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BOYCOTTING PRO-ISRAEL PRODUCTS: Reinventing the Hadith of *Tashabbuh* in the Contemporary Era

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Abstract

The concept of Tashabbuh is often understood textually by some Muslim groups as a form of resemblance to other groups. This understanding triggers caution to avoid imitating the ways, products, or identities of non-Muslims. However, in an increasingly global cultural context, cross-cultural resemblance becomes inevitable. If not properly understood, the prohibition of Tashabbuh can create difficulties for Muslims themselves. In this context, applying the prohibition of Tashabbuh to the boycott movement of pro-Israel products may become a counterproductive action. This movement encourages the use of alternative products as a form of rejection towards Israel. Interestingly, the availability of these alternative products creates a need to resemble the very products being boycotted. This study uses a qualitative approach with critical discourse analysis methods. The findings reveal that the narrowing of the meaning of Tashabbuh in the context of legal prohibition often overlooks interpretations of cultural resemblance, including in product boycott actions. This article revisits the meaning of the Tashabbuh hadith and relates it to the phenomenon of the boycott of pro-Israel products in the contemporary era.

Keywords: Tashabbuh, Tamayyuz, Hadith, Cultural Identity, Pro-Israel Product

A. Introduction

Islam, as a comprehensive religion encompassing all aspects of human life, gives rise to a distinct Islamic identity for its adherents. This Islamic doctrine, which forms a collective identity, is inevitably shaped by life experiences, encounters with other value systems, and the tension between preserving one's own existence and that of others.

Identity is a social construct developed by society and is related to the distinction of who I am and who you are, who we are, and who they are (Bowie, 2001, p. 71). In this regard, the presence of a distinct identity among Muslims, separate from that of other religious groups such as Jews, Magians, and Christians, is aligned with the words of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). This is exemplified in a hadith found in *Sahih Muslim* No. 260, narrated by Abu Hurayrah: "Trim your mustaches and let your beards grow; differ from the Magians" (An-Naisabury, 2003, p. 115). The need to preserve and develop one's religious identity influences the contestation of religious identities in the public sphere.

In today's increasingly globalized world, cultural intermixing is inevitable. The imitation of traditions—known as *Tashabbuh*—between Muslims and followers of other religions, further reinforced by Western cultural colonization, has increasingly blurred religious boundaries. This has sparked a revivalist movement aimed at purifying Islam, which asserts that *tashabbuh*, or the adoption of cultural styles and ideas from outside Islam, must be rejected and eradicated.

The Prophet indeed forbade Muslims from imitating the traditions of Jews, Christians, and Magians. However, given the global context and the presence of Muslim minority communities in non-Muslim countries, a re-examination of the meaning of these hadiths is necessary. This includes assessing the hadiths' authenticity—both in terms of *sanad* (chain of narration) and *matan* (text)—as well as contextualizing them in today's world. How should we understand the hadiths prohibiting *tashabbuh* with Jews and Christians? And how should these hadiths be contextualized amid today's global cultural developments?

This article examines the *sanad* and *matan* of hadiths related to *tashabbuh* and links them to the contemporary movement of boycotting Israeli products. This boycott aligns with the fatwa issued by the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) Fatwa Commission, Number 83 of 2023, regarding the legal status of supporting the Palestinian struggle. One of the fatwa's recommendations is to avoid engaging in transactions or using products that are deemed to support Zionism and Israel's occupation (Gavlek & Sutopo, 2024; Giyarsi et al., 2023; Noor, 2024).

The MUI fatwa primarily targets products that can be replaced with alternatives that are not affiliated with support for Israel. Products affected by the boycott include various goods from Unilever, clothing items from Puma, electronics from HP, and food products

from KFC, Pizza Hut, Krispy Kreme, McDonald's, Starbucks, Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Cadbury, and Nestlé. All of these have viable alternatives, making them suitable targets for boycott. The effectiveness of such boycott movements, however, largely depends on the availability of competitive alternative products (Kurniawan et al., 2024; Sormin & Malik, 2024).

However, there is a legal consequence to this: producing goods similar to those being boycotted may be considered *tashabbuh*. This raises a significant question about the nature of cultural imitation in the development of Muslim society. This article explicitly addresses whether manufacturing products similar to those produced by Israel constitutes *tashabbuh*. Using a critical discourse analysis approach, the researchers explore the status and meaning of hadiths related to *tashabbuh*, and how these hadiths should be understood in relation to calls for boycotting Israeli products.

B. Understanding the Hadiths Prohibiting *Tashabbuh*

Linguistically, *tashabbuh* in Arabic is derived from the root word *sha-ba-ha*, which means "to resemble something." It shares the same derivational root with words such as *shibh*, *shabah*, and *shabih* (Faris, n.d., p. 243). *Tashabbuh* is the verbal noun (*masdar*) of *tashabbaha* (تشبه), and it refers to a deliberate effort by a person to imitate or resemble something else. One who engages in *Tashabbuh* seeks to emulate the behaviors, attributes, expressions of belief, or even the cultural products of another group. This imitation is often motivated by admiration, affection, or an emotional inclination toward what is being imitated.

Some Muslims believe that following the emotional inclinations toward the customs of other religious communities is prohibited, in order to prevent excessive admiration that may blur one's Islamic identity. Prohibitions against imitating the traditions and lifestyles of non-Muslim societies—particularly in religious matters—are grounded in both the Qur'an and hadith. One of the key Qur'anic references often cited in this context is Surah al-Baqarah, verse 120:

وَلَنْ تَرْضَىٰ عَنْكَ الْيَهُودُ وَلَا النَّصَارَىٰ حَتَّىٰ تَتَّبِعَ مِلَّتَهُمْ قُلْ إِنَّ هُدَى اللَّهِ هُوَ الْهُدَىٰ وَلَئِنَّ آتِبَعْتَ أَهْوَاءَهُمْ
بَعْدَ الَّذِي جَاءَكَ مِنَ الْعِلْمِ مَا لَكَ مِنَ اللَّهِ مِنْ وَلِيٍّ وَلَا نَصِيرٍ

"And never will the Jews or the Christians approve of you until you follow their religion. Say, 'Indeed, the guidance of Allah is the [only] guidance.' If you were to follow their desires after what has come to you of knowledge, you would have against Allah no protector or helper."

There are several interpretive challenges in how this verse and others are used to characterize the relationship between Muslims and Jews or Christians. First, it can foster the perception that each group is an eternal enemy of the other. Second, it gives the

impression of an everlasting hostility between the religious communities, stretching from the past into the future. Third, such interpretations can obscure the many other texts that promote moderation and tolerance toward followers of other religions.

Historically, Surah al-Baqarah verse 120 reflects the time when Jewish and Christian communities proposed a truce to the Prophet Muhammad. When the Prophet was about to accept this offer, Allah warned that these groups would never truly be satisfied unless Muslims fully adopted their religion (Al-Wāḥidī, 2003, p. 39). The truce proposal was tied to a hope that Muslims would revert to facing al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem as their qiblah. Accepting the truce, therefore, raised the risk that Muslims might later adopt the religious traditions of Jews and Christians.

Another relevant verse is Surah al-Hadid, verse 16, which states:

"Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive at the remembrance of Allah and what has come down of the truth? And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts hardened; and many of them are defiantly disobedient."

Imam Jalaluddin al-Suyuthi and Imam Jalaluddin al-Mahalli, in *Tafsir al-Jalalayn*, interpret this verse as a directive for Muslims not to imitate Jews and Christians (Al-Suyūthi & Al-Maḥallī, n.d., p. 447). This view is informed by the notion that these religious groups often took a mocking attitude toward their own scriptures. Thus, the companions in Medina were warned against adopting similar irreverent attitudes, prompting the revelation of this verse as a call to spiritual humility (H.A.A. Dahlan & Alfarisi, 2000, pp. 541–542).

A hadith recorded in *Sahih Bukhari* No. 7320 provides a further prophetic warning:

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْعَزِيزِ حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو عَمْرِو الصَّنَعَانِيُّ مِنَ الْيَمَنِ عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَسْلَمَ عَنْ عَطَاءِ بْنِ يَسَارٍ عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخَدْرِيِّ عَنِ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَتَتَّبِعَنَّ سَنَنَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ شِبْرًا شِبْرًا وَذِرَاعًا بِذِرَاعٍ حَتَّىٰ لَوْ دَخَلُوا جُحْرَ ضَبٍّ تَبِعْتُمُوهُمْ. قُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى؟ قَالَ: فَمَنْ؟

"You will certainly follow the ways of those who came before you, inch by inch and cubit by cubit, so much so that if they entered the hole of a lizard, you would follow them." We asked, "O Messenger of Allah, [do you mean] the Jews and the Christians?" He replied, "Who else?" (Al-Asqalani, n.d., p. 313)

The warning narration as recorded in *Sahih al-Bukhari* is also found in *Sahih Muslim*, with a slightly different chain of transmission (*sanad*) and wording (*matan*), though both

converge on the same line of narrators: the Companion Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, the Tabi'i 'Aṭā' ibn Yasār, and the Tabi' al-Tabi'i Zayd ibn Aslam. Imam Muslim's version includes three different chains, all of which trace back to Zayd ibn Aslam. In *Sahih Muslim*, the hadith is listed as No. 2669, while in *Sahih al-Bukhari*, it appears as Hadith No. 7319:

حدثني سُؤَيْدُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ حَدَّثَنَا حَفْصُ بْنُ مَيْسَرَةَ حَدَّثَنِي عَنْ زَيْدِ بْنِ أَسْلَمَ عَنْ عَطَاءِ بْنِ يَسَارٍ عَنْ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ الْخُدْرِيِّ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ لَتَتَّبِعَنَّ سَنَنَ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ شِبْرًا بِشِبْرٍ وَذِرَاعًا بِذِرَاعٍ حَتَّىٰ لَوْ دَخَلُوا جُحْرَ ضَبٍّ تَبِعْتُمُوهُمْ. قُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى؟. قَالَ: فَمَنْ؟

Narrated by Suwayd ibn Sa'id: Hafṣ ibn Maṣṣarah narrated to us, from Zayd ibn Aslam, from 'Aṭā' ibn Yasār, from Abu Sa'id al-Khudri who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: "You will certainly follow the ways of those who came before you, inch by inch and cubit by cubit, to the extent that if they were to enter a lizard's hole, you would follow them." We said, "O Messenger of Allah, do you mean the Jews and Christians?" He said, "Who else?"

This hadith, which warns of Muslims eventually following the footsteps of non-Muslims, has largely been understood as one of the prophetic miracles (*mu'jizāt*)—a sign of the Prophet's foreknowledge of future events, particularly the imitation of past religious communities such as the Jews and Christians. In Bukhari's version (Hadith 7319), the Prophet does not explicitly mention Jews or Christians but instead refers to the Persians and Romans. This is because, during the Prophet's time, the two dominant world powers were the Persian Empire—mostly composed of Jewish communities—and the Roman Empire, which was predominantly Christian.

The context of the hadith in *Sahih al-Bukhari* closely relates to the events leading up to the Battle of Hunayn. This battle was fought against the tribe of Thaqif, who had allied with the Hawazin tribe between Mecca and Ṭā'if. The Prophet marched out with an army of 12,000 men, including 2,000 new converts from Mecca who had recently embraced Islam after the *Fath Makkah* (Conquest of Mecca) (Chalil, 2001, p. 11). On the way to the battlefield, some of the troops noticed a large, lush tree and asked the Prophet to designate it as a place where they could hang their swords and weapons—believing that doing so would bring them victory. This request reflected a pre-Islamic practice linked to superstition and sacred trees.

Upon hearing this request, the Prophet reacted strongly. As recorded in *Sunan al-Tirmidhi*, Hadith No. 2180 (Abi Isa Muhammad bin Isa bin Sarah al-Tirmidzi, 2000, p. 216):

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ لَمَّا خَرَجَ إِلَى حُنَيْنٍ مَرَّ بِشَجَرَةٍ لِلْمُشْرِكِينَ يُقَالُ لَهَا ذَاتُ أَنْوَاطٍ يُعَلِّقُونَ عَلَيْهَا أَسْلِحَتَهُمْ فَقَالُوا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، اجْعَلْ لَنَا ذَاتَ أَنْوَاطٍ كَمَا لَهُمْ ذَاتُ أَنْوَاطٍ. فَقَالَ النَّبِيُّ: سُبْحَانَ اللَّهِ هَذَا كَمَا قَالَ قَوْمُ مُوسَى: اجْعَلْ لَنَا إِلَهًا كَمَا لَهُمْ آلِهَةٌ؛ وَالَّذِي نَفْسِي بِيَدِهِ لَتَرْكَبُنَّ سُنَّةَ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ

"When the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) set out toward Hunayn, they passed by a tree that the polytheists used to venerate, called Dhat Anwat, upon which they would hang their weapons. Some of the companions said: 'O Messenger of Allah, appoint for us a Dhat Anwat just as they have a Dhat Anwat.' The Prophet replied: 'Subhanallah! This is just like what the people of Moses said: 'Make for us a god just as they have gods.' By the One in Whose hand is my soul, you will surely follow the way of those who came before you."

The journey to the Battle of Hunayn is also known for the incident involving the tree of *Dhāt Anwāt* (ذَاتُ أَنْوَاطٍ), a tree revered by the polytheists and believed to possess sacred power. Because of this, in a later period, the Companion 'Umar ordered the felling of another tree known as the *Tree of Bay'at al-Riḍwān*. This was the tree under which the Muslims pledged their allegiance to the Prophet. Over time, Muslims began visiting the tree frequently and would intentionally perform prayers beneath it. This raised concerns for 'Umar, who feared that Muslims might fall into *shirk* (associating partners with Allah) by attributing sanctity to the tree.

A hadith with a similar message prohibiting *tashabbuh* (imitation) is reported by Imam al-Tirmidhi in the chapter on hand gestures used in greetings, recorded as Hadith No. 2695 (Abi Isa Muhammad bin Isa bin Sarah al-Tirmidzi, 2000, pp. 485–486):

حدثنا قُتَيْبَةُ حَدَّثَنَا ابْنُ لَهْيَعَةَ عَنْ عَمْرِو بْنِ شُعَيْبٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ جَدِّهِ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بغيرِنَا لَا تَشَبَّهُوا بِالْيَهُودِ وَلَا النَّصَارَى فَإِنَّ تَسْلِيمَ الْيَهُودِ الْإِشَارَةُ بِالْأَصَابِعِ وَتَسْلِيمَ النَّصَارَى الْإِشَارَةُ بِالْأَكْفَفِ

"Narrated by Qutaybah: Ibn Lahī'ah narrated to us, from 'Amr ibn Shu'ayb, from his father, from his grandfather, who said that the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) said: 'He is not one of us who imitates others outside of our community. Do not imitate the Jews or the Christians. Indeed, the greeting of the Jews is by pointing with fingers, and the greeting of the Christians is by gesturing with the palm.'"

This hadith reported by Imam al-Tirmidhi provides guidance that Muslims should maintain a distinct identity when greeting one another, rather than relying on finger or palm gestures. Islamic tradition emphasizes the verbal salutation "*Assalāmu 'alaykum wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh*" as the proper form of greeting among Muslims.

In a military context, it is possible that this hadith also implies the use of specific coded signals to prevent imitation of Jewish or Christian practices, especially through hand gestures. For example, during the Battle of the Trench (*Ghazwat al-Khandaq*), Hudhayfah ibn al-Yamān was dispatched as a spy, with a covert identification signal: holding the other person's hand first and asking for their name and place of origin (Hisyam, 1995a, p. 459). Similarly, special call-signs were used during events such as the Conquest of Mecca (*Fath Makkah*), the Battle of Hunayn, and the Battle of Tā'if: "Yā Banī 'Abd al-Raḥmān" for troops of the Muhājirīn banner, "Yā Banī 'Abdillāh" for the Khazraj tribe, and "Yā Banī 'Ubaydillāh" for the Aws tribe (Hisyam, 1995b, p. 472). However, in the context of Imam al-Tirmidhi's hadith concerning greetings, the reference seems to be general in nature, stressing the distinctive verbal greeting "*Assalāmu 'alaykum wa raḥmatullāhi wa barakātuh*"—a phrase that continues to define Muslim identity today.

The specific identity of verbal expression is explained in Surah al-Baqarah, verse 104. This verse teaches that Muslims should not use the phrase "*Rā'inā*", as was used by disbelievers when addressing the Prophet Muhammad:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لَا تَقُولُوا رَاعِنَا وَقُولُوا انظُرْنَا وَاسْمَعُوا وَلِلْكَافِرِينَ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ

Another hadith concerning the prohibition of *tashabbuh* (imitating others) is narrated with multiple chains of transmission, including one by Imam Abu Dawud in the chapter on clothing, Hadith No. 4031 (Al-Imam al-Hafidz Abi Dawud Sulaiman bin al-As'ats al-Simhastany, 1996, p. 47):

حَدَّثَنَا عُثْمَانُ بْنُ أَبِي شَيْبَةَ حَدَّثَنَا أَبُو النَّضْرِ حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ ثَابِتٍ حَدَّثَنَا حَسَّانُ بْنُ عَطِيَّةَ عَنْ أَبِي مُنَيْبٍ الْجُرَشِيِّ عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ قَالَ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ مَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ

Narrated by 'Uthman ibn Abi Shaybah: Abu al-Naḍr narrated to us, 'Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Thābit narrated to us, Ḥassān ibn 'Aṭīyyah narrated to us, from Abu Munīb al-Jurashi, from Ibn 'Umar who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever imitates a people is one of them."

This hadith regarding *tashabbuh*, as narrated by Imam Abu Dawud, is also narrated by Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal on the authority of Ibn 'Umar (Al-Syaibany, 2000, p. 50):

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يَزِيدَ يَعْنِي الْوَاسِطِيَّ، أَخْبَرَنَا ابْنُ ثَوْبَانَ، عَنْ حَسَّانَ بْنِ عَطِيَّةَ، عَنْ أَبِي مُنَيْبٍ الْجُرَشِيِّ، عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "بُعِثْتُ بِالسَّيْفِ حَتَّى يُعْبَدَ اللَّهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَجُعِلَ رِزْقِي تَحْتَ ظِلِّ رُحْمِي، وَجُعِلَ الدَّلَّةُ وَالصَّعَارُ عَلَى مَنْ خَالَفَ أَمْرِي، وَمَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ"

Narrated by Muḥammad ibn Yazīd al-Wāsiṭī: Ibn Thawbān reported to us, from Ḥassān ibn ‘Aṭiyyah, from Abu Munīb al-Jurashi, from Ibn ‘Umar who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: “I was sent with the sword before the Hour, until Allah alone is worshipped without any partner. My provision was placed under the shadow of my spear, and disgrace and humiliation were imposed upon those who oppose my command. Whoever imitates a people is one of them.”

Al-Bayhaqi also transmitted a version of this message on the prohibition of *tashabbuh*, recorded as Hadith No. 1199 (Al-Baihaqi, 1413):

أَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو مُحَمَّدٍ عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ يُوسُفَ الْأَصْبَهَانِيُّ، أَنَا أَبُو سَعِيدٍ ابْنُ الْأَعْرَابِيِّ، ثنا إِبْرَاهِيمُ بْنُ مُعَاوِيَةَ الْقَيْسَرِيُّ، ثنا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ يُوسُفَ الْفَرِيَّابِيُّ، ثنا ابْنُ ثَوْبَانَ. ح وَأَخْبَرَنَا أَبُو عَبْدِ اللَّهِ الْحَافِظُ، ثنا أَبُو الْعَبَّاسِ الْأَصَمُّ، ثنا الْحَسَنُ بْنُ الْمُكَرَّمِ، ثنا أَبُو النَّضْرِ، ثنا عَبْدُ الرَّحْمَنِ بْنُ ثَابِتٍ بْنِ ثَوْبَانَ، ثنا حَسَّانُ بْنُ عَطِيَّةَ، عَنْ أَبِي مُنَيْبٍ الْجُرَشِيِّ، عَنْ ابْنِ عُمَرَ، قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: "بُعِثْتُ بَيْنَ يَدَيِ السَّاعَةِ بِالسَّيْفِ، حَتَّى يُعْبَدَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَجُعِلَ رِزْقِي تَحْتَ ظِلِّ رُحْمِي، وَجُعِلَ الذِّلَّةُ وَالصَّغَارُ عَلَى مَنْ خَالَفَ أَمْرِي، وَمَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ"

Narrated to us by Abu Muḥammad ‘Abdullah ibn Yūsuf al-Aṣbahānī, who said: Abu Sa‘īd ibn al-A‘rābī narrated to us, who said: Ibrāhīm ibn Mu‘āwiyah al-Qaysarānī narrated to us, who said: Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf al-Firyābī narrated to us, who said: Ibn Thawbān narrated to us. Also, narrated to us by Abu ‘Abdullah al-Ḥāfiẓ, who said: Abu al-‘Abbās al-Aṣamm narrated to us, who said: al-Ḥasan ibn al-Mukarram narrated to us, who said: Abu al-Naḍr narrated to us, who said: ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Thābit ibn Thawbān narrated to us, who said: Ḥassān ibn ‘Aṭiyyah narrated to us, from Abu Munīb al-Jurashi, from Ibn ‘Umar who said: The Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: “I was sent with the sword before the Hour, until Allah alone is worshipped without partner. My provision was placed under the shadow of my spear, and disgrace and humiliation were imposed on those who oppose my command. Whoever imitates a people is one of them.”

The Prophet informed that toward the end of times, he was sent with the sword—signifying that the mission of prophethood represents the final period. The sword also serves as a reminder to the People of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitāb*) that their scriptures already contain signs describing the prophethood of Muhammad (Al-Banna, n.d., p. 40). The core of the Prophet’s message was to proclaim the oneness of Allah (*tawḥīd*) and eliminate all forms of polytheism (*shirk*). This goal could not be fulfilled without *jihad fī sabīlillāh*—fighting against the perpetrators of *shirk* and misguidance. The Prophet’s sustenance being described as “under the shadow of his spear” indicates that both his and his Companions’ livelihood came from *ghanimah* (spoils of war).

Another chain of transmission regarding the prohibition of *tashabbuh* comes from the Companion Ḥudhayfah ibn al-Yamān, and is narrated by Imam al-Ṭabarānī in *al-Muʿjam al-Awsaṭ*, Hadith No. 8327 (Al-Thabrani, 1413):

حَدَّثَنَا مُحَمَّدُ بْنُ مَرْزُوقٍ، قَالَ: أَخْبَرَنَا عَبْدُ الْعَزِيزِ بْنُ الْحَطَّابِ، قَالَ: أَخْبَرَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ غُرَابٍ، قَالَ: أَخْبَرَنَا هِشَامُ بْنُ حَسَّانَ، عَنْ مُحَمَّدِ بْنِ سِيرِينَ، عَنْ أَبِي عُبَيْدَةَ بْنِ حُدَيْفَةَ، عَنْ أَبِيهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، أَنَّ النَّبِيَّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: " مَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ "

Narrated by Muḥammad ibn Marzūq, who said: ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ibn al-Khaṭṭāb reported to us, who said: ‘Alī ibn Ghurāb reported to us, who said: Hishām ibn Ḥassān reported to us, from Muḥammad ibn Sīrīn, from Abū ‘Ubaydah ibn Ḥudhayfah, from his father (Ḥudhayfah al-Yamānī), that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: “Whoever imitates a people is one of them.”

C. Analysis of the *Matn* and *Isnad* of Hadiths on the Prohibition of *Tashabbuh* (Imitation)

Hadiths concerning *tashabbuh*, or the prohibition of imitating Jews and Christians, are transmitted through several chains of narration originating from different Companions, including Abu Sa‘id al-Khudri, ‘Abdullah ibn ‘Umar, Abu Hurayrah, and Hudhayfah ibn al-Yaman. These four main isnads (chains of transmission) can be traced in various hadith collections, all using at least seven Arabic terms that share a similar meaning with *tashabbuh*. These include: *al-tamāthul* (resemblance), *al-muhākāh* (similarity), *al-mushākalah* (being of the same form), *al-ittibā’* (following), *al-muwāfaqah* (conformity), *al-taqlid* (imitation), and *tashabbuh* itself (resembling or imitating).

Tabel 1. Comparison of the *Matn* (Text) of *Tashabbuh* Hadiths

No	Narrator	Nomor	Matn
<i>Tashabbuh</i> Keywords			
1	Tirmidhi	2695	لَيْسَ مِنَّا مَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِغَيْرِنَا لَا تَشَبَّهُوا بِالْيَهُودِ وَلَا بِالنَّصَارَى فَإِنْ تَسْلِمَ الْيَهُودَ الْإِشَارَةُ بِالْأَصَابِعِ وَتَسْلِمَ النَّصَارَى الْإِشَارَةُ بِالْأَكْفَفِ
2	Abu Dawud	4031	مَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ
3	al-Ṭabarānī	8327	مَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ
4	al-Bayhaqī	1199	بُعِثْتُ بِإِيْدِي السَّاعَةِ بِالسَّيْفِ، حَتَّى يُعْبَدَ اللَّهُ وَحْدَهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَجُعِلَ رِزْقِي تَحْتَ ظِلِّ رُحْمِي، وَجُعِلَ الدِّلَّةُ وَالصَّعَارُ عَلَى مَنْ خَالَفَ أَمْرِي، وَمَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ
5	Ahmad ibn Hanbal	2/50	بُعِثْتُ بِالسَّيْفِ حَتَّى يُعْبَدَ اللَّهُ لَا شَرِيكَ لَهُ، وَجُعِلَ رِزْقِي تَحْتَ ظِلِّ رُحْمِي، وَجُعِلَ الدِّلَّةُ وَالصَّعَارُ عَلَى مَنْ خَالَفَ أَمْرِي، وَمَنْ تَشَبَّهَ بِقَوْمٍ فَهُوَ مِنْهُمْ

Ittiba' Keywords			
1	Bukhari	7319	لَا تَقُومُ السَّاعَةُ حَتَّى تَأْخُذَ أُمَّتِي بِأَخَذِ الْقُرُونِ قَبْلَهَا شَيْراً بِشَيْرٍ وَذِرَاعاً بِذِرَاعٍ فَقِيلَ يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ كَفَارِسَ وَالرُّومَ؟ فَقَالَ وَمِنْ النَّاسِ إِلَّا أَوْلَئِكَ
2		7320	لَتَتَّبِعَنَّ سَنَنْ مَنْ كَانَ قَبْلَكُمْ شَيْراً بِشَيْرٍ وَذِرَاعاً بِذِرَاعٍ حَتَّى لَوْ دَخَلُوا جُحَرَ صَبٍّ تَبِعْتُمُوهُمْ. قُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَى؟ قَالَ: فَمَنْ؟
3	Muslim	2669	تَبِعْتُمُوهُمْ. بِشَيْرٍ وَذِرَاعاً بِذِرَاعٍ حَتَّى لَوْ دَخَلُوا جُحَرَ صَبٍّ لَتَتَّبِعَنَّ سَنَنْ الَّذِينَ مِنْ قَبْلِكُمْ شَيْراً وَالنَّصَارَى؟. قَالَ: فَمَنْ؟ قُلْنَا: يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ، الْيَهُودُ

Each narration reflects different contextual sequences of transmission. This can be understood from the placement of the hadiths in various topical chapters (*abwāb*) by the respective hadith compilers. Imam Bukhari places the hadith in the chapter on following the customs of previous nations. Imam Muslim, however, categorizes it more specifically under the chapter on following Jewish and Christian traditions. Imam Abu Dawud includes it under the chapter on clothing, whereas Imam Tirmidhi includes it under the chapter on gestures of greeting used by Jews and Christians. Other transmissions come from Imam Ahmad in his *Musnad*, and from al-Bayhaqī and al-Ṭabarānī in their respective works.

Tabel 2. Comparative *Isnād* Structure of the Hadiths (*Isnād Critique*)

No	Hadith Collector	Narrator 1	Narrator 2	Narrator 3	Narrator 4	Narrator 5	Narrator 6 & so on
		Sanad	Sanad	Sanad	Sanad	Sanad	Sanad
1	Bukhari	Abu Hurayrah	Ibn Abi Dzaab al-Maqbary	Ahmad ibn Yunus			
		Abu Sa'id al-Khudri	'Atho' ibn Yasar	Zaid ibn Aslam	Abu Umar Shon'any al-Yamani	Muhammad ibn Abdul Aziz	
2	Muslim	Abu Sa'id al-Khudri	'Atho' ibn Yasar	Zaid ibn Aslam	Hafsh ibn Maisaroh	Suwa'id ibn Sa'id	
		Abu Sa'id al-Khudri	'Atho' ibn Yasar	Zaid ibn Aslam	Muhammad ibn Muthorfi (Abu Ghossan)	Sa'id ibn Abi Maryam	
3	Tirmidzi	Jadd Amri ibn Shu'ayb	Abu Amri ibn Shu'ayb	Amri ibn Shua'yb	Ibn Lahi'ah	Qutaybah	
4	Dawud	Ibn Umar	Abi Munib al-Jurasiyyi	Hassan ibn Athiyyah	Abdurrahman ibn Tsabit	Abu Nadhr (Hashim bin al-Qasim ibn Muslim bin Miqsam)	Uthman ibn Abi Shaybah (Uthman ibn Muhammad

							ibn Ibrahim ibn Uthman)
5	Thabrani	Hudzayfah ibn Yaman	Abi Ubaidah ibn Hudzayfah	Muhammad ibn Sirrin	Hisham ibn Hassan	Ali ibn Ghurab	Abdullah ibn al- Khattab from Muhammad bin Marzuqi

Upon examining the various *matn* (text) and *isnad* (chains of transmission), it is evident that the hadiths concerning the prohibition of *tashabbuh* (imitation) reinforce one another. This significantly facilitates the authentication of the *matn* based on several established criteria.

First, the hadiths are supported by multiple narrations that mutually reinforce each other (*tawātur*). The prohibition of *tashabbuh* is documented in the narrations of Imam Bukhari, Imam Muslim, Imam Abu Dawud, Imam Tirmidhi, Imam al-Ṭabarānī, Imam Ahmad ibn Hanbal, and Imam al-Bayhaqī. This indicates that the hadiths on *tashabbuh* possess reliable (*thiqqah*) and well-known (*mashhūr*) chains of transmission that corroborate one another.

Second, the hadiths are not in conflict with the Qur'an. In fact, their context aligns with Qur'anic directives. For example, Surah al-Baqarah (2:104) warns Muslims not to use the word "*rā'inā*"—a phrase misused by disbelievers toward the Prophet Muhammad. Similarly, Surah al-Ḥadīd (57:16) prohibits emulating the People of the Book in certain attitudes and behaviors. These Qur'anic references underline the foundational legitimacy of the hadiths on *tashabbuh*.

Third, the hadiths do not contradict sound reasoning. *Tashabbuh*—or the act of imitating the customs and ways of another group—ultimately leads to the erosion of one's original identity. For instance, a man who imitates the behavior of women may lose his masculine traits; similarly, a Muslim who imitates non-Muslim identities is at risk of compromising their Islamic identity. This supports the idea that the prohibition of *tashabbuh* is in line with identity theory and does not contradict rational judgment.

Fourth, the hadiths are not contradicted by historical facts. Several chains of transmission are supported by historical events during the time of the Prophet. One such example is the incident of the Battle of Hunayn, narrated by Imam Tirmidhi in Hadith no. 2180. In this event, some newly converted Muslims—following the conquest of Makkah—requested that the Prophet designate a sacred tree for hanging weapons, imitating the pagan practice of *Dhāt al-Anwāt*. Another narration from Hudhayfah ibn al-Yamān is linked by some scholars to the Battle of Badr, in which the hadith of *tashabbuh* is interpreted as a directive for Muslims to have distinct symbols from the Quraysh disbelievers, helping archers distinguish friend from foe (Abi Isa Muhammad bin Isa bin Sarah al-Tirmidzi, 2000, p. 216).

Regarding the quality of the isnads in each narration, most are classified as *ṣaḥīḥ* (authentic). The narrators in each chain have been individually evaluated and generally found reliable, with the exception of Imam Tirmidhi's narration, in which he notes that Abu Lahī'ah is either unknown or unreliable. Thus, Tirmidhi's narration is considered to have a *ḍa'īf* (weak) isnad (Abi Isa Muhammad bin Isa bin Sarah al-Tirmidzi, 2000, p. 486). Nonetheless, this hadith is supported by *shawāhid* (corroborating narrations), which strengthen its overall reliability.

The *takhrīj* (referencing and classification) of the hadiths will be specifically discussed for the narrations from Imam Abu Dawud and al-Ṭabarānī, as these include relatively long isnads and come from different Companions. These narrations also closely resemble those reported by Imam al-Bayhaqī and Imam Ahmad.

All the hadiths in question feature uninterrupted chains of transmission (*ittiṣāl al-isnād*), such as those reported by Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud, and Tirmidhi. This continuity eliminates the possibility of *shudhūdh* (anomalous or isolated reports). Each *rāwī* (narrator) has been described as *thiqqah* (trustworthy), thus fulfilling one of the key requirements of hadith authenticity. Furthermore, these narrations are strengthened by multiple supporting hadiths.

In terms of transmission methods, most narrators used the phrase *ḥaddathanā* ("he narrated to us"), indicating that they heard the hadith directly from their teacher. This method, *taḥammul wa al-adā'* (receiving and transmitting hadith), reflects the highest level of authenticity in hadith transmission.

D. The Relationship Between *Tashabbuh* and the Boycott Pro-Israel Products

The authenticity of the *tashabbuh* hadiths—classified as *ṣaḥīḥ* (sound)—influences many Muslims to avoid imitating non-Muslims in any aspect. For some, rejecting contextual interpretation or reading the texts sociologically is viewed as compromising the sanctity of religion. This strict view is often supported by scriptural references such as "There is no law except from Allah (*lā ḥukma illā liLlāh*)" and "Whoever does not judge by what Allah has revealed, then they are disbelievers." However, contextualizing the prohibition of *tashabbuh* becomes a dynamic issue, especially in the contemporary call to boycott pro-Israel products—particularly when alternative goods or services are available that are not affiliated with Israel or its supporters.

Those participating in the boycott express their stance by refraining from engaging with certain products. The boycott of pro-Israel goods—as a non-violent resistance strategy—can span trade, investment, and business relations. In practice within Indonesia, the boycott tends to focus on everyday consumer products. Multinational companies such as McDonald's, KFC, Starbucks, Pizza Hut, and Burger King are among the primary targets. In response, domestically produced alternatives, often associated with

Muslim ownership or identity, have gained support and replaced boycotted items or services.

The demand to offer substitute goods similar to the ones being boycotted can be understood as an expression of *tamayyuz* (distinction), rather than *tashabbuh* (imitation). In fact, this kind of *tamayyuz* was practiced by the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) himself to distinguish Muslims from non-Muslims.

First, the Prophet's seal (*khātam*). After the Battle of the Trench (Khandaq), the Prophet began affixing a seal to letters sent to the rulers of the major empires of the time. This was in response to the custom of Roman, Persian (Kisra), Abyssinian (Najashi), and other royal courts, which did not recognize correspondence as official without a stamped seal (Demichelis, 2021). The Prophet's seal had an Arabic inscription: "Allah" at the top, "Rasul" in the middle, and "Muhammad" at the bottom (Abi Isa Muhammad bin Isa bin Sarah al-Tirmidzi, 2000, p. 486).

Second, military strategy using city trenches. During the Battle of the Trench, the Prophet accepted the suggestion of Salman al-Farisi to dig a trench around Madinah, preventing the Quraysh pagans from invading the city. This tactic was inspired by the Majus (Zoroastrians) in Persia—Salman's homeland—and was unknown to the Arabs at the time (Basri & Ummi, 2023; Wiwaha et al., 2024). Thus, adopting a strategy from non-Muslims—when beneficial to the protection and spread of Islam and unrelated to religious worship—should not be classified as *tashabbuh*.

Third, the fasting of 'Ashura. At one point, the Prophet encountered a group of Jews fasting in commemoration of the day Moses was saved from Pharaoh at the Red Sea. This day, the 10th of Muharram, is known as 'Ashura. Upon learning this, the Prophet told his Companions that Muslims have more right to commemorate Moses than the Jews. To distinguish Islamic practice from that of the Jews, the Prophet recommended that Muslims fast either the day before or the day after 'Ashura in addition to the 10th. This directive was narrated by Imam Muslim in *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, Hadith no. 2712 (An-Naisabury, 2003 Hadiths No. 2712; Kudhori, 2023).

Several practices carried out by the Prophet Muhammad as expressions of *tamayyuz* (distinction) can be understood contextually. *Tashabbuh*—imitating non-Muslims—is indeed prohibited, but contextually, there are certain aspects that may be permissible to imitate. This can be seen, for example, in the Prophet's construction of the *khandaq* (trench) as a military strategy. Similarly, the use of a seal for authenticating official letters sent to various kingdoms and empires across the Arabian Peninsula also reflected practical adaptation.

However, the Prophet's outward actions can become a source of interpretive ambiguity, especially when associated with modern practices such as celebrating the New Year, Christmas, birthdays, or other traditions rooted in Western or non-Muslim cultures.

In response to such concerns, the Indonesian Council of Ulama (MUI) issued Fatwa No. 56 of 2016, which prohibits the use of non-Islamic religious attributes (Adha, 2018; MUI, 2016; Waluyo, 2017). On the other hand, producing goods similar to those made by non-Muslims or adopting certain work methods customary among non-Muslim communities may be interpreted instead as a form of *tamayyuz*—an effort to appear distinct while achieving the same function or standard.

E. Contextual Analysis of *Tashabbuh* in Islamic Law

Al-Tashabbuh (imitation of non-Muslims) is a social reality that is dynamic and evolves in line with changes in a society's cultural and social structures. In Indonesia, *tashabbuh* is often associated with the legacy of Hindu-Buddhist traditions and Dutch Catholic colonialism. The impact of globalization, marked by the advancement of cyber technology and long-distance communication, has weakened cultural identities. Naturally, the phenomena of globalization and technological advancement, which bring about renewal, also have implications for Islamic law.

The principles of Islamic jurisprudence (*qawā'id al-fiqhiyyah*) can serve as primary indicators to determine whether an act constitutes *tashabbuh*. The first principle is that the legal status of an action depends on its objective. This means that an act is not considered *tashabbuh* if there is no intention or deliberate effort to imitate the group being emulated (Al-Luwayhiq, n.d., p. 72). This principle is supported by the well-known *hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad stating that every action is judged by its intention, as narrated by Sayyidina 'Umar ibn al-Khattab in Hadith No. 1 of Sahih Bukhari and Hadith No. 1907 of Sahih Muslim (Al-Asqalany, n.d. Hadits No. 1; An-Naisabury, 2003 Hadits No. 1907).

The second principle is that any cause leading to harm is prohibited unless there is a greater benefit that must be prioritized. This rule implies that any prohibition based on precautionary grounds (*sadd al-dharī'ah*) may be lifted if there is a significant public interest to be preserved. Determining this requires investigation (*istiqrā'*). For instance, praying at sunrise, which resembles non-Muslim sun worship, may still be permitted if it serves a legitimate purpose such as funeral prayer or making up missed prayers.

The third principle is that necessity permits what is normally forbidden. This applies to cases where life or personal safety is at risk, and imitating non-Muslims may be permitted to protect life or religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn wa al-nafs*) (Al-Nadwi, n.d., p. 364; Maswanto, 2022). Such imitation is not considered *tashabbuh* in the prohibited sense.

Understanding these legal maxims can help in addressing contemporary debates surrounding Islamic law and the boycott of pro-Israel products among Indonesian Muslims. The Walisongo—pioneers of Islamic propagation in the Indonesian archipelago—used cultural strategies that are often misunderstood as *tashabbuh* or syncretism (Fata & Ichwan, 2017; Syalafiyah & Harianto, 2020). The Walisongo classified

religion into three components: *al-dīn*, *millah*, and *nihlah*. *Al-dīn* refers to religious doctrines that contain divine commands and prohibitions. *Millah* is understood as a creative way of thinking in responding to religious texts, giving rise to diverse interpretations and religious expressions. *Nihlah* refers to deep-rooted traditions within society, whose origins may be unknown but are historically significant (Sunyoto, 2016, p. x).

In their Islamic propagation, the Walisongo adhered strictly to three forms of jurisprudential reasoning: *fiqh al-aḥkām*, which covers mastery of religious sources; *fiqh al-da'wah*, to strengthen *millah* through effective and efficient preaching strategies; and *fiqh al-ḥikmah*, which involves contextualizing Islamic teachings in a way that is accepted by all segments of society—laypeople, religious figures, and adherents of other faiths—without coercion, hostility, or marginalization. This gave rise to the concept of *Islam Nusantara*, a distinctly Indonesian expression of Islam that harmonizes Islamic doctrines with local cultural values.

The Walisongo emphasized substantive religious practice over the imposition of symbolic religious expressions. Marriage customs, the arts, military strategies, governance systems, education, city planning, fashion, and local customs were all infused with Islamic values by the Walisongo (Sunyoto, 2016, p. 436).

Tabel 3. Examples of Walisongo's Cultural Strategies (Sunyoto, 2016, p. 436)

No	Form of Cultural Product	Walisongo's Strategy	Pre-Existing Local Tradition
1	The word <i>Sembahyang</i>	Used in place of the term <i>ṣalāh</i> , as a continuation of the Kapitayan term for worshipping Sang Hyang Widi (<i>Sembah Hyang</i>)	The archipelagic communities were already accustomed to using the term <i>Sembah Hyang</i> for their ritual worship
2	The word <i>Puasa</i> (Fasting)	Used instead of the Arabic term <i>ṣawm</i>	Kapitayan and Hindu communities in the archipelago were already familiar with the practices of meditation and abstaining from food and drink, known as <i>upawasa</i> or <i>poso</i>
3	<i>Bedug</i> (Drum)	Used as a call to congregational prayer	Large drums (<i>tambur tengara</i>) were used to mark worship times in Buddhist monasteries (<i>vihara</i>) or Kapitayan sanctuaries (<i>sanggar</i>)
4	The word <i>Langgar</i>	Used instead of <i>mushalla</i> or small mosque	Kapitayan communities referred to their worship places as <i>sanggar</i>
5	<i>Nyadran</i>	Used in place of <i>ziyārah al-qubr</i>	

The strategies employed by Walisongo proved effective in allowing Islam to spread peacefully across the Indonesian archipelago. Rather than abolishing existing traditions, they continued and transformed them through a process of transvaluation, infusing

Islamic values into non-Islamic beliefs and practices. This approach is in line with the example of the Prophet Muhammad, who transformed cultural practices such as the use of a seal (for official letters) and the observance of the *‘Āshūrā’* fast, which had been previously practiced by non-Muslim communities.

In a similar manner, the contemporary practice of boycotting pro-Israel products—particularly when alternative, unaffiliated products are readily available—can be seen as a new interpretation of the *tashabbuh* prohibition. Rather than imitating non-Muslim economic systems, Muslim consumers may choose culturally and religiously distinct alternatives, reinforcing a collective identity while adhering to Islamic ethical frameworks.

F. Conclusion

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that the phenomenon of *al-tashabbuh* (imitation of non-Muslims), which continues to spread among Muslim communities in Indonesia, calls for a mature and thoughtful response from Muslims. Islam, as a religion with distinct political, cultural, and spiritual identities, has established a firm foundation for confronting the challenges of cultural warfare.

The *tashabbuh* hadiths—narrated through multiple chains (*mutawātir*)—can be seen as evidence of the prophetic foresight (*nubuwwah*) of Prophet Muhammad, who predicted that segments of his ummah would emulate the ways of Jews and Christians. These hadiths are also connected to historical events such as the Battle of Hunayn and the Battle of Badr, serving as guidance for Muslims to be cautious against imitation that lacks a clear understanding of its underlying essence.

The principles of *fiqh* formulated by Islamic scholars have clarified various aspects of *tashabbuh*, including the intention behind the act, the scope of the behavior, exceptions to the rule, and its legal consequences. Matters of religion, politics, economics, and culture can find common ground through the process of transvaluing Islamic principles within existing norms and practices.

This framework helps to contextualize the connection between the *tashabbuh* prohibition and the contemporary movement to boycott products affiliated with support for Israeli occupation of Palestine—demonstrating how Islamic teachings can remain relevant in modern social and political realities.

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