Qur'anic Perspective on Social Religious Conflict Resolution Based on Culture of Togetherness and Rembugan in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT: This study described the resolution of religious and social conflicts in Bantarkawung, Central Java, Indonesia; its contributing factors and how they aligned with the Qur'an's perspective. This study employed a qualitative approach by conducting interviews with participants in conflict resolution. During the Covid-19 period from 2020 to 2021, we collected data. This study found that the local government and religious leaders resolved conflicts based on the culture of togetherness in religious rituals and social works, fostering interactions and adhering to consensus-based "rembugan" to accept differences in religious understanding, particularly regarding ūlūl-amr. In this region, conflicts were typically resolved through conciliation, with a conciliator initiating the process. Additionally, the conciliator actively devised and formulated resolution steps for the disputing parties. This resolution was a combination of şulĥ (reconciliation) and taĥkīm (arbitration), according to the Qur'an. However, this research had limitations; consequently, it is necessary to conduct similar studies in other regions of Indonesia with distinct characteristics from the research area. Comparative studies would also be useful with countries that share similarities with Indonesia, such as Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, and Singapore and those that differ, such as Middle Eastern, Australian, American, and European nations.

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Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, dan Singapura, serta negara-negara yang berbeda, seperti negara-negara Timur Tengah, Australia, Amerika, dan Eropa.

**Keywords:** ADR (Alternative Dispute Resolution); culture of togetherness, rembugan; conciliation, social conflict.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Conflict resolution is a complex and essential process for maintaining peace and harmony among individuals or groups. Conflict resolution is a complicated and crucial process for maintaining peace and harmony among individuals or groups. Utilizing a solution based on cultural aspects can efficiently tackle specific issues (Istiqomah & Widiyanto, 2020; Nanang, 2016). The same practice is observed in Aceh, known as 'di'et sayam,' 'suloh,' 'peusijuk,' and 'peumat jaroe' (Nurdin, 2013). This is also confirmed in Sigi Regency, Central Sulawesi (Ilyas, 2014), and among the Baduy tribe, who still adhere to customary justice (Mulyadi & Furqon, 2021). Such findings are consistent with Brandes' research, which suggests that dispute resolution in Indonesia is based on cultural values, specifically consensus-based deliberations (Suratminto, 2019). This is because culture plays a central role in shaping an individual's or group's identity (Verulitasari & Cahyono, 2016). By understanding culture, each party involved in a conflict can find appropriate solutions. Additionally, cultural-based conflict resolution can respect diversity and promote inclusivity. Furthermore, culturally based conflict resolution can enhance knowledge about the surrounding world and reduce negative stereotypes. Therefore, culturally based conflict resolution is vital for maintaining peace among individuals or groups, finding better solutions, and appreciating diversity.

Alternative dispute resolution has been extensively studied, including those based on culture or customs. Based on our research on alternative dispute resolution, we mapped out as follows. Firstly, it involves "şulţ" (peaceful resolution), as mentioned in Q.S. An-Nisa/4:35 and 128, in addition to Q.S. Al-Hujurat/49:9 (Mutholib et al., 2022). In divorce cases within Islam, mediation by family members is prioritized (Salamah, 2013). Mediation in Islam can be applied in civil matters and criminal cases, allowing the state to act as a punisher and mediator (Imam Ali Bashori, 2017). Secondly, concerning mediators, peers at school can serve as a method to manage conflicts, promoting school coexistence and enhancing students' socio-emotional well-being (Pérez-Albarracín & Fernández-Baena, 2019). The importance of utilizing mediators who speak the same language (native speakers), have close geographical proximity and possess backgrounds in handling interethnic conflicts has been highlighted (Nasution et al., 2022). Multi-stakeholder involvement in managing disputes in heterogeneous urban areas has proven effective in Brazil (Ferreira & Severo, 2021). Mediation through communication robots can be highly effective, particularly in dangerous situations (such as hostage situations), intense conflicts (such as ethnic and racial conflicts), and when parties are reluctant to involve a third party (Druckman et al., 2021). "What about resolving religious and social conflicts in Bantarkawung, Brebes, Central Java?"

This research aims to describe the resolution of religious and social conflicts that based on a culture of togetherness for religious ritual and social works and rembugan (musyawarah) to accept diversity regarding 'ulûl-amr, the factors contributing to such conflict resolution, and how this resolution is in the perspective of the Qur'an.
II. METHOD

This study employed a qualitative method by interviewing persons involved in the conflict resolution to find out how to resolve religious and social conflicts between Muhammadiyah and Khilafatul Muslimin members as well as the factors influencing this case in Sendangwangi Bantarkawung Berebes Central Java. The informants included individuals from formal structures (the Chief of Police of Bantarkawung and the village head of Sendangwangi) and the conflicting parties (representatives from Muhammadiyah and Khilafatul Muslimin). This research applied an interview guide as the basis for formulating a questionnaire. The open-ended questions covered topics of resolution processes between Muhammadiyah and Khilafatul Muslimin and the factors contributing to conflict resolution.

The informants consist of the Chief Police Officer, the Head of the Village of Bentarkawung, a Muhammadiyah member, and a Khilafatul Muslimin member. The research was conducted in March 2020 (before the Covid-19 pandemic) and April 2021 (during the peak of the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, after implementing the new normal). The interview was face-to-face, and a small portion was conducted via WhatsApp chat. Probing was also shown to explore further the answers obtained. Next, we analyzed the data in three stages: Firstly, data restatement referring to the interview results with the informants. Secondly, we describe data to demonstrate patterns or tendencies regarding conflict resolution. Thirdly, considering the interviewees' context, we took the interpretation process. These three stages of analysis formed the basis for concluding (inferences).

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Religious organizations in Bantarkawung

Among the religious ideological differences in the Bantarkawung sub-district are those between followers of the religious organizations NU, Muhammadiyah, Persis, and Khilafatul Muslimin. Hasari divides these religious organizations into the majority and the minority. The majority consists of Nahdlatul Ulama (N.U.), followed by Muhammadiyah, while the minority includes the Islamic Union (Persis) and Khilafatul Muslimin. Persis comprises only six families, and Khilafatul Muslimin shall incorporate 9 (39 people). The two majority organizations have reached a mutual understanding. Differences in furū‘ (branches) in religious practices (rituals) no longer cause social friction. However, the minority did not share the same understanding and acceptance groups (Interview with the Chief of Police of Bantarkawung, 2020).

Generally, each religious organization has distinct characteristics that differentiate them from other religious groups. For example, N.U. has an accommodating and adaptive nature towards local traditions and culture. In their spiritual practices, the followers of this organization exhibit (taważun, tawāsuţ, and tasāmuĥ). On the other hand, Muhammadiyah identifies itself as a religious organization that seeks to purify Islam of superstitions, innovations, and heresies (taḥayul, bid'ah, and khurafāt). The religious traditions in N.U. stress on Kitab Kuning (traditional Islamic texts), while Muhammadiyah emphasizes the Qur’ân (Burhani, 2016). Such character differences can cause friction, as seen in Madiun (Mohd Yusoff et al., 2015). What about the two minority organizations (Persis and Khilafatul Muslimin) in the area under study?

Similar to N.U. and Muhammadiyah, the Islamic Union (Persis), also has distinct characteristics. One of its characteristics is the emphasis on enjoining good and forbidding evil (amar ma’rūf nahī munkar). This organization shares similarities with Muhammadiyah in its efforts to purify Islam of what they perceive as superstitions, innovations, and heresies (Isnaeniah, 2019). As for Khilafatul Muslimin, although its origin or embryonic phase is associated with the N.I.I.
Khilafatul Muslimin, as a new religious organization in Bantarkawung, is unique. One of its unique aspects is that most of its members are women (Faisal., 2014). The organization began in 2009 when the caretaker of Al-Manar Islamic boarding school, Ustadz Asep Saepulloh, invited Al-Ustadz Abdul Qadir Hasan Baraja (referred to as Khalifah) to be a speaker at a religious gathering in his boarding school in Jetak Sindangwangi, Bantarkawung, Berebes, Central Java. Another uniqueness is that when Hasan Baraja delivered his mission of caliphate, it was warmly received by Asep and his congregation, leading 38 people to pledge their allegiance to Khilafatul Muslimin. That was when the kemas'ulan (branch) of Bumiayu was established with Asep Saepulloh as the Mas'ul Ummah. Two months later (7th of Ramadhan 1430H), the kemas'ulan of Bumiayu was divided into three: Kemas'ulan Bumiayu, Bantakawung 1, and Bantarkawung 2. The kemas'ulan of Bantarkawung was entrusted to Sarmedi, a loyal follower of Ustadz Asep Saepulloh (Faisal., 2014).

Ustadz Asep Saepulloh, a newcomer from Banten, was respected, facilitated, nurtured, and then entrusted with handling religious and social activities by the Muhammadiyah community. Ustadz Asep Saepulloh had many followers from the Muhammadiyah community and some members of N.U. It is not surprising that his loyal followers later joined Khilafatul Muslimin, following in their teacher's footsteps, resulting in a total of 38 people. It was during this time (2009) that the Mas'ulul Ummah was directly established by Khalifah Abdul Qadir Baraja during his visit and da'wah activities in the village of Sindangwangi, Bantarkawung (Faisal., 2014).

From the brief description of the characteristics of each religious organization above, there is a potential for friction between the members of different congregations. Therefore, we understood that each group feels more comfortable with their group. One of the factors contributing to this is the need for specific places of worship for each congregation. However, as a new group, they are not yet known by the local community, which may result in obstacles and difficulties, leading to horizontal conflicts.

Resolution of Religious Social Conflict in Bantarkawung

The conflict between Khilafatul Muslimin and Muhammadiyah in Bantarkawung, as conveyed by the village head of Sindangwangi, started when the community became aware of the allegiance of Ustadz Asep Saepulloh and some of his followers to Khilafatul Muslimin. Attacks from the community, particularly from the Muhammadiyah group, began to occur. These attacks included verbal assaults, such as viewing Ustadz Asep as someone who lacked self-awareness and betrayed their trust. Asep got adequate facilities for his daily needs, including groceries and other necessities. He even received extraordinary respect from the Muhammadiyah community. However, he turned away from Muhammadiyah and followed the Khilafatul Muslimin organization, which did not align with Muhammadiyah's vision. These attacks were verbal and physical, such as throwing stones at the residence of Ustadz Asep, which eventually led to his expulsion (the village head of Sindangwangi, 2021).
Conflict arises between Khilafatul Muslimin and Muhammadiyah, as conveyed by the village head of Sindangwangi.

The research findings can be summarized as follows: The conflict resolution is carried out by the government, namely the police chief and the village head, through communication with the conflicting parties, especially their leaders. Through this communication, spaces are created for the conflicting parties to worship together in the same mosque or prayer room and engage in communal cleaning activities and activities related to Independence Day celebrations. These shared spaces and activities allow the conflicting parties to meet frequently and subsequently engage in dialogues for reconciliation.

The research results reflect that conflict resolution continues Indonesia's tradition and culture of cooperation, which prioritizes peace through consensus-based deliberations.

Table 1. The Steps of Conflict Resolution

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Informans</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The intervention of the Chief of Police, who communicated regularly with the conflicting parties, especially with Khilafatul Muslimin</td>
<td>The Chief of Police of Bantarkawung, 2020</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>The Chief of Police persuaded the members of Khilafatul Muslimin not to establish their exclusive places of worship, such as small prayer rooms or mosques. By doing so, the members of Khilafatul Muslimin became more inclusive, could interact more frequently, and could communicate with the surrounding community.</td>
<td>The Chief of Police of Bantarkawung, 2020</td>
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<td></td>
<td>We wanted to establish our place of worship (a mosque or prayer room). Still, for the sake of safety and harmony with the local community, we decided to follow the request of the police chief and village head so that we do not establish a separate place of worship.</td>
<td>The member of Khilafatul Muslimin (Sm, Rn, and Rh), 2020</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>The village head involves the conflicting parties in community social activities to allow them to meet and communicate more frequently. Among these are village-coordinated initiatives such as community cleaning campaigns, P.K.K. activities at the village hall, and various events leading up to the Indonesian Independence Day on August 17. These measures alleviated the conflict between Khilafatul Muslimin and Muhammadiyah</td>
<td>The village head of Sindangwangi Bantarkawung, 2021.</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The Chief of Police and village authorities communicate with religious leaders from various social-religious organizations in Sindangwangi village, Bantarkawung sub-district. Dialogues and discussions are initiated to facilitate reconciliation, particularly among the conflicting parties.</td>
<td>The Chief of Police of Bantarkawung, 2020</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>The Chief of Police and the village head invite religious leaders to witness the Khilafatul Muslimin ongoing activities in the jungle. When they arrive, they discover that the activities are physical training events called &quot;Pancadaya&quot; (similar to Pagar Nusa in N.U. or Tapak Suci in Muhammadiyah), beginning with collective prayers.</td>
<td>The Chief of Police of Bantarkawung, 2020</td>
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mediators involved are respected individuals from customary leaders, government officials, and religious figures. This finding aligns with Mulyadi and Furqon in the Baduy community (Mulyadi & Furqon, 2021), Aceh (Nurdin, 2013), and Central Sulawesi societies (Ilyas, 2014).

We interpreted the research findings as follows. Firstly, the community has difficulty accepting different religious ideologies. The Khilafatul Muslimin group holds a religious belief regarding *ulul-amri*, which is entirely different from the existing religious beliefs in society. Most of the community is affiliated with N.U. and Muhammadiyah believes that *ulul-amri* refers to the legitimate government elected democratically through general elections.

On the other hand, the Khilafatul Muslimin group believes that the president is not synonymous with *ulul-amri* or Caliph. They believe that the Caliph (in this case, Abdul Qadir Baraja) is not limited to a specific territorial jurisdiction but represents the entire Muslim ummah worldwide. Sarmedi, as the *Mas'ul Ummah* (Chairman of the organization), expressed this viewpoint: "We (Khilafatul Muslimin) acknowledge the territorial government of the Republic of Indonesia that has been democratically elected, but for us, the president is not simultaneously *ulul-amri* or Caliph. The Caliph is not limited to a specific territorial jurisdiction but represents the entire Muslim ummah" (Interview to Sm, 2021).

Numerous research findings on *ulul-amri*, often associated with the caliphate, support these perspectives. For example, Juhari and Malikah discovered controversies surrounding the interpretation of H.T.I. (Hizbut Tahrir Indonesia) political system (Juhari & Malikah, 2021, p. 41). *Ulul-amri*, apart from its general meaning as a husband, also carries a specific purpose as a leader and ruler, as evidenced by studies of the Qur’an, Hadith, atsar (narrations of the Prophet Muhammad’s companions), historical evidence, language, and terminology (Luthfiah et al., 2021, p. 198). Similarly, Handoko et al. found that in Indonesia, there is no room for ideologies other than Pancasila (the state ideology), and Sutomo’s research (Sutomo & Budihardjo, 2021, p. 116) showed that religious figures in Indonesia reject not only secularism but also the idea of an Islamic state (Khilafah) (Handoko et al., 2021, p. 1)

**The factors of conflict resolution**

From the interview results, we found that the factors behind resolving the conflict are as the table follows.

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<tr>
<th>Factors</th>
<th>Descriptions</th>
<th>Informants</th>
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<td>The disappointment of the Muhammadiyah community.</td>
<td>&quot;The person first initiated pledging allegiance to Al-Ustadz Abdul Qadir Hasan Baraja (as the Caliph of Khilafatul Muslimin) was Ustadz Asep Saepulloh. He Came from West Java to Sindanwangi Bantarkawung, and the Muhammadiyah community facilitated Saepulloh's material needs and entrusted him with religious activities.</td>
<td>The Village Head of Sindangwangi Bantarkawung, 2021. Mrs. IW, Mr Hs, and As a member of Muhammadiyah.</td>
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</table>
His students followed Saepullah's decision. The decision of Ustadz Asep to pledge allegiance (bai’ah) to Mr. Khilafatul Muslimin was followed by his followers, the majority of whom were from the Muhammadiyah community. The Head of Village of Sindangwangi Bantarkawung, 2021.

### Exclusivity of Khilafatul Muslimin

| Exclusivity of Khilafatul Muslimin | The members of Khilafatul Muslimin were exclusive and had little interaction with the surrounding community. | The Chief of Police of Bantarkawung, 2020; The village head of Sindangwangi Bantarkawung, 2021. |

Both the community and Khilafatul Muslimin have low education

| Both the community and Khilafatul Muslimin have low education | The general education level of the community is low, resulting in narrow perspectives. | The Chief of Police of Bantarkawung, 2020. |

Likewise, other followers of Khilafatul Muslimin, such as Rs, who only completed junior high school, and Rh, Aj, are high school graduates. All mentioned individuals are officials in Khilafatul Muslimin. The member of Khilafatul Muslimin (Sm, Rs, and Rh), 2021

In the study, we found that the factors contributing to the resolution of the conflict, as mentioned earlier, were because the conflicting parties involved a preacher who was prominent among the Muhammadiyah community, followed by a relatively large number of followers who had limited religious knowledge and were exclusive from their surrounding society. With the accumulation of these various factors, conflict resolution was conducted based on cultural foundations. This involved utilizing religious facilities (mosques and prayer rooms) and social communal spaces and facilities (environmental clean-up and preparation for national holidays) between Khilafatul Muslimin and the Muhammadiyah community. By utilizing these religious and communal facilities, the conflicting parties could frequently interact and communicate, which would then be followed by rembugan (deliberation for consensus), resulting in peace between the conflicting groups.

The results of this study reflect the continuation of primordialism and fanaticism, which often occur among members of religious affiliations, including Islam. Prasojo and Pabja Rahmat (2020) state that conflicts arise due to a lack of divine religious understanding, exclusive attitudes, fanaticism towards certain religious beliefs, and primordialism among the conflicting parties. In line with this, Zaenuddin, as quoted by Syamsuddin (2020), found that religious and social conflicts occur due to exclusivism, truth claims, fanaticism, and the politicization of religion. Furthermore, Wahyudi (2021) states that disputes arise because parties cannot accommodate differences. Thus, conflicts between parties appear partly due to low education levels and narrow religious understanding, making it difficult to accept religious diversity.

We interpreted that this study's findings indicate that the low level of education and understanding of religious teachings can contribute to social conflicts in religious communities. Limited education and a lack of spiritual knowledge make it difficult for individuals to accept differences. However, the ulama can interpret many sacred texts, such as the Qur'an and Hadith, in various ways. A lack of understanding of the diversity of interpretations of religious texts can lead to misunderstandings, which, in turn, can trigger conflicts. Etherington states that religion and work can be integrated productively (Etherington, 2019, p. 1). Higher education institutions are one of the primary institutions for enhancing and promoting cultural awareness and sensitivity, which can then foster

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respect for cultural differences (Coleman et al., 2021, p. 27). Therefore, adequate education and internalization are necessary to appreciate differences so communities can accept and respect diversity.

**Conflict Resolution in the Perspective of the Qur'an**

As mentioned earlier, the resolution of religious conflicts in Bantarkawung is carried out by the governmental structure, namely the Police Chief and the Village Head, through communication with the influential figures of the conflicting parties. They strive to facilitate frequent meetings, interactions, and communications between conflicting parties. Some spaces used for this purpose include shared places of worship (mosques and prayer rooms), environmental clean-up activities, and religious and national events such as Independence Day. Through persuasive efforts by various parties, including the Police, village officials, and religious leaders, the tensions between Khilafatul Muslimin and Muhammadiyah diminished. Subsequently, dialogues between the two parties can achieve acceptance of the differences in godly understanding among the parties, ultimately leading to peace and the end of the conflict.

There are several terms in the Qur'an related to conflict management and resolution, namely şulḥ (peace), taĥkīm (arbitration), and the combination of şulḥ and taĥkīm. First, şulḥ is used in the Qur'an to eliminate disputes and conflicts (Al-Aşfihānī, n.d., p. 292). Şulḥ means peace, an agreement to end all disputes or disagreements. Şulḥ encompasses all the functions of negotiation, mediation, reconciliation, and compromise, as mentioned in Q.S. 4:128, which describes the peace between a husband and wife when the husband's behavior is feared to be nusyūz (disobedience). Additionally, şulḥ in Q.S. 49:9-10 instructs believers to reconcile and make peace justly, as they are all brothers and sisters. Second, taĥkīm (arbitration), as mentioned in Q.S. 4:35, commands the appointment of arbitrators from both the husband's and wife's sides to seek a solution when they are in conflict and unable to reach peace. Scholars differ in their views on who can be the arbitrators. Al-Razi (1999, vol. 10 (74)) mentions various opinions: some scholars believe that the arbitrator should be an imām, as they are the implementers of Islamic law, while others say that the arbitrator can be any righteous believer, regardless of being an imām or not. Quoting the views of Al-Qurthubi (2019, vol. 5, p 175) and asy-Syaukani (1414, vol. 1, p 534), Naqiyah (2022, p. 136) states that the mediator (hakam) should be a just person who can argue strongly, rationally, and by religious principles.

Third is a combination of şulḥ and taĥkīm, based on Q.S. 4:35, as stated by Md. Zahidul Islam (2012). The Qur'an says that şulḥ is the best way to resolve conflicts. Q.S. 4:128 states "that peace is better for them (husband and wife), even though human nature tends to be greedy. Furthermore, şulḥ applies not only to private (civil) matters but can also be implemented in criminal cases, as seen in Q.S. 2:178 regarding murder cases and Q.S. 4:92-93 explaining the concept of forgiveness in cases of murder. What is prohibited is şulḥ, which entails making what Allah has made forbidden permissible, as mentioned in hadith number 1352 of Sunan Tirmidhi (1988, vol. 3, p. 28, no 1352).

From this perspective, resolving religious and social conflicts in Bantarkawung involves a third party (the Police Chief and Village Head), which can be associated substantively with the concept of hakam. This third party seeks solutions encouraging the conflicting parties to interact in various religious and community activities. They followed by dialogue to foster mutual understanding and achieve peace or şulḥ. Therefore, conflict resolution can be categorized as a combination of şulḥ and taĥkīm.

This finding is consistent with Rahman's results that Indonesian society tends to resolve disputes through peaceful means available in Islam, known as the concept of şulḥ. The idea of şulḥ aligns intrinsically with the traditions and cultural values of the Indonesian people, emphasizing harmony, peace, and kinship (A. R.-J. I. E. Islam & 2021, 2020).
IV. CONCLUSION

We found that resolving religious and social conflicts is done through conciliation by a third party. They are the Bantarkawung Police Chief and the Village Head of Sendangwangi. They actively engage religious leaders and initiate culturally-based resolution steps (promoting togetherness, consensus, and rembugan (mutual deliberation among the conflicting parties. One significant contribution of this research is the need for preventive measures to minimize social and religious conflicts. Among these measures is the widespread promotion of religious moderation within educational institutions at all levels and within the broader community. Through this, society can understand and accept religious diversity in values, norms, and ideas, thereby minimizing exclusive attitudes toward religion, fanaticism towards a particular religious doctrine, and primordialism. With religious moderation, a society that is not only tolerant of diversity but also appreciates it, as long as it does not contradict the principles of spiritual teachings, will be created.

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