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RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN WATER USE PRACTICES BASED ON BULUGH AL-MARAM AT SALAF ISLAMIC BOARDING SCHOOLS: A Study of Living Hadith

Muhamad Nurudin

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kudus, Kudus, Indonesia

kudusnurudin@gmail.com

Ahmad Saerozi

Ma'had Aly Al-Kautsar, Pati, Indonesia

shirazyusuf@gmail.com

Zahrotur Rochmah

Institut Agama Islam Negeri Kudus, Kudus, Indonesia

zahroh@gmail.com

Abstract

This study is motivated by the increasing urgency of religious moderation in a plural society amid the growing crisis of water resources, particularly within Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*). *Bulugh al-Maram*, as a primary reference for *hadith ahkam* studied in *pesantren*, holds significant potential for fostering values of moderation, especially through hadiths regulating proportional and efficient water use. However, a purely textual understanding of certain hadiths may also lead to rigid or even radical attitudes if not properly contextualized. Therefore, this research aims to examine the values of religious moderation embedded in the hadiths on water

usage in *Bulugh al-Maram* and their implementation in Salaf pesantren along the northern coast of Java. This study employs a qualitative research method using both library and field approaches within the framework of living hadith studies. Hermeneutic analysis is applied to interpret the hadith texts, while field data are collected through observations and interviews conducted in several Salaf pesantren in Kudus and its surrounding areas. The findings reveal that *Bulugh al-Maram* contains numerous hadiths that promote moderate religious attitudes, such as prohibitions against excessive water use (*israf*), flexibility in purification practices, and recognition of diversity in ritual observance. These values are reflected in pesantren practices, including water-saving behaviors, the use of *tayammum* when appropriate, and tolerant attitudes toward differences among Islamic legal schools. This study recommends strengthening contextual approaches to hadith understanding through living hadith studies so that the values of religious moderation can be more effectively internalized, while simultaneously contributing to water resource conservation and the promotion of social harmony within pesantren communities.

Keywords: Bulugh al-Maram, Hadiths on Water Usage, Living Hadith Religious Moderation.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh semakin menguatnya urgensi moderasi beragama di tengah masyarakat plural serta krisis energi air yang kian mengkhawatirkan, khususnya di lingkungan pesantren. Kitab *Bulugh al-Maram* sebagai rujukan utama hadis-hadis ahkam di pesantren memiliki potensi besar dalam menanamkan nilai moderasi, terutama melalui hadis-hadis yang mengatur penggunaan air secara proporsional dan efisien. Namun, pemahaman tekstual terhadap hadis-hadis tertentu juga berpotensi melahirkan sikap kaku bahkan radikal jika tidak dikontekstualisasikan. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini bertujuan mengkaji nilai-nilai moderasi beragama dalam hadis penggunaan air dalam *Bulugh al-Maram* serta implementasinya di pesantren salaf di wilayah Pantura Jawa. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan kepustakaan dan lapangan (living hadis). Analisis hermeneutik digunakan untuk menafsirkan teks hadis, sementara data lapangan diperoleh melalui observasi dan wawancara di beberapa pesantren salaf di Kudus dan sekitarnya. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa *Bulugh al-Maram* memuat hadis-hadis yang mendorong sikap moderat, seperti larangan *israf*

dalam penggunaan air, fleksibilitas dalam bersuci, serta pengakuan terhadap keragaman praktik ibadah. Implementasi nilai-nilai tersebut tampak dalam praktik penghematan air, pemanfaatan tayamum, serta sikap toleran terhadap perbedaan mazhab di pesantren. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan perlunya penguatan pemahaman kontekstual hadis melalui kajian living hadis agar nilai moderasi beragama dapat terinternalisasi secara lebih efektif, sekaligus berkontribusi pada upaya konservasi sumber daya air dan penguatan harmoni sosial di lingkungan pesantren.

Kata kunci: Bulugh al-Maram, Hadis Penggunaan Air, Living Hadis, Moderasi Beragama.

Introduction

Modern life, characterized by rationality and empiricism, is now being abandoned by society due to the weaknesses inherent in these principles. For example, abandoning the values of divinity and humanity in life, even though both are an integral part of human life, has led to an environmental crisis, such as water scarcity (Nurhayati, 2022, p. 61).

One source of values in Islam is the hadith of the Prophet, his words, deeds, and decisions during his lifetime. To facilitate the retrieval of the Prophet's hadith, scholars compiled various hadith books, such as Bulugh al-Maram. This is one of the hadith books on law that is widely studied in the Islamic world, especially among Islamic boarding schools.

For example, in relation to water, the Prophet did something simple, as in the following hadith:

عن عائشة قالت: كنت أغتسل أنا و رسول الله من إناء واحد تختلف فيه من الجنابة

"From Aisha Ra., when I bathed with the Prophet in one place, we took turns bathing in it" (Bukhari, 2009, p.321).

The above hadith shows the importance of conserving water, especially for bathing. One of the problems related to water use is extravagance, which is excessive use of water (*israf fi al-ma'*) for any purpose, because it will cause an energy crisis. In fact, water is vital for human life, because it is the source of life. As mentioned in Surah al-Anbiya' verse 30 as follows:

وَجَعَلْنَا مِنَ الْمَاءِ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ حَيٍّ أَفَلَا يُؤْمِنُونَ

"And from water We have made everything alive. So why do they not believe?"

Being economical in the use of water today is a necessity. This is very much needed in various matters, including in worship, because the need for water is very high, while its supply is dwindling. Being economical in the use of water is part of a moderate attitude in worship, which is not to use water excessively and only for sufficient needs, or not to be wasteful (Soebahar, 2011, p. 13). In addition to the above hadiths, the book *Bulugh al-Maram* also mentions the Prophet's hadiths related to the existence of water, as in the following hadith (Asqalani, 2019).

ان الماء طهور لا ينجسه شيء

Indeed, water is pure and will not become impure due to anything

This hadith shows a moderate attitude towards water that has been contaminated with impurities. It is not considered impure even if it has been contaminated with dirt, as long as the amount is less than two kulah, and its substance, color, and taste have not changed. This makes it easier for someone who is purifying themselves with water to avoid being wasteful. In addition, one should not be careless in using water that has been contaminated with impurities, if the amount is less than two kulah.

Unlike the hadith above, research on the book *Bulugh al-Maram*. Conducted by Moh. Misbakhul Khoir with the title "The Implementation of Puritan Hadiths in the Book *Bulugh al-Maram* Based on Religious Moderation at the Mambaul Ulum Islamic Boarding School in Mojokerto," concluded that the book actually contains puritan hadiths, so they need to be taught appropriately so that people become moderate (Khoir, 2021, p. 182). The results of this study indicate that there are radical elements in the book *Bulugh al-Maram*, if understood textually. An example is a hadith about someone who drinks water from a silver vessel, as if he were putting the fire of hell into his stomach.

According to the author, the above hadith contains two meanings: the literal meaning, which is a threat to anyone who uses gold and silver utensils for wudu; and the contextual meaning, which is that all human possessions in this world are a trust from Allah. Therefore, one is prohibited from being arrogant about one's wealth (Muslim, 2000, p. 163).

Respecting differences of opinion is a must in the world of science, one of the moderate attitudes in the world of science. As is done in Islamic boarding schools in Kudus, for example, regarding the hadith that invalidates wudu due to skin contact between men and women who are not mahram. In general, they invalidate it, but under certain conditions it is not invalid.

In pesantren life, the implementation of the hadith on the use of water is carried out in various ways. For example, the use of diapers or sanitary pads for menstruating women is very important because it significantly reduces water consumption. Maximizing tayamum as a substitute for wudu as long as the

conditions are met is also very important, as is performing *istinja* with stones and performing *wudu* once to perform prayers several times.

Water conservation is very important nowadays and must be practiced in all activities due to the current water crisis. In fact, the impact will be enormous if it is not properly addressed. This includes droughts caused by prolonged dry seasons, global warming, population growth disruption, poor sanitation, and the emergence of various diseases.

Retnosuryandini, a researcher from the Center for Environmental Studies at Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, as quoted by Eva concluded that out of every ten families, seven are affected by contaminated clean water. This indicates that access to clean water is becoming increasingly difficult for families in the country (Rolia, Oktavia, Rahayu, Fansuri, & Mufidah, 2020, pp. 114-121).

In addition to the above methods, efforts to overcome clean water shortages in Islamic boarding schools are also carried out directly by drilling wells, using PDAM Simas, and digging regular wells. However, in reality, clean water and sanitation issues remain a problem in Islamic boarding schools. Despite various measures that have been taken, the clean water crisis still affects boarding schools in terms of meeting daily needs.

The attitude and steps taken to overcome the clean water problem are related to various things, one of which is the belief in religious values that encourage water conservation, as in the hadith in the book *Bulugh al-Maram*. The systematics of the book *Bulughul Maram* cover several things; first, the book, which is the largest part of the book. Second, the chapter, which is a sub-section of the book. In this section, there are several hadiths. For example, the book on *taharah*, which is related to the use of water, consists of several chapters. The book on *taharah* (purification) consists of several chapters, such as the types of water, *wudhu*, *tayamum*, *istinja'*, and bathing. These chapters consist of several hadiths. They are located at the beginning of the book because of their urgent role in matters of law and worship.

Conceptually, the hadiths on the use of water found in the book *Bulugh al-Maram* are a source for practicing moderate values in religion, in addition to radical values, especially in the midst of a water energy crisis. This is because the book mentions the efficient use of water, especially in relation to worship, which is an important element in human life. This means that efficiency is required even in matters of principle, let alone in secondary matters.

Nevertheless, there are still many Islamic boarding schools that experience difficulties in obtaining clean water. Even though they also practice conservation, such as bathing moderately, not taking long ablutions, washing clothes moderately, and performing *istinja* (ablution after defecation) moderately.

Wahda Annisa, in her research, analysis of the availability and quality of sanitation facilities in Islamic boarding schools: a case study of the Al Kahfi Somalangu Kebumen Islamic boarding school, explains that the issue of clean water is an important part of the development of Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia.

As mentioned earlier, in the book *Bulugh al-Maram*, there are moderate hadiths, and there are also those with radical nuances. Due to the diversity of attitudes and laws regarding an issue, it also causes “division” among Muslims. This triggers conflicts within society (Mulyani & Siregar, 2020, pp. 15-18).

The study of living hadith is a study concerning the implementation of hadith in daily life, which cannot be separated from the social and cultural conditions in society. Living hadith is a contemporary form of hadith study, aimed at implementing the values of the Hadith so that they are accepted in society, especially in modern times. This study originated from the ideas of Fazlur Rahman, a Muslim intellectual from Pakistan, and was later developed by Barbara Medcafe and continued by contemporary hadith scholars (Rahman, 1995, p. 21).

In studying the implementation of a hadith, one cannot ignore the analytical tools available in the social world. Various socio-cultural theories developed among scientists are important tools in answering questions related to the implementation of hadith. For example, the theory of social engineering in relation to the use of water in Islamic boarding schools.

Related to moderation in the book *Bulugh al-Maram* is a study conducted by Moh. Mahrus entitled: “The Concept of Multiculturalism from a Hadith Perspective: A Study of the Book *Bulughul Maram*” (Mahrus & Muklis, 2015, pp. 87-90). The researcher from IAIN Samarinda, Indonesia, concluded that the book *Bulughul Maram* strongly supports the existence of diverse cultures, such as ethnicity, culture, race, and religion. Therefore, studies such as this are very important to be developed among Muslims in modern times, especially in Indonesia. This research is literature-based, so its implementation in society is not yet known precisely.

In addition, Imam as-Syafi'i wrote about the issue of mukhtalif al-Hadith in the chapter *tanawwu' fi al-'ibadah* (diversity in worship) (Safri, 1999). If there are differences in the narrations regarding worship, this is very likely because the Prophet always paid attention to the circumstances of his surroundings. Thus, there is diversity in the methods used in certain environments. For example, regarding the recitation of the iftitah, qunut, and tashahhud prayers, and when leading the prayer, sometimes a short recitation is used or vice versa.

Discussion

A moderate approach to religion is one that lies between radical and liberal attitudes in dealing with all issues, respecting local wisdom in practicing religion. The Prophet always emphasized this kind of attitude in dealing with the circumstances surrounding life (Suharto, 2019, p. 92).

According to Hasanudin Aly the Indonesian government's approach to religious moderation is based on two important things; first, the pluralistic nature of society in various aspects. Second, the emergence and development of radical or extreme religious understandings in the country, which could threaten national unity and integrity. This is very dangerous for the survival of the nation and state in the territory of the Republic of Indonesia, which is based on Pancasila (Ali, 2019, p. 1).

The role of living hadith is very urgent in modern life, not only to implement the values of hadith, but also to pay attention to the socio-cultural conditions that exist in society, so as to be able to give birth to a moderate attitude in religion. This greatly supports the role of Hadith as a grand concept and grand theory for various problems that arise in life. For example, related to the efficient use of water in life (Fathul Mufid, 2013, pp. 89-94). As water reserves on earth decrease, water use needs to be limited in all aspects, as taught by the Prophet in the hadith above.

In general, water is a very urgent need for a community, such as in Islamic boarding schools. For example, with more than five hundred students, the need for clean water is vital, because each student needs 60 liters of water per day. Given the large number of students, this requires 60 liters of water multiplied by the number of students.

Madonna, in her research on "Energy Efficiency through Water Conservation (Case Study: Bakri University Higher Education Institution)," concluded that to conserve water for wudu, standard faucets should be used to prevent waste (Madonna, 2013, pp. 18-29).

At first glance, it seems that this attitude is inseparable from the Prophet's commandment against wasting energy resources. The book *Bulugh Maram* discusses many hadiths about the ethics of using water resources. The book was written by Ibn Hajar in the 9th century Hijri, with the aim of providing guidance for Muslims on the basics of law and worship.

Although the use of clean water is still difficult, steps have been taken at the Kudus Islamic boarding school in various ways. For example, bore wells have been constructed with the help of the government. As in the Duta Aswaja Kudus Islamic boarding school, bore wells were constructed at several points, as one point was not sufficient for the five hundred students.

The study of the Ahkam hadith is conducted using the book *Bulugh al-Maram*, with the aim of making it easy to understand because it is quite concise,

used as a reference for students, and implemented. All of this is possible thanks to the good cooperation between the government and the Islamic boarding school. Therefore, washing with stones is not practiced at the Islamic boarding school. The reason is that the use of water is more hygienic than other means, including stones or other hard objects.

For the pluralistic Indonesian nation, harmony among religious communities is very important in order to maintain the stability of the nation and state. For this reason, the principle of religious moderation has been made the main mission of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. The goal is to achieve harmony among religious communities in Indonesia, which is peaceful, united, safe, and prosperous (Kemenag, 2018, p. 13).

Hadith law is one of the most important subjects of hadith, as it concerns the procedures of worship and muamalah, which are central to daily life. This has led to the emergence of various books on legal issues, such as the book *Bulughul Maram*, which is widely studied in society, especially in Islamic boarding schools.

The concept of religious moderation has actually existed since the time of the Prophet, as explained in the Qur'an, Surah al-Kafirun, verse 6, and Surah al-Baqarah, verse 143. These verses contain commands to respect the differences in beliefs and worship of others. This was exemplified by the Muslim community during the time of the Prophet in Medina, who lived side by side with Christians, Jews, Magians, and Sabians.

After the Prophet's death, his practices and sayings were codified in a vast body of Hadith literature. The aim was none other than to make it easy for Muslims to follow his example in their lives. However, the Hadith commandment regarding *tasamuh*, or being open-minded as a manifestation of religious tolerance, was not recorded in a separate book or chapter. This theme is still combined with other themes, so it is often understood in other ways.

An example in the book *Bulugh al-Maram*, Hadith about religious moderation is found in various chapters, not collected in one place, so it is sometimes difficult to find. For example, in the chapter on *toharoh*, it is explained about a moderate attitude in religion, specifically the differences in the procedures for purification, prayer, and muamalah, so that it has great potential in building an attitude of religious moderation. (Ibn Hajar; 1989, 13)

In the matter of wudu, it is mentioned in the Hadith that skin contact between men and women who are not mahram invalidates wudu. Then another Hadith is also mentioned about skin contact between men and women not invalidating wudu, because it is not considered gathering. (Ibn Hajar: 14)

The two Hadiths above have led to two different understandings in society regarding what invalidates wudhu; some say it invalidates wudhu, while others say it does not. By understanding the differences in understanding the Hadith, a

tolerant attitude towards different groups will emerge, because the basis for this understanding is known.

The implementation of a moderate attitude in religion is applied in various ways in various Islamic boarding schools, such as TBS Kudus, Al-Hidayat Lasem, and al-Fadhlu Kaliwungu Kendal. This attitude is carried out by studying the meaning of the Hadith from the perspective of the madhhab that exist among Muslims. A madhhab is a school of thought in Islamic jurisprudence that is adhered to by Muslims in carrying out their daily worship. There are four well-known schools of thought, namely: Shafi'i, Hanbali, Maliki, and Hanafi.

The book *Bulugh al-Maram* is a simple book of legal Hadith, written by Imam Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (d. 853 AH), a medieval Hadith scholar. It does not mention any particular school of thought, so it is acceptable to all groups. The purpose of writing this book was to summarize the hadiths about law found in the main books on hadith, such as the *Sahih*, *Sunan*, *Mustadrak*, and *Syarah*.

As a book of hadiths on legal issues, it discusses various legal matters. For example, *toharoh*, *salat*, *fasting*, *zakat*, *food*, *jihad*, *siasah*, and *muamalah*. The legal principles taught by the Prophet are flexible, up to date, easy to follow, and not burdensome. (Muhamad Amin: 1989, p. 1)

Hudhari Bik, a modern Islamic law expert, explains that the basic nature of Islamic law is flexible, in line with the times. This attitude has given rise to a moderate religious life, such as a democratic spirit, respect for differences, and a spirit of togetherness in building the country. (Khudhori Bik; 1989, p. 3)

However, in reality, conflicts often arise in life due to tensions between religious communities as a result of radical or textual interpretations. Such interpretations claim that one's group is the most correct and impose their understanding on others in practicing their religion and beliefs.

Azyumardi Azra, in one of his studies, explains that one of the causes of conflict in society is inter-religious conflict, which can even reach high levels of resistance. This is caused by the emergence of radicalism among religious adherents. However, the purpose of religion is to bring about peace, not conflict. (Adeni: 2022, p. 180).

Belief in a religion is very useful for fostering a strong spirit in defending and fighting for one's beliefs. However, this must be balanced with a high level of tolerance towards the beliefs of others who are different. This is because, in reality, in a global society, there is a diversity of opinions and beliefs, which is part of human rights. Problems arise when people try to impose their will on others, giving rise to radical attitudes.

As happened in NTB, destructive attitudes towards water led to conflicts between groups in the community, because each group was unable to restrain

itself. Such attitudes are not in line with the general purpose of religion for humanity, which is to bring about peace in human life. (T. Saifullah: 2021, p. 39).

Diversity does not always become a source of conflict between groups if each of them can respect differences, does not consider their group to be the most correct in understanding the text, and does not consider other groups to be wrong for various reasons. (T. Saifullah: 2021, p. 40)

One form of diversity in actions and attitudes is the practice carried out by the Prophet in worship. According to Dr. Bliteser Bachtiar, MA (2021), the diversity of the Prophet's attitudes and actions in worship is a blessing intended to serve as a guide in making takhyir (choices) in worship in accordance with the culture of the community. This opens the way to follow certain texts in accordance with the circumstances in society, which are influenced by social, cultural, and natural conditions. Thus, the concept of mukhtalif al-Hadith was born, a science to resolve differences in the wording of Hadith, pioneered by Imam Shafi'i (Djuneid, 2011, p. 29).

In hermeneutics of diversity of thought, there is a school of thought known as subjectivism, which bases understanding on one's own opinion and acknowledges other opinions that are different. This school of thought arose from the phenomenon that the environment has a very strong influence on a person's life, giving rise to various opinions. This school of thought is very appropriate for resolving the diversity of Hadith texts, such as those in the book Bulughul Maram.

For example, in the Hadith about things that invalidate wudu, the book Bulugh al-Maram shows a moderate attitude in religion, especially regarding the procedures for purification, which reads as follows (Asqalani, 2014, p. 201);

قال رجل مسست ذكرى عليه الصلاة ام لا ؟ فقال النبي صلى الله : لا انما هو بضعة منك

Someone said, "I touched my genitals, so do I have to perform ablution again or not?" The Prophet replied, "No, because it is part of your flesh."

The meaning of the above Hadith regarding the invalidity of wudu due to touching the genitals is used as a basis by the Hanafi school of thought and certain groups who consider this Hadith to be superior. Imam as-Syafi'i held the opposite opinion, citing another Hadith that invalidates wudu due to touching the genitals.

The implementation of this hadith at the al-Hidayah Islamic boarding school is based on the second opinion, namely that touching the penis invalidates wudu. This hadith was used as the basis by Imam Shafi'i in establishing his school of thought. This is one of the schools of thought adopted by Indonesian society, including the boarding school. They use the Shafi'i school of thought as a guideline in practicing the hadith. This means that the hadith texts studied in the book are then linked to the fiqh books they study, especially the book *Fath al-Qarib* (Al-Ghazzi, 2010, p. 59).

Similarly, at the TBS Kudus Islamic boarding school, one of the salaf boarding schools in the city, the students use the second hadith, which invalidates wudu. The reason for this is that they adhere to the Shafi'i school of thought, which is the school of thought used at the pesantren. Meanwhile, at the Salafiyah Kajen pesantren in Pati, students are taught this book in order to learn about the causes of differences between schools of thought so that they can develop a moderate attitude.

At the al-Hidayat Islamic boarding school, the principle of *intiqal al-mazhab*, or changing madhhabs, is also taught, if in an emergency, such as when performing the hajj or umrah. There, Muslims tend to use the Hanafi or Maliki madhhabs in performing worship rather than other madhhabs, because they are easier to implement.

So, their moderate understanding stems from their understanding of the book that teaches diversity in worship, so that they know the basis of each group. Although they believe that one of the things that invalidates wudu is *mula-masah*, they still respect differences with other beliefs. For them, the existence of *ikhtilaf al-'ulama* is a necessity that brings blessings to the ummah, so it is preserved.

According to the Hadith scholars, the two hadiths about the invalidation of wudu above are classified as *mukhtalif*, because there are contradictory statements between the two hadiths. (Zuhad:) If there are differences in wording, then the steps taken are to do one of several things, such as; *al-jam'*, *takhsis*, *taqyid*, *naskh*, and *tanawwu' fi al-ibadah*.

At first glance, the book *Bulughul Maram* seems to indicate both radical and moderate attitudes towards the people in facing life in modern times, depending on the pattern of understanding. When the understanding is correct, as intended by the author of the book, a moderate pattern of understanding will emerge. However, if only the outward appearance is seen, it will give rise to radical attitudes.

A moderate understanding is very appropriate in pluralistic Indonesia, as it can make a real contribution to fostering a sense of national unity and integrity. A moderate attitude is also very important for global life, as it upholds the values of democracy, respects the opinions of others, and does not impose itself, thereby creating peace in the world.

Conversely, radical understanding can lead to conflict in life, because it always imposes its will on others. This is exemplified by the Israeli Zionist group, which claims the land of Jerusalem as part of the promised land in the Torah, thereby causing conflict with the Palestinian people who have long inhabited the region. Other examples include the conflict between the Shia and Sunni groups in Syria, and the conflict between the Wahhabi and Sunni groups in Saudi Arabia. Such ideologies arise from an exclusive attitude in practicing religious teachings.

Conversely, respecting differences of opinion in society will prevent radicalism, foster peace, and strengthen national unity and integrity. Therefore, this concept has been adopted as the vision and mission of the government in regulating religious life.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this study finds that the hadiths in *Bulugh al-Maram*, especially those related to the use of water and purification procedures, have strong potential as a source of religious moderation and ecological ethics when understood contextually through the living hadith approach. Hadiths about water efficiency, water purity, and diversity in worship practices (*tanawwu' fi al-'ibādah*) have been shown to contribute to the formation of moderate, tolerant, and adaptive attitudes in Islamic boarding schools, especially in responding to clean water crises and diversity in religious practices. However, this study also shows that a purely textual understanding of some of the hadith in *Bulugh al-Maram* has the potential to give rise to puritanical or exclusive attitudes that can trigger socio-religious tensions. Therefore, it is recommended to strengthen the learning of hadith based on religious moderation by emphasizing the *mukhtalif al-hadith* methodology, cross-sectarian understanding, and the integration of socio-ecological perspectives in pesantren education. In addition, synergy between Islamic boarding schools, the government, and the community is needed in the sustainable management of water resources, so that the values of the hadith are not only understood normatively, but also implemented practically to support environmental sustainability and social harmony in a pluralistic society.

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