humans.

The three stages of development of human attitudes as formulated by Borrong show that the current environmental crisis is caused by an unequal relationship between humans and nature. This stage refers to the modern era which is marked by extraordinary advances in science and technology or the positive thinking phase according to Comte. According to Schumacher (2011: 11), modern humans do not experience themselves as part of nature but as external forces destined to dominate and conquer them. This view sees nature as a machine, which has no value and purpose (Alpay, Özdemir, and Demirbaş, 2013: 5). Nature seems to be made only to meet needs and interests, and even tends to satisfy human greed. As a result of this view, modern humans have lost their awareness of the importance of living in harmony with nature.

Sayyed Hussein Nasr also positioned modern humans as the main actors in environmental damage. According to him, modern humans have made nature like a prostitute, only to be enjoyed without feeling any obligation and responsibility towards it. Natural conditions that are prostituted in such a way are no longer possible to be enjoyed further (Nasr, 1990: 18). Human motives dominate nature according to Nasr (1990: 19) not only because of economics but also because of "mystical" impulses which are the direct residue of one-time human spiritual relationship vis-a-vis nature. Pre-modern humans generally climbed mountains only once or rarely did so. But what is happening now is that they want to conquer all the peaks of the mountains and intend to remove the mountains from all their majesty by overcoming them. This image of the climber conveys the understanding that humans want to get rid of the problems caused by breaking the balance between humans and nature but by further conquest and domination of nature.

The environmental crisis in the assessment of Nasr (2015: 15) for a long time was not taken seriously by almost all non-Western countries. These countries say that protecting the environment is the West's way of solving the problems created by the West itself. Likewise in Islamic countries, attention to the environment is a new phenomenon and is generally only carried out by private groups. Meanwhile, the government generally does not make much effort to mitigate environmental damage. Government steps, including in Indonesia, in overcoming and restoring environmental damage are still not comparable to exploitation carried out in the name of development. The environmental crisis due to coal mining in Kalimantan, gold mining in Papua, and so on is a clear illustration of how this country's concept of development still does not pay attention to its impact on the environment.

Public awareness has recently been acknowledged by Nasr (2015: 15-16), and continues to grow with the birth of 'ulama' who are concerned in the environmental field, such as Sheikh Ahmed Kuftaro Mufti of Syria, Masoumeh Ebtekar, former vice president of Iran, founder Fazlun Khalid UK-based Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences. The same awareness has also begun to increase in Indonesia with the establishment of non-profit organizations concerned with conservation. Some of them are the Wahana Lingkungan Hidup (Walhi) founded on October 15, 1980, Peduli Konservasi Alam (PEKA) Indonesia Foundation founded on August 25, 2000, Yayasan Konservasi Alam Nusantara (YKAN) has been present in Indonesia since 2014, and so on. Religious organizations such as Nahdlatul Ulama' (NU) also established the Lembaga Penanggulangan Bencana dan Perubahan Iklim (LPBI NU) at the 32nd NU Congress in Makassar in 2010, and among NU youths there was also the Front Nahdliyin untuk Kedaulatan Sumber Daya Alam (FNKSDA) which was initiated by a thematic discussion entitled "NU and the Conflict of Natural Resources Management" on 4 July 2013.

The Idea of Anthropocentrism in Scripture

Anthropocentrism is usually associated with a belief doctrine that considers humans as the most important entity in the universe. This doctrine is popular in the field of environmental ethics and environmental philosophy and is considered to be the root cause of the current destruction of nature (Beck 2013: 123-136). The religious community recognizes anthropocentrism as a biblical

doctrine that is positioned in contrast to theocentrism. If theocentrism is interpreted as a doctrine that positions God as the center of everything, then anthropocentrism is interpreted the other way around, namely humans as the center.

The doctrine of anthropocentrism in the Bible and the Koran is found in verses that explain the causes of the problem of evil that occurs in God's creation. The response of the Bible and the Koran itself in several verses explains the problem of crime in two forms, namely theocentrism and anthropocentrism. Theocentrism views the problem of evil as God's active response in human life, in the form of a rebuke, test, redemption, or eschatological guarantee. Meanwhile, anthropocentrism views the problem of crime as a direct consequence of free will. This anthropocentric doctrine is considered the root of the environmental crisis faced by humans today.

The concept of anthropocentrism is affirmed by the Bible in verses about sin which indicate humans as creatures that have the potential to do evil according to their minds. Genesis contains a long story about the violation of eating the forbidden fruit committed by Adam and Eve in heaven. In addition, Hosea (6: 7) also says: "But like Adam, they have violated the covenant; There they have dealt treacherously with Me," and Genesis (6: 5) "The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time." The Bible shows that sinful acts can be defined as violations of God's law. This violation is an indication that humans are creatures that have free will to obey and at the same time disobey God's law.

The Koran's explanation of evil as a result of human bad deeds is explained verbally in many verses. Allah says in Surah al-Rum (30: 41): "Evil has become rife on the land and at sea because of men's deeds; this so that He may cause them to have a taste of some of their deeds; perhaps they will turn back (from evil)." When the Muslims were defeated in the Battle of Uhud, the Qur'an also explains that it happened because of the actions of the Muslims themselves. This is explained in Surah Ali-Imran (3: 165): "Why (is it that) when a (single) disaster struck you [on the day of Uhud], although you had struck (the enemy in the battle of Badr) with one twice as great, you said, 'From where is this?' Say, 'It is from yourselves.' Indeed, Allah is over all things competent."

Explanations from the Bible and the Koran illustrate that humans have power over their actions, whether they choose to obey or violate God's laws. This means that various environmental crises have occurred due to errors in human choices. The anthropocentric doctrine in this case does not justify humans acting arbitrarily toward the environment. Damage to nature in the form of

floods, landslides, and droughts caused by illegal logging of forests, is an act of sin that God does not want. Man is not in a position of compulsion to sin so with his free will he should be able to choose to be an obedient servant following the rules set by God. The Bible explains that God regrets (grieves) creating humans because God only wants them to live by the rules and laws that God has set in their lives. (Elbaar & Maiaweng, 2013: 114). This is explained in Genesis (6: 6-7): “6; 6 The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. 6; 7 So the Lord said, ‘I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them, the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them’.” Likewise, the Koran reports that God only wants good, while evil occurs because of human actions themselves. This is explained in Surah al-Nisa' (4: 79) “What comes to you of good is from Allah, but what comes to you of evil, (O man), is from yourself. And We have sent you, (O Muhammad), to the people as a messenger, and sufficient is Allah as Witness.”

Biblical expressions that are considered to give human legitimacy to act arbitrarily against nature refer to Genesis (1: 28): “God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground’.” Then Genesis (1:26) “Then God said, ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,[a] and over all the creatures that move along the ground’.” The word “rule” in Genesis is often used to position humans as super beings in Christianity. Whereas in Islam the position of the human being as a super being is often associated with the Koran expression about the position of the human being as God’s representative on earth (*khalifat al-Allah fi al-ard*). The Koran explains that God gives a mandate to humans to be his representatives on earth as in Surah al-Baqarah (2:30), “Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority.” Surah al-Baqarah (2: 30) and Genesis (1:28) are accused of being the root of the doctrine of anthropocentrism which is responsible for environmental damage.

The anthropocentric proponents themselves disagree with the accusations of environmentalists who say that environmental damage is caused by theological views that position humans as super beings. They argue that there may have been an error in the translation from Hebrew. The Bible places all of the same importance on God as creator, and humans as just another

part of His creation (Simkins, 2014: 387-413). They stated that the definition of humans as the most important entity is a long-term view that recognizes that the global environment must be continuously created according to human needs. Anthropocentrism that leads to human arbitrariness towards nature is shallow anthropocentrism (Cochrane 2007).

The theological view of the Koran which positions humans as super beings towards nature is directly proportional to the mandate and obligation to protect it. Mawil Izzi Dien (1997: 48-49) provides a summary of human tasks with the environment. *First*, the creation of this earth and all its natural resources is a sign of His wisdom, mercy, power, and other attributes and therefore serves to develop human awareness and understanding of the creator (Koran surah al-Ra'ad 2 -4 and al-Anbiya' 79). *Second*, humans must try to protect and preserve the environment because by doing so they protect God's creatures who pray to Him and praise Him. *Third*, the environment contains God's creatures which Muslim scholars or scholars consider also worthy of protection (*hurma*). *Fourth*, Islam, as a way of life, stands on the concept of goodness (*khair*). *Fifth*, human relations with humans and nature must be based on the concepts of justice (*'adl*) and goodness (*ihsan*), not on material or economic gain.

The overall idea of the environment in the Bible and the Koran is very anthropocentric in the sense that the preservation of nature and its resources is the responsibility of humans. The explanation of the two holy books which give the position of humans as super-being becomes an ethical and even theological foundation for humans to be able to fully intervene as agents of environmental preservation, namely to maintain and accelerate it. The granting of privileges to humans to manage natural resources from God as the Best Essence is of course with good intentions. Exploitative acts against the environment are a violation of God's goodwill or purpose (Ozkan, 2016: 19-35). Therefore, humans as super beings towards nature have a meaning as agents of protecting the environment.

Anthropocentric Ideas in Christian and Islamic Theodicy

The word theodicy etymologically has the meaning of "justifying God" for all forms of evil and ugliness of His creation. Theodicy is often interpreted as an attempt to explain rationally the relationship between God as the Best Essence and the existence of evil in His creation. Alvin Plantinga (1977: 4), the American philosopher defines theodicy as a theological construction that seeks to justify God in response to a real problem of evil that seems inconsistent with His existence as the Most Perfect and Most Good.

A theologian generally seeks to show a rational relationship between God and the existence of evil in His creation by offering a framework that can explain why evil exists (Bunnin, Nicholas, Tsui-James, 2003: 481). Theodicy is also often based on naturalist theology, which seeks to prove the existence of God, and to show the possibility of God permitting evil to occur (Geiviett, 1995: 60-61). The scope of theodicy thus includes a theological debate about God Almighty, God Almighty, and God Omniscient, but the world contains evil.

The emergence of theodicy begins with questions about the nature of God as expressed by McCloskey (1974:2) by stating: “*If God does not exist, where does good come from? If he does exist, where does evil come from? If God is the source of good, can he also be the source of evil? Evil exists and God exists. Their coexistence is a mystery.*” This theological contradiction, according to McCloskey (1974:1) requires the affirmation of God as the Most Perfect Creator on the one hand and the existence of evil on the other.

John Hick in his book *An Interpretation of Religion* also states that there is an ambivalence of belief in God as the Most Perfect Essence with the existence of imperfections in His creatures. If God is truly all-merciful and all-powerful, then God should be able to eliminate natural disasters and misery in mankind. Apparently, natural disasters and tribulations still exist. Therefore, for Hick (2004: 118), God cannot be both omnipotent and evil simultaneously. Thus, theodicy was born to answer the question of why God, the all-good, allows evil to exist in His creation (Plantinga, 1977: 10).

Theodicy in Islam is considered by many to be less well-known in the vast and massive theological realms compared to the Christian tradition. Most Muslims accept evil and suffering as God's will either as a punishment, a test, or as a result of human actions. God as the Most Perfect Essence is not seen to contain any inconsistency with the existence of evil in His creation. Orientalists assess the low level of theodicy debate in Islam because there is no event of the crucifixion, the concept of incarnation, and redemption. Eric Linn Ormsby (2014: 4) corroborates this claim that the problem of evil does not seem to occupy a dominant position in Islamic theology as it does in the Christian tradition. But some Muslim thinkers argue that there has been extensive discussion among Muslim theologians and philosophers to solve the problem of crime.

Even the Shiite Muslim theologian Murtadha Motahhari claims Muslim theologians and philosophers have tackled the problem of evil that has not yet received a satisfactory answer in the Western tradition.

Therefore, the problem of evil from the perspective of Muslim theologians and philosophers can also be juxtaposed to the extent that it has similarities with Christian theodicy. The theodicy's responses to the problem of evil in Christian theology are often classified into two periods: traditional theodicy and modern theodicy. Modern theologians or theologians, although in some ways there are differences from traditional theodicy, can still be associated with the three theodicy traditions.

1. Traditional Theodicy

Traditional theodicy inherits three traditions of thought namely; Augustine who is well known in Western Christianity for centuries, the Iranian developed by the Eastern Church of Irenaeus, and the Plotinian which refers to Plotinus' concept of God as a First Cause (Cheetham, 2003: 40).

Augustinian tradition

Augustine believed that evil basically does not exist except as a protection for good, and therefore God did not create evil. The Augustinians argued that God created the world perfectly, without human evil or suffering (Geiviett, 1995: 19). The existence of evil is believed to have originated in human sin and the punishment it brought about through the disobedience (original sin) of Adam and Eve. Humans then have evil natures as much as they lose their original goodness due to the inherited sins of Adam and Eve, but are still good in the end because their existence comes from God. This doctrine was further developed during the Middle Ages by Anselm of Canterbury who considered a sin to be very important. Sin is alienation from God that disrupts the order of creation, so it must be restored with punishment (Wethmar, 2007: 220). On this basis, God restored this order by asking Christ to replace Himself through crucifixion.

The response of Muslim theologians or philosophers to evil is similar to that of Augustine's tradition put forward by Hambali and Ibn Taymiyah who try to overcome the polemic in Islamic theodicy between predestination and human free will. He says God created human deeds, humans are responsible for their deeds as doers. God's creation is good from a causal point of view because God created everything for a wise purpose. The appearance of evil is in reality good in its purpose, and pure evil does not exist (Hoover, 2016: 642). Islam does not recognize original sin, so in the

belief of Muslims, God does not incarnate and make atonement for original sin as happened to Jesus Christ.

The problem of crime is based on the Augustinian theodicy doctrine and the views of Hambali and Ibn Taymiyah believe that the existence of evil is good in terms of its purpose. By presenting the concept of sin in this doctrine, whether it is believed to be inherited or the result of human free will, it makes the problem of crime solely occur due to human actions. The environmental crisis that is being felt by almost all people in the world does not end with just seeing its goal as a means to recover from it. This doctrine positions humans as the cause of environmental crises so humans are also responsible for restoring them. Humans as the cause of the environmental crisis also have a choice to avoid it just like the freedom of Prophet Adam and Siti Hawa to avoid doing what was forbidden by Allah.

Iranian tradition

Irenaeus believes that evil is one of the stages of a creature's journey toward perfection. He argued that human goodness develops through the experience of evil and suffering (Stump, 1999: 222-227). According to Irenaeus, human creation consists of two parts, namely in the image and likeness of God. Humans with the image of God have the potential to achieve moral perfection, while those with the likeness of God are the actualization of that perfection (Davis, 2001: 40-42). This doctrine developed since Greek patristics and was continued by 20th-century Swedish theologians through Gustav Aulén in Christus Victor's soteriology. Aulén also based his theodicy on the crucifixion of Jesus, which he believed to be Christ's victory over Satan by dying on the cross and as a ransom for mankind (Wethmar, 2007: 220). Crucifixion in soteriological theory is the event Christ defeated the devil because the devil did not realize that under Christ's humanity, his divinity was hidden and therefore He would not remain in death.

Several Muslim theologians identified as having similarities with the Iranian tradition can be traced through the works of Abd al-Qahir al-Baghdadi and Muhammad al-Ghazali who are affiliated with the Ash'ariyah sect. Early Mu'tazilah ideologies such as Abu Ali Jubai, Abu Hashim Jubai, Qadzi Abd al-Jabbar, and others also adhered to similar ideas (Edalatnejad, 2007: 311). Evil, according to them, exists to discipline and improve humans, not to punish them. Difficulties in life are believed to be gifts and gifts from God. But this equation does not include the concept of soteriology in the crucifixion of Jesus.

The existence of evil in the doctrine allows humans to develop as moral agents. Evil exists solely as a means or test so that humans can develop toward perfection according to the image of the Creator. This doctrine provides an understanding that the environmental crisis should encourage humans to become agents of protecting the environment. In other words, the crisis is a means that encourages human potential to achieve actualization to become an agent of environmental preservation as depicted by God as Creator and Sustainer.

Plotinian tradition

This tradition is a contribution of natural theology which was developed based on Plotinus' emanation theory explored through Plato's concept of the idea of nature. Plotinus in his theory of emanation (radiation or bestowal) introduces the concept of TO HEN (source of all things), then nous (first mind), *Psyke* (means that allows for matter/passion), and matter (end of emanation) (Moore). This theory assesses that crime does not originate directly from the main source, but rather a series of emanations that are far away, namely lust/material origins.

Muslim philosophers such as Ikhwan al-Safa' al-Farabi and Ibn Sina fully developed Plotinus' theory of emanations. Al-Farabi who is also called the "Second Teacher" after Aristotle, stated that there is no evil in nature because they, firstly, come from God; secondly, both in terms of function (Edalatnejad, 2007: 309). Even so, al-Farabi still recognizes the existence of moral crimes that occur because of human actions. Ibn Sinâ an adherent of the theory of emanation, also believed that the world was created through the emanation of God as the Most Perfect Essence. God is not divided in meaning or quantity, with that attribute His essence is perfect, He is single in all respects, He is *wâjib al wujûd*, and other things do not exist except Him (Sina, 1992: 84). God is pure goodness, so the world as a result of his radiance is also full of goodness. The essence of the Almighty is the cause of things coming out, not anything outside of His essence, and His essence is the cause of the system of goodness, and everything that comes from His essence must conform to His rules (Zamzami et al., 2021: 145). This theory explains the existence of shrinkage and shrinkage which explains the process of emitting or devolving from a Perfect Being to an imperfect being, then receding again to become imperfect, and so on until the evil appears (Fahri, 1997: 48-49).

The series of emanations as introduced by Plotinus and developed by later philosophers positioned crime as the farthest series caused by *Psyke*, closer to the bottom than TO HEN as the

main source of emanations. This view provides an understanding that the environmental crisis occurs because of human desires. Everything is closer to the main source which is then known as God, the better. Meanwhile, lust in Islam can be controlled and encouraged to get closer to God. Islam in this context introduces the concept of *tazkiyah al-nafs*, namely training to cleanse the soul. The environmental crisis, if understood as an event caused by bad desires, can be avoided by training and controlling greed, which is believed to be the cause of the uncontrolled exploitation of nature.

2. Modern Theodicy

The problem of crime has increasingly attracted the attention of modern theologians such as John Hick, Stephen T. Davis, G. Stanley Kane, Alvin Plantinga, and others. Questions that connect God with all His attributes of perfection with the existence of evil such as suffering, criminality, oppression, and so on are expressed by many modern theologians. This is different from Islam, which from the beginning did not question the problem of evil with God's perfection. However, this research still makes comparisons with several views of Islamic theologians who have similarities with Christian theologians, even though they are not in the same era.

Process theodicy

The Process Theodicy emerged in modern times as a development of Augustine's theodicy. David Griffin, John Cobb, and Lewis S. Ford developed this theodicy under the influence of the works of the English philosopher A.N. Whitehead and his follower Charles Hartshorne. One feature of process theology, which differs from the classical theodicy tradition, is its emphasis on the power of persuasion. When Whitehead linked Plato with the discovery that the divine element in the world must be understood as a persuasive agent and not as a coercive agent, it was hailed as a hypothesis and one of the greatest intellectual discoveries in the history of theological thought. Then Lewis Ford describes process theology as a persistent attempt to understand God's activity, especially in terms of persuasion (Frankenberry, 1981: 180). The essence of the typical statement of process theodicy is that God does not have an absolute will to prevent evil. Therefore, He cannot be blamed for something He is not good at.

In Islamic theology, ideas like this can be traced to the idea of the Mu'tazilah ideology which believes God does not have an Absolute Will. God in the view of the Mu'tazilah has created a system of obligations and prohibitions. God is believed to be unable to wish arbitrarily because it

is hindered by God's justice which is in harmony with the system. In other words, God's justice is compensation for rewards and punishments for humans who carry out or violate God's obligations and prohibitions or what are known as promises and threats.

The process theodicy doctrine of the absoluteness of God's Will certainly makes Him unable to be associated with environmental crises. God has set a system for humans to follow, namely the obligation to care for nature and the prohibition of doing damage. God guarantees rewards for humans who take care of the environment and punishment for those who do damage. The environmental crisis based on this process of theodicy occurs due to human sinful acts as per the Augustinian tradition. God has threatened them with torture, based on the concept of God's justice.

Free will defense theodicy

The theodicy most frequently used to explain moral evil is the Theodicy of Free Will Defense. This theology seems to continue process theology and is equally inspired by Augustine's theodicy. Contemporary theologians who believe in this theodicy are Stephen T. Davis, and G. Stanley Kane and the very popular one is Alvin Plantinga. God in the view of this theodicy is the Most Willing Essence which is not completely absolute, because it is limited by human free choice. Plantinga (1977: 30; Tidman, 2008: 302) argues, that a world containing significantly free beings is more valuable than a world containing no free beings at all. The consequence of God creating free beings like humans is to give them freedom, not to determine their actions to do what is good and right. Jacob H. Friesenhahn (2011: 5) argues that human free will is also explicitly contained in the concept of the immanent Trinity, especially the Cross. The Trinity is a prerequisite for the possibility of human sin, namely the abuse of the freedom given to man by God. Sin as human alienation from God, is only possible in the context of the infinite immanent difference between the Father and the Son in the Trinity (Friesenhahn, 2011: 118).

The conception of man as a free being also returns to the classical Islamic theology represented by the Qadariyah and Mu'tazilah schools of thought. This understanding has the belief that humans are the creators of their actions, so good and bad are completely human-free choices (Nasution, 2010: 33). They refuse to accept divine destiny in the sense that God predetermined everything before creation (Syahrastani (al), 1992: 37). Mu'tazilah in one of his *al-ushul al-khamsah* formulations believes that humans have the freedom to determine actions so that humans are fully responsible for the actions chosen (Jabbar, 1967: 290-310). For them, God's deeds are

good even though there is suffering because it makes it possible for humans to be compensated for greater rewards in the hereafter. God cannot create evil, disloyalty, and evil in a person. He could not even wish for these things to happen because He is All-good and All-just. The Qadariyah and Mu'tazilah theologians refer to the framework of moral realism, according to which the value of God's actions can be reached by common sense so that humans can make moral judgments about God's actions (Shihadeh, 2005: 772). One of God's justice in the view of Mu'tazilah is to punish the perpetrators of evil or violators of God's law and provide compensation for those who do good and obey God's law.

The argument that human free will is the source of both evil and good makes this theodicy free or purifies God of his responsibility for bad events in His creation (Jackson, 2014: 32-33). This means that the environmental crisis is not caused by God but is the result of human free actions. God Almighty certainly could not have wanted an environmental crisis to occur. Humans are given the ability to maintain and at the same time destroy the environment.

Natural Law Theodicy

The theodicy popularized by Swinburne emphasizes that the existence of natural evil is necessary for human morality. Swinburne in his book, *Providence and the Problem of Evil*, argues that natural evil is necessary for humans to acquire good knowledge. The knowledge in question is the nature and consequences of human actions that direct sympathy and empathy for others. Without natural evil, humans can't know the consequences of their actions. Crime is a necessary condition for good purposes (Murray, 2011: 16), so it can encourage humans to become moral agents. This idea also complements the free will theodicy which merely emphasizes good and bad entirely as a result of human free actions. This theodicy is more than that, viewing that freedom allows natural evil to function to impart knowledge and bring goodness. So any crime that seems haphazard everywhere is good information. By understanding evil, man can understand good at the same time.

The view that evil is necessary as a means of good can also be easily traced in the Islamic world. Evil functions for good purposes have long been suggested by theologians or philosophers. The expression "If something seems bad to us, we must remember that there is always a good purpose behind the bad," is often found and conveyed by theologians, philosophers, and even Sufis. Alkindi one of the Muslim philosophers said, that the cosmic order is the result of genuine

divine wisdom. God is the ultimate cause of creation, but there are His intermediary and subordinate agents (Gierer, 1999: 13). Individual suffering is considered to have a good purpose in the overall picture of creation. God according to this instrumental view, has created good and evil in the world according to His wisdom.

Environmental crisis based on natural law theodicy is not only understood as an act of sin or a consequence of human free choice but rather as a means for humans to be able to understand the importance of environmental sustainability. Humans based on this theodicy were created with a good purpose, namely as a caretaker and guardians of environmental sustainability. The environmental crisis is evident only through human actions and with it, a sense of human sympathy and empathy will grow. God cannot prevent the environmental crisis from occurring simply by not liking it or simply because it is hindered by human free will. More than that, God must also allow the environmental crisis to occur so that humans can understand every consequence that arises from their actions. With that understanding, humans are expected to be able to take care of it according to what God wills

Soul-making theodicy

One of the theodicies considered the most comprehensive in contemporary Christian thought is the soul formation theodicy. The theodicy initiated by John Hick through his book *Evil and the God of Love* is a “metaphysical” hypothesis based on Christian and world traditions. What is meant by the metaphysical hypothesis is not to formulate a new faith, but rather to “preserve” the Christian faith in the face of the problem of evil. This theodicy considers worldly life as an arena for humans to grow morally and spiritually. God according to this theodicy permits evil in the world to enable human beings to develop virtues that outweigh the good which cannot be developed in any other way (Murray 2011: 16). As a legacy of the Iranian tradition, Hick defines four conditions that must exist for the formation of the soul. *First*, there must be beings capable of choosing between good and evil. *Second*, the creatures must be placed in an environment that allows free choice to be exercised. *Third*, the environment must contain challenges to one's character that allow for good and evil responses. And *finally*, the creature must have sufficient opportunities to respond for character building to be possible (Flint & Rea, 2011: 368). G. Stanley Kane (1975: 1) sets out many of the key points of the theodicy of soul formation, among the main

ones being the belief that God's purpose in creating the world was the formation of souls for rational moral agents.

Islam also affirms that one of the functions of crime is the formation of the soul. Suffering and difficulties are recognized to produce achievements and heroism, poverty produces austerity, and so on. Islamic theologians draw on several characteristics of plants and animals that endure adversity to show that they acquire qualities that other creatures do not possess. Koran in Surah al-Baqarah (2: 155) also states that one can achieve happiness through suffering (Edalatnejad, 2007: 310). The soul-making theodicy only develops the previous theodicy, namely the theodicy of free will and natural law, because both require free will as a justification for crime (Culp, 2020: 661). Therefore, if this idea has to find a more detailed equivalent in Islamic theodicy, it will still return to the two classical theological ideologies, namely the Qadariyah and the Mu'tazilah as the originators of the theodicy of free will defense.

The main point of the soul formation theodicy is to focus on the ultimate goal of God allowing environmental crises to occur as the theodicy of natural law. The theodicy that explains the causes of the environmental crisis has been thoroughly discussed by the theodicy of process and free will. Whereas the soul formation theodicy focuses on God's ultimate goal allowing crises to occur. God as the Best Essence cannot possibly want bad things to happen to His creation. However, God still allows the environmental crisis to occur, apart from being a consequence of having created humans as free beings, it is also a lesson for humans to realize the impact of their actions and grow morally and spiritually as agents of protecting the environment.

The main focus of the problem of crime in theodicy is basically to defend God from all the bad personifications of His creation and position humans as the cause of evil. Many critics believe that theologians spend too much energy defending God and only look for the causes of evil without doing much to deal with or overcome the crisis. However, theodicy has at least provided answers to questions about the causes of the environmental crisis. Then theodicy also offers a solution for humans to overcome theological problems that seem to be a contradiction between the good God and the environmental crisis. Furthermore, theodicy also builds a moral and spiritual foundation so that humans can become agents of protecting the environment.

Theodicy is thus very important to provide the foundation for the most basic attitudes about the importance of humans intervening to protect their environment. The loss of metaphysical

(theological) knowledge according to Nasr (1990: 83) is responsible for the loss of harmony between humans and nature. Humans seem to be uprooted from their roots and disconnected from their responsibilities in the world. Searching for theological concepts in the context of environmental crises is very relevant as a basis for arguments to restore the human role in environmental damage.

Conclusion

The low level of human responsibility for environmental damage is very much determined by the way humans view nature. The historical point of view is based on the treasures of Western thought, developing evolutionarily along with advances in science and technology, namely from theocentrism to anthropocentrism. Theocentric view occurs when humans regard nature as a miracle, a gift, and a source of life from the Creator. At that time humans chose to live in harmony and harmony with nature. Meanwhile, the anthropocentrism view occurs after humans become more independent in thinking, the peak of which occurs when modern science is born. Anthropocentrism in the Western tradition is seen as a source of environmental damage, namely humans as the center of everything or everything only for humans.

The doctrine of anthropocentrism in theology is not the same as the Western thought tradition which tends to be secular. Anthropocentrism in theology has existed since religion was born and long before modern science emerged. The belief in God as the Supreme Being is not at all directly related to the existence of evil and ugliness in nature. In Christianity, efforts to "purify" God from bad events in His creation have been carried out since the middle ages, which is called theodicy. Both traditional and modern theodicy studies provide an anthropocentric perspective to answer the problem of God as the Supreme Being in the environmental crisis. Christian theodicy considers that an all-good God cannot possibly have a bad will on His creation. Even if there is a fact that there are evils and ugliness in nature, then they are caused by human actions and God still allows them for good purposes.

Islam also inherits the anthropocentric theodicy which emphasizes the magnitude of human responsibility in managing the earth/environment. The question of whether God is a Being who has an absolute will or whether humans have free will colored the debate between theological schools in the classical era. But when nature is in a state of disrepair, a view that emphasizes human

predestination cannot provide any solution. Therefore, a theological reconstruction of the perspective that denies human responsibility for the environment is urgently needed.

Through a theological search, an anthropocentric-progressive conception is found that can restore the responsibility of Muslims in environmental issues, namely as *khalifah fi al-ard*.

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