

**RELIGIOUS MODERATION IN THE INDONESIAN ULAMA COUNCIL (MUI)
FATWA: ANALYSIS OF FATWA FIKIH ON INTERFAITH GREETINGS**

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Abstract	<p><i>This research aims to analyze how the principles of religious moderation are reflected in the fatwa of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) on the Jurisprudence of Interfaith Greetings. This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive-analytical approach. Data were collected from various secondary sources, including academic literature, official reports, the media, and other relevant sources. The results show that MUI's fatwa on Fikih Salam Lintas Agama reflects the principles of religious moderation, such as balance, tolerance, and public good. The fatwa seeks to bridge theological and social interests and encourage the harmonization of interfaith relations in Indonesia. However, the implementation of the fatwa still faces challenges related to differences in understanding and acceptance among the community. This research contributes to the literature on religious moderation and the role of MUI's fatwa in realizing religious harmony in Indonesia.</i></p> <p>Keywords: <i>MUI Fatwa, Religious Moderation, Interfaith Greetings.</i></p>
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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country with various religions and beliefs that coexist. According to data from the Ministry of Religious Affairs, there are six officially recognized religions in Indonesia, namely Islam, Christianity, Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism (Kementerian Agama Republik Indonesia, 2021). Meanwhile, in the 2020 population census data, about 86.7% of Indonesia's population is Muslim, 10.7% is Christian, followed by Hinduism, Buddhism, and other religions (BPS, 2021). This religious diversity is often a source of potential conflict but can also be a strength if managed properly. In this context, religious moderation is important to implement in order to create harmony and tolerance between religious communities.

This diversity makes religious moderation an important element in maintaining social harmony. Religious moderation, which is a middle stance between extremism and liberalism, plays a vital role in creating a peaceful and respectful society. This diversity sometimes causes friction between religious communities that can threaten national harmony. Therefore, there is a need for religious moderation that can minimize conflict and promote tolerance.

The Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), as a religious institution that has the authority to issue fatwas, plays an important role in creating and maintaining religious moderation in Indonesia. One of the relevant fatwas in this context is the fatwa on the fiqh of interfaith greetings, which is the main focus of this research (MUI, 2021).

In this context, the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI), as an institution that provides religious guidance through its fatwas, clearly has a great responsibility to support religious moderation. MUI's fatwas provide guidance for Muslims in practicing religion in a multicultural society. One topic that attracts attention is the fiqh of interfaith greetings, given the importance of social interaction between religious communities in Indonesia.

MUI's fatwas often reflect an attitude of religious moderation that Muslims are expected to apply in their daily lives. One of the relevant topics in the context of Indonesia's multicultural society is the fiqh of interfaith greetings. Interfaith greetings become an important issue because they involve direct interaction between Muslims and adherents of other religions, which is often characterized by differences in theological and cultural views.

Therefore, MUI's fatwa on the fiqh of interfaith greetings is relevant in this context. In Indonesia's multicultural and multireligious society, interfaith greetings are one form of social interaction that often occurs. Therefore, it is important to see how MUI applies religious moderation in its fatwa related to interfaith greetings.

In the context of a plural society like Indonesia, fatwas issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) have a significant role in providing legal and moral guidance for Muslims. These fatwas are often considered the main reference in daily religious life. For example, in controversial cases or new issues for which there is no precedent, MUI is often the party that provides legal guidance that is considered valid by many Muslims.

One phenomenon that has attracted considerable attention is the practice of interfaith greetings. In Indonesia's pluralistic society, social interaction and interfaith relations are inevitable. Interfaith greetings, such as saying "*Assalamualaikum*" to non-Muslims, often become a hot topic of discussion. This phenomenon has led to various responses from various groups, from religious, social, and legal aspects. Data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) shows that around 87.2% of Indonesia's population are Muslims, while the rest adhere to other religions. This shows that interfaith interaction is a social fact that cannot be ignored (BPS, 2020).

The importance of this study lies in an in-depth understanding of the MUI fatwa on interfaith greetings from a legal and social perspective. This study is expected to provide a more comprehensive insight into how the fatwa is implemented and accepted by the community. In addition, this study also aims to evaluate the social impact of the implementation of the fatwa in the context of interfaith relations in Indonesia.

In the context of religious moderation, several questions arise regarding MUI's fatwa on the fiqh of interfaith greetings. First, what is the background of the issuance of MUI's fatwa on Fikih Salam Lintas Agama? Second, how are the principles of religious moderation reflected in MUI's Fatwa on the Jurisprudence of Interfaith Greetings? These questions become the basis for this research to examine more deeply the application of religious moderation in MUI's fatwa and its implications.

This research aims to analyze the background of the issuance of MUI's fatwa on Fikih Salam Lintas Agama. In addition, this research also aims to identify the principles of religious moderation reflected in MUI's Fikih Salam Lintas Agama fatwa. As well as assessing the social and religious impact of the fatwa on interfaith relations in Indonesia. Thus, it is hoped that this research can provide a deeper understanding of the role of religious moderation in MUI's fatwa.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative method with an analytical-descriptive approach. Data was collected from various secondary sources such as books, journals, official reports and mass media. The data collection techniques used include literature study and document analysis. The data analysis method applied is content analysis to identify the main themes related to religious moderation in MUI fatwas.

Several previous studies have examined religious moderation and the role of MUI fatwas in the Indonesian context of creating interfaith tolerance. For example, research by Hasyim (2018) highlights the role of MUI in promoting religious moderation through its

fatwas. Another study by Anwar (2019) examined the impact of MUI's fatwa on interfaith harmony in Indonesia. These studies show that MUI has a significant role in creating religious moderation in Indonesia, despite some challenges faced.

However, there is no research that specifically examines the principles of religious moderation in MUI's Interfaith Salam Fikih Fatwa. Therefore, this research seeks to fill the gap and contribute to the literature on religious moderation and the role of MUI's fatwa in Indonesia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSION

1. Religious Moderation: Concept and Theory

Religious moderation in Indonesia is a concept that emphasizes tolerance, balance, and respect for differences in religious life. This concept aims to create social harmony in the midst of religious diversity in Indonesia, avoid extremism, and encourage mutual understanding between religious communities (Rahmat, 2019). The theory of religious moderation is based on the principle of *wasatiyyah*, which means the middle way or balance in religion. This principle teaches people to be fair, proportional, and not excessive in practicing religious teachings. In the Indonesian context, religious moderation also includes government and community efforts to promote interfaith dialog, interfaith cooperation, and law enforcement against acts of intolerance and radicalism (Azra, 2020). The Indonesian government through the Ministry of Religious Affairs has initiated various programs and policies to promote religious moderation, such as multicultural education, anti-radicalism campaigns, and strengthening religious harmony. These efforts aim to build a better understanding of the importance of tolerance and togetherness in diversity (Hidayat, 2021).

Religious moderation emphasizes a modest and non-excessive approach to religious practice, thus avoiding extremism. This means not imposing certain religious views or practices on others and respecting differences in a pluralistic society (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2020). According to Oman Fathurahman, Chairperson of the Religious Moderation Working Group of the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs, the importance of religious moderation lies in its ability to reduce social friction due to differences in religious views and maintain harmony and peace in a pluralistic society like Indonesia (Ministry of Religious Affairs, 2020).

The concept of religious moderation is rooted in Islamic teachings that emphasize "*ummatan wasatan*" or moderate people. This concept is in line with the principles of Islam that teach its people to be fair, balanced, and not excessive (al-Quran. Al-Baqarah: 143). According to Yusuf Al-Qaradawi, religious moderation in Islam can be realized through *tawazun* (balance), *i'tidal* (justice), and *tawassut* (middle way) (Al-Qaradawi, 2010). These principles can be applied in various aspects of life, including in interfaith interactions.

The theory of religious moderation includes several aspects such as inclusiveness, interfaith dialog, and rejection of extremism and liberalism. Religious moderation in Islam is known as "*wasatiyyah*", which means the middle stance (Al-Qaradawi, 2010).

Islamic moderation emphasizes an attitude of openness to existing differences that are believed to be *sunnatullah* and a blessing for humans. In addition, Islamic moderation is reflected in an attitude that is not easy to blame, let alone to disbelieve people or groups with different views. Islamic moderation prioritizes brotherhood based on the principle of humanity, not only on the principle of faith or nationality (Sutrisno, 2019).

Religious moderation is a middle stance that avoids extremism and radicalism in religion. Religious moderation prioritizes principles such as tolerance, inclusiveness, and respect for differences. According to research conducted by the Wahid Foundation (2021), religious moderation can prevent interfaith conflict and strengthen social cohesion (Wahid Foundation, 2021).

In the context of pluralism, religious moderation becomes very important. Pluralism is the recognition and acceptance of religious and cultural diversity in society. Religious moderation helps create a harmonious social environment, where all individuals can coexist

peacefully despite having different beliefs. In the Indonesian context, religious moderation is one of the important pillars in maintaining national unity.

So, maintaining the unity of the nation must be accompanied by togetherness between the government and scholars in this case MUI to synergize in preventing wrong understanding and extreme attitudes that cause the birth of radicalism in plural Indonesia. Because, religious moderation not only needs to be developed in religious patterns, but in the way of thinking about the state. Because the relationship between the state and religious understanding, often leads to extreme attitudes in religion (Arif, 2020).

2. Role and Concept of MUI Fatwa in Indonesia

The Indonesian Ulama Council (MUI) is an organization established in 1975 with the aim of providing advice and guidance to Muslims in Indonesia on various aspects of life related to Islamic law. It serves as a liaison between the Indonesian government and the Muslim community, as well as a supervisory and advisory role in religious and social practices related to Islam (Nurhayati & Kadir, 2015). MUI was established with the aim of becoming the main reference for Muslims in Indonesia on various religious issues. For decades, MUI has issued various fatwas covering various aspects of Muslim life, ranging from worship, economics, to socio-politics (MUI, 2020).

MUI's role is not only limited to the determination of Islamic law but also as a mediator in religious conflicts and promoter of tolerance between religious communities. MUI's fatwas have a significant influence in shaping the understanding and religious behavior of Muslims in Indonesia. One of MUI's important roles is as a mediator between the government and Muslims, as well as the guardian of Islamic orthodoxy in Indonesia (Hosen, 2007). MUI's fatwas often become a reference for Muslims in carrying out daily religious practices.

MUI fatwa is an Islamic legal opinion given by scholars who are members of MUI on contemporary issues. These fatwas are not legally binding, but they have a great influence among Muslims in Indonesia as they are considered a guide in running daily life in accordance with Islamic principles. Fatwas can cover a wide range of topics such as economics, health, social, and politics (Hidayat, 2020).

Fatwa is one of the important instruments in Islamic law that serves to provide legal guidance in situations that do not have clear precedents in the Quran and Hadith. According to Wahbah Zuhaili in his book "*Usul al-Fiqh al-Islami*," a fatwa is a legal opinion given by a mufti or fatwa body in response to questions posed by individuals or communities (Zuhaili, 1986). Fatwa is a legal opinion or decision given by a cleric or religious institution on an issue that is not yet clear in Islamic law. Fatwa is a legal opinion given by a mufti or an institution of scholars on an issue for which there is no explicit legal provision in the Qur'an and Hadith.

The main function of a fatwa is to provide legal solutions that are valid and acceptable to Muslims in contemporary situations. Likewise, a fatwa serves as a guide for Muslims in carrying out religious teachings in daily life. Fatwas have a function as a guide for Muslims in carrying out religious teachings.

MUI's fatwa-making procedure involves several stages, including in-depth study of the Quran, Hadith, and the opinions of previous scholars. MUI also often holds deliberations with scholars and Islamic law experts commonly referred to as *Ijtima' Ulama* (Fatwa Commission throughout Indonesia) to ensure that the fatwa issued has a strong basis and is acceptable to the people. The process of making fatwas by MUI involves in-depth study of religious texts and consideration of the socio-cultural context of Indonesian society. This procedure ensures that fatwas issued are not just based on one point of view, but through a comprehensive and inclusive process.

The process of making a fatwa by MUI involves several stages, including an in-depth study of the *nash* (religious texts), consideration of the social context, and consultation with experts in related fields (MUI, 2021). The fatwa issuance mechanism in MUI involves several stages, starting from the submission of issues by the community or government, discussion

by the fatwa commission, to the issuance of an official fatwa announced to the public. This process is carried out by considering various sources of Islamic law such as the Qur'an, Hadith, Ijma' (consensus of scholars), and Qiyas (analogy) (Ma'ruf & Hasan, 2017).

Examples of MUI fatwas that are relevant to religious moderation include fatwas on pluralism, inclusivism and religious tolerance, as well as fatwas on interfaith fiqh. These fatwas show MUI's commitment in supporting religious moderation and maintaining social harmony in Indonesia. One of MUI's fatwas related to religious moderation is the Fatwa on Interfaith Jurisprudence issued in 2005. This fatwa regulates the procedures for giving greetings and congratulations in the context of interfaith relations. Then it was used as a discussion material related to *Masail Asasiyyah Wathaniyyah* (Strategic Issues of Nationality) by the MUI Fatwa commission in the Ijtimā' Ulama Fatwa Commission throughout Indonesia in 2024 in Bangka Belitung Islands Province (MUI, 2024).

The background of the Fatwa on the fiqh of interfaith greetings issued by MUI aims to respond to the increasing social interaction between Muslims and adherents of other religions in Indonesia. In a pluralistic social context, questions often arise regarding the boundaries in giving greetings to adherents of other religions. MUI considers it necessary to provide clear guidelines so that Muslims can interact with adherents of other religions without violating Islamic principles (MUI, 2021).

3. Interfaith Salam Jurisprudence: Definition and Context

Interfaith greetings are a form of greeting given by one person to another person of a different religion, as a form of respect and brotherhood. From an Islamic perspective, interfaith greetings are an interesting topic because they involve interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims. Salam in Islam is not just a greeting, but also a prayer and good wishes for the person being greeted.

The practice of interfaith greetings in Indonesia can be seen in various social and religious activities, such as celebrating religious holidays, cultural events, and other community activities. Interfaith greetings symbolize harmony and respect between religious communities, which is in line with the principle of religious moderation.

The Jurisprudence of Interfaith Greetings is an interpretation of Islamic law that regulates the interaction of Muslims with adherents of other religions in the context of religious greetings. This fatwa was issued to respond to the complex social dynamics in Indonesia, where interfaith interactions are common. In this context, MUI's fatwa on the Jurisprudence of Interfaith Greetings emphasizes the importance of respecting differences while maintaining Islamic principles.

In the Quran and Hadith, there are several arguments that serve as a legal basis for interfaith greetings. For example, in Surah An-Nisa' verse 86, it is stated that "*When you are honored with an honor, then return the honor with something better than it, or return it (with something similar).*" This verse is often used as a basis for allowing interfaith greetings, provided that the honor does not contradict Islamic teachings.

The jurisprudence of interfaith greetings is a concept that regulates the procedures for giving greetings and congratulations in the context of interfaith relations. This concept is based on Islamic principles that teach its followers to respect and be kind to adherents of other religions.

In the Islamic perspective, interfaith greetings have several different views. Some scholars consider interfaith greetings as a form of respect and tolerance, while others consider it an act that should be avoided because it can lead to theological confusion.

The opinions of scholars regarding interfaith greetings vary. Classical scholars such as Ibn Qayyim Al-Jawziyya in his book "*Ahkam Ahl al-Dhimma*" tend to be more restrictive, while contemporary scholars such as Yusuf Al-Qaradawi in "*Fiqh of Muslim Minorities*" are more flexible in accepting interfaith greetings on the grounds of maintaining social harmony (Al-Jawziyya, 1997; Al-Qaradawi, 2003).

The fact that there are differences among scholars regarding the ruling of interfaith greetings is explicitly stated by MUI in the quote from Imam An-Nawawi's explanation, "As

for non-Muslims, our scholars differ in their opinions. The majority of our scholars decided that it is not permissible to start the greeting of peace to non-Muslims. But some scholars stated that it is not forbidden but makrooh. If they start greeting Muslims, it is sufficient to say “*Wa'alaikum*” and nothing more.” (MUI, 2024).

4. Analysis of MUI Fatwa on Interfaith Salam Jurisprudence

Principles of Religious Moderation in Fatwas

In drafting this fatwa, MUI used strong theological and social arguments. The theological argument is based on Islamic teachings about the importance of showing a friendly and peaceful attitude to all people, including adherents of other religions. One of the traditions used as a basis is the hadith narrated by Al-Bukhari, which states that the Prophet SAW always showed a friendly attitude to all people, regardless of their religion. The social argument used is the importance of maintaining harmony between religious communities in pluralistic Indonesia (MUI, 2021).

MUI's fatwa on the fiqh of interfaith greetings regulates how Muslims should respond to greetings given by non-Muslims and how to give greetings to non-Muslims. In its fatwa, MUI states that it is not allowed to mix by reciting all the greetings of various religions, because the pronunciation of greetings by including the greetings of various religions is not an implementation of tolerance and/or religious moderation that is justified (MUI, 2024).

In its fatwa, MUI also states that in the event that the audience consists of Muslims and people of other religions, Muslims are allowed to greet with *Assalamu'alaikum* and/or other national greetings that do not mix with other religious prayer greetings, such as good morning (MUI, 2024). This is in line with the principle of religious moderation explained by the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in the book *Religious Moderation*, that moderation in religion in no way means compromising the basic principles or main rituals of religion in order to please others who have different religious views or different religions. Religious moderation is also not an excuse for someone not to take the teachings of their religion seriously. On the contrary, being moderate in religion means being confident in the essence of the teachings of one's religion, which teaches the principles of fairness and balance, but sharing the truth as far as religious interpretation is concerned (Ri, 2019).

The above refers to the explanation of Imam An-Nawawi in the book *Al-Adzkar* quoted by MUI in its fatwa, “Abu Said said: If a Muslim wants to honor a non-Muslim, then he can honor him with a sentence other than the greeting, namely “*hadakallah*” (may Allah guide you), “*an'amallahu shabahaka*” (may Allah make your morning beautiful). I think that Abu Said's opinion is fine if there is a need for someone to say “may your morning be good, happy or healthy”, “may Allah make your morning happy, joyful, in favor, in pleasure,” or something similar. But if there is no need, then it is better not to answer with anything” (An-Nawawi, 1971; MUI, 2024).

In this context, as a citizen, it is permissible to answer greetings from non-Muslims with a kind and polite answer, and it is permissible to give general or neutral greetings to non-Muslims as long as there is no dimension of special religious prayers in the narrative of the greeting, and does not mix all existing religious greetings. Therefore, it can use greetings that emphasize social relations as Indonesian citizens who are united by one language, namely Indonesian. In practice, it can use the sentences “good morning”, “good afternoon” or other greetings that are a reflection of national values that serve as a link between all citizens.

This confirms that the fatwa on interfaith greetings issued by MUI shows the value of tolerance among religious adherents who have different ways of greeting according to their respective beliefs. This value of tolerance is a manifestation of religious moderation that emphasizes respect for differences in religious practice. Religious moderation includes an attitude of tolerance, namely the ability to appreciate and accept differences in the views

and religious practices of others, which is important to maintain social harmony and avoid conflict between religious communities.

In its theological argumentation, it is permissible to say greetings that are general and neutral as a form of doing good to non-Muslims MUI refers to several arguments from the Qur'an and Hadith.

Among the basic arguments from the Qur'an is the verse that states:

﴿وَإِذَا حُيِّتُمْ بِحَيَّةٍ فَحَيُّوا بِأَحْسَنَ مِنْهَا أَوْ رُدُّوهَا﴾

Which means, "And when you are honored with an honor, then return the honor with a better one, or return it (with a similar one)" (al-Quran. An-Nisa: 86).

This verse is the basis that Muslims are commanded to return the honor in a good way, including in the context of interfaith greetings.

Similarly, the Qur'anic verse that explains that it is not forbidden to be kind and fair to non-Muslims,

﴿لَا يَنْهَاكُمُ اللَّهُ عَنِ الَّذِينَ لَمْ يُقَاتِلُوكُمْ فِي الدِّينِ وَلَمْ يُخْرِجُوكُمْ مِنْ دِيَارِكُمْ أَنْ تَبَرُّوهُمْ وَتُقْسِطُوا إِلَيْهِمْ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ﴾

Which means, "Allah does not forbid you to be kind and just to those who do not fight you in matters of religion and do not expel you from your homes. Indeed, Allah loves those who are just" (al-Quran. Al-Mumtahanah: 8).

As well as verses that emphasize the importance of doing good despite different religions,

﴿وَإِنْ جَاهَدَاكَ عَلَى أَنْ تُشْرِكَ بِي مَا لَيْسَ لَكَ بِهِ عِلْمٌ فَلَا تُطِعْهُمَا ۖ وَصَاحِبُهُمَا فِي الدُّنْيَا مَعْرُوفًا ۖ وَاتَّبِعْ سَبِيلَ مَنْ أَنَابَ إِلَيَّ ۚ ثُمَّ إِلَيَّ مَرْجِعُكُمْ فَأُنَبِّئُكُمْ بِمَا كُنْتُمْ تَعْمَلُونَ﴾

Which means, "If they force you to associate with Me something that you have no knowledge about, do not obey them, (but) associate with them in the world well and follow the path of those who return to Me. Then, only to Me will you return, and I will tell you what you used to do." (al-Quran. Luqman: 15).

In this context, greeting with politeness and saying greetings to fellow countrymen and women is part of the goodness that must be maintained and pursued, in order to create harmony in social relations.

However, the pronunciation of greetings of other religions or answering greetings that contain the dimensions of prayer, then it is prohibited and forbidden because it is not part of the implementation of religious moderation and the application of tolerance values for religious people. In its fatwa MUI said that it is actually a blasphemy and blasphemy (MUI 2024).

In this case, tolerance is implemented by not interfering with matters that are the domain of other religions. According to the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, "Tolerance as an indicator of religious moderation wants to see the extent to which a religious person can accept other people who have different views and beliefs in religion, while not disturbing other people who are different from them to believe, express their beliefs, and also express their opinions" (Ri, 2019).

Among the MUI's arguments and reasons for prohibiting the greetings of all religions are the dimensions of prayer based on verses of the Qur'an: First, because it is a matter of imitating the disbelievers both in speech and action,

﴿يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقُولُوا زَاعِنًا وَقُولُوا انظُرْنَا وَاسْمَعُوا ۚ وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾

Which means, "O you who believe, do not say, "Rā'inā." Rather, say, "Unẓurnā" and listen. The disbelievers will have a painful punishment." (al-Quran. Al-Baqarah: 104).

Secondly, it is a matter of mixing the right with the false:

﴿وَلَا تَلْبِسُوا الْحَقَّ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَتَكُنُوا لِلْحَقِّ غَافِلِينَ وَأَنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ﴾

Which means, "Do not confuse truth with falsehood, and do not conceal the truth while you know it." (al-Quran. Al-Baqarah: 42).

Third, according to MUI in its fatwa that in Islam the greeting is a prayer that is *ubudiah*, therefore it must follow the provisions of Islamic law and should not be mixed with greetings from other religions (MUI, 2024), so it is prohibited because it mixes worship with other religions, the prohibition is as in the Qur'an,

﴿قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الْكَافِرُونَ. لَا أَعْبُدُ مَا تَعْبُدُونَ. وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عِبُدُونَ مَا أَعْبُدُ. وَلَا أَنَا عَابِدٌ مَّا عَبَدْتُمْ. وَلَا أَنْتُمْ عِبُدُونَ مَّا أَعْبُدُ. لَكُمْ دِينُكُمْ وَلِيَ دِينِ﴾

Which means, "Say [Prophet Muhammad], 'O disbelievers, I will not worship what you worship. Neither do you worship what I worship. Nor have I ever been a worshipper of what you worship. Neither have you ever been a worshipper of what I worship. For you your religion and for me my religion.'" (al-Quran. Al-Kafirun: 1-6).

In addition to the verses of the Qur'an MUI (2024) also included the reason in the traditions about the prohibition of greeting in a way that resembles non-Muslims, the Prophet said:

{لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِغَيْرِنَا لَا تَشَبَّهُوا بِالْيَهُودِ وَلَا النَّصَارَى فَإِنَّ تَسْلِيمَ الْيَهُودِ الْإِشَارَةُ بِالْأَصَابِعِ وَتَسْلِيمَ النَّصَارَى الْإِشَارَةُ بِالْأَكْفِ}

Meaning, "Those who imitate or follow other than us are not among my people, so do not imitate the Jews and the Christians; indeed, the greeting of the Jews is to gesture with the fingers of the hand, while the greeting of the Christians is to gesture with the palm of the hand." (Hadith. al-Tirmidhi. 2695).

Ibn Hajar (2000) in *Fath al-Bari* comments, the meaning of *tasyabbuh* is imitating someone else styled or kind attire a non Muslims make an easy mark for others and habits. He adds that this is haram because it can mean acknowledging or agreeing with the counter-Islamic values practiced by them.

Likewise, the prohibition of starting the greeting to non-Muslims, the Prophet said:

{لَا تَبْدَءُوا الْيَهُودَ وَالنَّصَارَى بِالسَّلَامِ، فَإِذَا لَقِيتُمُوهُمْ فِي طَرِيقٍ فَاضْطَرُّوهُمْ إِلَى ضَيْقِهِ}

Meaning, "Do not precede the Jews and the Christians in greeting. And if you meet one of them on the road, then push him to the narrow part" (Hadith. Muslim. 2167).

According to the book *Faidhul Qodir*, this prohibition is so that Muslims not be affected by non-Islamic culture. The Prophet said that imitating and honoring disbelievers, will lead something to be considered as a practice or belief of sin by Muslims (Munawi, 2010).

In this context, of course, what is meant is the greeting with the method or pronunciation prescribed in the religion, so that it can create confusion in the case of other religious believers. This argument does not prohibit the pronunciation of greetings or greetings that are general and neutral and outside the provisions of each religion that can be applied to maintain harmonious relations between fellow human beings and fellow countrymen.

MUI's argument underlying this fatwa is to maintain the purity of Islamic teachings and prevent religious syncretism that can damage people's *aqidah*. MUI argues that *salam* is a part of worship that has theological meaning, so it should not be misused or applied outside its proper context.

Implementation of Religious Moderation in Fatwa

The implementation of religious moderation in this fatwa can be seen from the way MUI provides practical guidance in interacting with adherents of other religions. This fatwa provides clear guidelines on how to give greetings that are in accordance with Islamic teachings while still respecting adherents of other religions. In addition, this fatwa also encourages Muslims to be active in promoting tolerance and peace through positive social interactions (MUI, 2021). The fatwa on the *fiqh* of interfaith greetings has a positive impact on interfaith harmony in Indonesia. By providing clear guidance on social interactions between Muslims and adherents of other religions, the fatwa helps reduce misunderstandings and potential conflicts. It also encourages Muslims to be active in promoting tolerance and peace, which in turn can strengthen interfaith harmony (Hasyim, 2018).

While the fatwa has had some success in promoting religious moderation, it has also faced some challenges. One of the main challenges is the acceptance of the fatwa among Muslims with conservative views. Some consider the fatwa to be too lax and may blur the boundaries in interacting with adherents of other religions. Another challenge is the lack of socialization and education about the fatwa at the grassroots level, which may hinder its effective implementation (Anwar, 2019).

In some areas, the implementation of MUI's fatwa on interfaith greetings has shown mixed results. For example, in some areas some community and religious leaders reported that the fatwa was well received and became a guide in daily social interactions. However, in some other areas such as those that are minority areas and those with a high level of religious pluralism, this fatwa has caused controversy and debate among the community (Republika Online, 2024; MUI, 2024).

The public response to this fatwa has been mixed. Most Muslims welcomed the fatwa as it provides clear guidance in interacting with followers of other religions. However, there were also those who criticized the fatwa for being too lenient and causing confusion about the boundaries of interacting with adherents of other religions. Mass media and civil society organizations also gave mixed responses, with some supporting and others providing constructive criticism (Liputan6, 2021).

The implementation of religious moderation in MUI's fatwa on the *fiqh* of interfaith greetings has several advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are that this fatwa succeeds in creating clear guidelines for Muslims in interacting with non-Muslims, and supports the creation of social harmony. However, the disadvantage of this fatwa is the resistance of some groups that do not fully accept the principle of religious moderation.

Factors that influence the effectiveness of this fatwa include the level of public understanding and acceptance of the concept of religious moderation, as well as the role of religious leaders and religious institutions in socializing the fatwa. In addition, the social and cultural context in each region also affects the implementation of this fatwa. Meanwhile, the implementation of religious moderation requires serious efforts that are supported by three main things, including: correct knowledge or understanding, balance and control of emotions, continuous vigilance and caution (Nurhidin, 2021). This is what makes MUI's fatwa a very relevant tool to promote the values of religious moderation, in order to provide a comprehensive view of the implementation of Islamic law in the midst of a plural society in Indonesia.

All of this shows that the principles of religious moderation adopted in MUI's fatwa on the *fiqh* of interfaith greetings are in line with *Wasatiyyah* theory in Islam and social theory in fatwa making. The fatwa reflects a balance between safeguarding the faith of Muslims and showing a friendly attitude to adherents of other religions, which is the

essence of religious moderation. The findings of this study have important implications for public policy, especially in the context of promoting tolerance and interfaith harmony. The government and related institutions can use the principles of religious moderation reflected in this fatwa as a reference in formulating policies that support interfaith harmony. In addition, the results of this study can also be used as educational material to raise public awareness about the importance of religious moderation.

CONCLUSION

This study found that MUI's fatwa on the Jurisprudence of Interfaith Greetings is a significant effort in promoting religious moderation in Indonesia. From this study, it can be concluded that MUI's fatwa on interfaith greetings has a strong legal basis based on the Quran and Hadith. It has a systematic content and structure, with underlying theological and social arguments. This research explains that MUI in the fatwa fikih of interfaith greetings is very concerned about the values of the principle of religious moderation. In the interfaith greetings guide, the principle of tolerance is taken into consideration so that there is no confusion and mixing between Islamic worship and the worship of other religions. The principle of tolerance is illustrated not by accompanying all religions in the implementation of their teachings, but rather by accepting differences and ensuring that all religions carry out parts of their respective religious teachings without interference and interference from adherents of other religions and beliefs.

The analysis of religious moderation in MUI's fatwa on the fiqh of interfaith greetings shows that this fatwa plays an important role in creating clear guidelines for Muslims in interacting with non-Muslims. This fatwa also supports the creation of social harmony and increases the level of tolerance among religious communities in Indonesia. So it has a positive impact on interfaith harmony in Indonesia, although there are some challenges in its implementation. However, the implementation of this fatwa in society has shown mixed results, depending on the social context and level of religious pluralism in each region. Public responses to the fatwa vary, but overall, it has had a positive impact on interfaith harmony.

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