



# The Irony of Sectarian Claims: A Comparative Study of Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin Religious Practices in the Shafi'i Sect Tradition in Indonesia

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## Abstract

*This article examines the irony of madhab claims in the religious practices of the Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin communities in Indonesia, both of which identify themselves with the Shafi'i school of law. The objective of this research is to analyze the differing ways in which Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin understand, interpret, and express the authority of the Shafi'i madhab in religious practice. This study employs a qualitative approach with a comparative-descriptive method through an analysis of classical Shafi'i legal literature as well as contemporary religious discourses and practices, particularly those related to collective dhikr, tahlil, grave visitation (ziyārat al-qubūr), tabarruk, and outward symbols of Islamic identity. The findings indicate that the contested religious practices are not entirely principled in nature but are shaped by differences in interpretive methodology (manhaj al-fahm), epistemological orientation, and the construction of socio-religious identity. This study affirms that the Shafi'i madhab encompasses a broad and dynamic spectrum of views. The novelty of this research lies in situating the Salafiyyin–Nahdiyyin debate within an intra-madhab framework, with policy implications for strengthening inclusive and moderate religious approaches in managing the diversity of Islamic practices in Indonesia.*

Artikel ini membahas ironi klaim mazhab dalam praktik keagamaan komunitas Salafiyyin dan Nahdiyyin di Indonesia yang sama-sama mengidentifikasi diri dengan tradisi Mazhab Syafi'i. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah menganalisis perbedaan cara Salafiyyin dan Nahdiyyin memahami, menafsirkan, dan mengekspresikan otoritas Mazhab Syafi'i dalam praktik keagamaan. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode komparatif-deskriptif melalui analisis literatur klasik Syafi'iyyah serta wacana dan praktik keagamaan yang berkembang, khususnya terkait zikir berjamaah, tahlilan, ziarah kubur, tabarruk, dan simbol-simbol lahiriah keislaman. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perbedaan praktik keagamaan tersebut tidak sepenuhnya bersifat prinsipil, melainkan dipengaruhi oleh perbedaan metodologi pemahaman (manhaj al-fahm), orientasi epistemologis, dan konstruksi identitas sosial-keagamaan. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa Mazhab Syafi'i memiliki spektrum pandangan yang luas dan dinamis. Kebaruan penelitian ini terletak pada penempatan perdebatan Salafiyyin–Nahdiyyin dalam kerangka internal mazhab, dengan implikasi kebijakan berupa penguatan pendekatan keagamaan yang inklusif dan moderat dalam pengelolaan keragaman praktik Islam di Indonesia.

## **A. INTRODUCTION**

The debate between Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin is a phenomenon that continues to unfold in the dynamics of Islam in Indonesia. These two communities often represent two extremes of religious practice: the Salafiyyin, with their purist zeal that emphasizes a return to the texts and practices of early Islam (al-salaf al-shalih), and the Nahdiyyin, known for their efforts to preserve local traditions and religious practices rooted in the legacy of the ulama. Issues such as tahlilan, yasinan, the veil, and beards are often used as grounds for open debate, even triggering tensions at the social and digital levels (Putra, 2018).

Interestingly, when tracing classical sources, many practices associated with the Salafiyyin group are also found in the works of Shafi'i scholars, which have long been a reference for the Nahdiyyin. Conversely, some religious practices that are claimed to represent the Nahdiyyin tradition are not found to have a strong basis in the Shafi'i school of thought. This phenomenon shows that the boundary between "tradition" and "purification" is not always clear, but rather intersects and even switches positions. This reality has become increasingly prominent in the Indonesian public sphere, especially through academic studies, social media, religious forums, and popular Islamic polemics discussing issues such as tahlilan, yasinan, qunut, the veil, beards, and grave pilgrimages. A number of recent studies tend to portray the relationship between the Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin in normative-ideological terms—that is, as a battle between purification and tradition—without an in-depth examination of the Shafi'i fiqh literature that both claim as their reference. As a result, religious practices are often judged based on group labels rather than on the underlying arguments of the madhhab. (Munip, 2019; Ma'arif et al., 2024; Nur'aeni & Ramdan, 2025).

Even more ironic is the lack of comparative studies that systematically trace the compatibility between the claims of the schools of thought and the religious practices of the two communities by referring directly to the authoritative works of classical and contemporary Shafi'i scholars. Some research emphasizes the sociological aspects of conflict or ideological discourse, while the methodological aspects of fiqh—particularly how madhhab arguments and opinions are used, selected, or even ignored—have not been studied in depth. (Munip, 2019; Ma'arif et al., 2024; Nur'aeni & Ramdan, 2025).

The main causes of this problem include: first, the strong construction of group identity, which makes religious practices more understood as symbols of affiliation and defended apologetically (Bruinessen, 1999; Zuhdi, 2014). Second, the tendency to simplify fiqh discourse in the public sphere, which ignores the diversity of opinions among scholars in the Shafi'i school of thought, thereby reducing fiqh to a black-and-white narrative (Munip, 2019; Ma'arif et al., 2024). Third, there is still a limited number of interdisciplinary studies that connect classical fiqh literature with the reality of contemporary religious practices in Indonesia, because existing studies emphasize sociological and ideological dimensions rather than Islamic legal methodology (Azra, 2017; Hasan, 2012).

Therefore, this study is limited to a comparative analysis of religious practices that are often the subject of polemics between the Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin communities, with an emphasis on their conformity with the views of Shafi'i scholars as stated in authoritative classical fiqh literature, such as the works of al-Nawawi, Ibn Hajar al-Haitami, and al-Ramli. This study does not discuss theological, political, or organizational dynamics of the two groups, but is directed at objectively examining the relationship between madhab claims and religious practices, through a normative-comparative fiqh approach (Zuhaili, 2011; Hallaq, 2019).

Previous studies relevant to this research include:

First, Ahmad Shidqi's study entitled, "*Respon Nahdhatul Ulama (NU) Terhadap Wahabisme dan Implikasinya bagi Deradikalisasi Pendidikan Islam*". The results of this study show that the agenda of deradicalization of Islamic education, which has been strongly promoted in our country in recent years, can be seen in the diversity of forms, strategies, and instruments chosen and used by a number of individuals and/or groups in society. What is demonstrated by the NU community in Yogyakarta above, such as the intensification of studies on Aswaja and NU-ness, is one form of the efforts of the NU community in Yogyakarta, both at the structural or management level and at the cultural level, in its efforts to stem the tide of religious radicalism that is growing stronger in this country. By using the momentum of "resistance" against Wahhabism expansion, which it considers to be the embryo of Islamic radicalism, the NU community in Yogyakarta can indirectly be said to have contributed to the efforts of deradicalizing Islamic education. (Shidqi, 2013)

Second, Dewi Masitah's research, entitled "*Studi Konflik Ahlussunnah Wal Jamaah Antara NU dan Salafi di Pasuruan*". The results of this study concluded that the

conflict over influence between the NU and Salafi elites had an impact on the people of Pasuruan, resulting in two types of congregations: the pure congregation, which tended to be fanatical, and the muhajirin congregation, which was more critical and flexible. The muhajirin congregation is referred to as the Hybrid Islamic generation, namely Muslims who have a cross-understanding between the Nahdliyyah Ahlusunah wal jamaah and Salafi Ahlusunah wal jamaah concepts and their behaviors. (Masitah, 2021)

Third, Arief Abidin's research entitled, *“Konsep Dakwah Nahdatul Ulama (NU) dan Salafi dalam membangun Toleransi Beragama.”* The results of the study found that there were incidents of persecution and expulsion of Salafi studies in several places, such as the expulsion of Ust Firanda Andirja from the Al-Fitrah mosque in Banda Aceh. There were protests against the construction of the Imam bin Hambal Mosque in Bogor, led by Ust. Abdul Qodir Jawas. Similarly, there was criticism of NU practices spread on YouTube channels by Salafi Ustadz, which triggered a reaction from the NU congregation. Muslims should prioritize ukhuwah or unity rather than highlighting differences. Differences are part of sunnatulloh and inevitability that cannot be avoided. As long as the differences are only furu'iyyah, they can still be tolerated, unlike differences that concern ushuliyyah or the basic principles of Islam (Abidin, 2022).

The three studies share a common theme, namely examining the socio-theological relationship between the Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin, whether in the form of conflict, ideological differences, or efforts to build tolerance and deradicalization. However, these studies emphasize the social and practical dimensions of conflict and have not yet explored in depth the epistemological aspects and sectarian claims that underlie the differences in religious practices between the two groups.

This study is entitled “The Irony of Madhhab Claims: A Comparative Study of the Religious Practices of the Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin in the Shafi'i Madhhab Tradition in Indonesia”. This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of how the Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin communities—both of which claim affiliation with the Shafi'i school—understand, express, and construct claims of doctrinal purity in their religious practices. This research highlights the irony that arises when claims of loyalty to the same school of thought actually give rise to differences in religious attitudes and practices. The analysis is conducted not only on the socio-religious dimension, but also on theological and epistemological aspects, particularly in matters of worship, da'wah, and relations with religious authorities. Thus, this study offers a conceptual

contribution in the form of mapping the dynamics of sect practices and claims in the context of contemporary Islam in Indonesia.

Based on a review of previous studies, it can be seen that studies on the relationship between the Salafiyyin and Nahdliyyin communities in Indonesia generally still focus on aspects of social conflict, da'wah, and education. This is evident in the works of Ahmad Shidqi (2013), Dewi Masitah (2021), and Arief Abidin (2022), which make important contributions in explaining the patterns of interaction and social impact of the relationship between the two groups. However, these studies have not yet thoroughly examined the theological, epistemological, and especially the madhhab aspects, particularly regarding claims of loyalty to the Shafi'i tradition.

The novelty of this research lies in its comparative approach, which places the Salafiyyin and Nahdliyyin as two communities that both claim affiliation with the Shafi'i school of thought, but display different expressions and practices of religion. This study not only captures the social relations between the two, but also analyzes the epistemological foundations, patterns of madhhab truth claims, and worship and da'wah practices that are the main arena of these differences.

Thus, this study attempts to integrate a socio-religious approach and fiqh-madhhab analysis to reveal the relationship between inhumane religious conflict and misunderstandings of the Shafi'i school of thought in contemporary religious practice. This study shows that tensions between Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin often lead to social exclusion and violence, which are legitimized by symbolic and reductive madhhab claims, especially on the part of the Nahdiyyin. By directly examining classical Shafi'i literature, this study positions differences in practice as a methodological issue of fiqh, not a basis for justifying conflict. This approach is expected to correct the misunderstanding of madhhabs that has developed in the public sphere and contribute to efforts to reduce the escalation of religious conflict in Indonesia's diverse Muslim society.

## **B. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a comparative-descriptive qualitative design to examine the differences and similarities in the religious practices of the Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin communities within the framework of their claims of allegiance to the Shafi'i school of thought. A qualitative approach is used to explore the meanings, patterns of

understanding, and theological constructs that underlie the religious practices of both communities.

The comparative-descriptive method was applied by describing the religious practices carried out by both groups, then comparing them with references from Shafi'i literature to identify commonalities, differences, and ironies in their claims to the same school of thought.

The research instruments consisted of the researcher as the main instrument, supported by observation guidelines, semi-structured interviews, and a literature review list. Data were obtained through direct observation of religious practices, interviews with religious leaders and congregations from both communities, and a literature study of classical Shafi'i school books and contemporary scientific works.

Data analysis was conducted using a qualitative-comparative approach by grouping findings based on themes of religious practice, then comparing them with school references. Data credibility was maintained through triangulation of sources and methods by comparing observational, interview, and literature data.

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

This study focuses on a comparative study of religious views between the Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin, as well as examining their claims regarding which side is most entitled to uphold the Shafi'i school of thought in its entirety. The results of this study are presented in the following tables.

**Table 1.** Research Results: Dynamics of Religious Practice between Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin

<b>Religious Issues</b>	<b>A Comparison of Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin Perspectives</b>
1. Collective remembrance after prayer	The Salafis reject this because it is considered bid'ah; the Nahdiyyin allow it as a good practice and a means of strengthening ukhuwah.
2. Tahllilan	For Salafis, this is considered bid'ah (innovation); for Nahdiyyin, it is a tradition of communal prayer that has social and spiritual value.
3. Grave visits / religious tourism	Salafis allow this if it is merely to remember death; Nahdiyyin encourage it as a way of honoring scholars and

Religious Issues	A Comparison of Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin Perspectives
	as a means of prayer.
4. Seeking blessings at the graves of saints	Salafis consider this minor shirk; Nahdiyyin allow it with the intention of tabarruk without belief in anything other than Allah.
5. Reading Surat Yasin on Friday nights	Salafis consider there to be no specific evidence for this; Nahdiyyin consider it a sunnah based on the general virtue of reading the Qur'an.
6. Gifting recitations of the Qur'an to the deceased	Salafis reject this because there is no example from the Prophet; Nahdis allow it based on the opinion of Shafi'i scholars regarding ihda' al-tsawab.
7. Niqab (face veil)	Salafis emphasize it as a sunnah and the identity of Salafi women; Nahdis consider it permissible but not obligatory.
8. Short pants (above the ankles)	Salafis consider it a sunnah of the Prophet; Nahdis do not make it obligatory as long as it is not out of arrogance.
9. Beard	Salafis require it to be maintained; Nahdiyyin consider it sunnah without making it a measure of piety.
10. Smoking	Salafis prohibit it because it harms the body; Nahdiyyin now tend to agree after medical evidence has emerged.

**Table 2.** Research Results: Dynamics of Religious Practices and Sectarian Claims between Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin

No	Religious Issues	Findings / Analysis of Salafiyyin Views	Findings / Analysis of Nahdiyyin Views	Consistency with the Shafi'i School of Thought
1	Group zikir after prayer	Considered bid'ah because it was not routinely practiced by the Prophet.	It is considered a good practice to strengthen unity. And those who disagree with it are considered to be	The Salafi view is more in line with the Shafi'i school of

No	Religious Issues	Findings / Analysis of Salafiyyin Views	Findings / Analysis of Nahdliyyin Views	Consistency with the Shafi'i School of Thought
			following Wahhabi teachings.	thought than the NU view.
2	Tahlilan	Declared bid'ah because there is no example from the Prophet or his companions.	It is regarded as a tradition of communal prayer that has religious and social value. Meanwhile, those who reject it are considered to be followers of the Wahhabi movement.	The Salafi view is more in line with the Shafi'i school of thought than the NU view.
3	Grave pilgrimage / religious tourism	Permitted if it is to remember death, but prohibited if it involves tabarruk or istighatsah on the deceased.	It is encouraged as a form of respect for scholars and a means of prayer. Those who reject it are considered to be affiliated with or influenced by Wahhabi ideology.	The Salafi view is more in line with the Shafi'i school of thought than the NU view.
4	Seeking blessings at the graves of saints	Considered minor shirk or bid'ah because it is not in accordance with tauhid uluhiyah.	It is justified as a form of tabarruk (seeking blessing) on the condition that one does not believe in any power other than Allah. A total ban on this practice is considered to be influenced by Wahhabi ideology.	The Salafi view is more in line with the Shafi'i school of thought than the NU view.
5	Reading Surat Yasin on Friday nights	There is no specific evidence requiring it, so it is considered an bid'ah idhafiyyah..	It is accepted as a sunnah practice based on qiyas (analogy) on the virtue of reading the Qur'an.	The Salafi view is more in line with the Shafi'i school of

No	Religious Issues	Findings / Analysis of Salafiyyin Views	Findings / Analysis of Nahdliyyin Views	Consistency with the Shafi'i School of Thought
			Those who criticize it are often associated with Salafi/Wahhabi ideology.	thought than the NU view.
6	Reciting the Qur'an for the deceased	Most Salafis reject it because there is no authentic evidence from the Prophet.	It is justified on the basis of ijma' (consensus) among some Shafi'i scholars and the tradition of ihda' al-tsawab. Meanwhile, the attitude of considering this practice bid'ah (innovation) arises from a puritanical approach, which in NU discourse is often associated with Salafi-Wahhabi.	The Salafi view is more in line with the Shafi'i school of thought than the NU view.
7	Niqab for Muslim women	It is considered a recommended sunnah and part of the identity of Salafi women.	It is permissible, but not obligatory; following the opinion of the Shafi'i fuqaha. However, some NU figures consider the veil not to be an obligatory Islamic teaching, but rather an Arab culture, and is often brought by Wahhabi ideology.	P The Salafi view is more in line with the Shafi'i school of thought than the NU view.
8	Wearing cropped pants (above the ankles)	It is considered the Prophet's sunnah and a symbol of following the Salaf.	Not obligatory, as long as it is not out of arrogance; makruh if done with the intention of showing off. However, some NU	The Salafi view is more in line with the Shafi'i school of

No	Religious Issues	Findings / Analysis of Salafiyyin Views	Findings / Analysis of Nahdliyyin Views	Consistency with the Shafi'i School of Thought
			figures consider the phenomenon of cingkrang and certain outward symbols to be often identified with Wahhabi ideology and not reflective of Islam in the archipelago.	thought than the NU view.
9	Beard	It is obligatory to preserve it as a clear sunnah of the Prophet.	Sunnah muakkadah, but not a measure of piety. According to some NU figures, Islam is not measured by outward symbols such as beards, short pants, or veils, which are often associated with Wahhabi ideology.	The Salafi view is more in line with the Shafi'i school of thought than the NU view.
10	Smoking	It is prohibited because it harms the body (the principle of "lā ḥarār wa lā ḥirār").	It is either haram or makruh depending on the opinion of the scholars; in the past it was only makruh.  In public discourse, the attitude of absolutely prohibiting smoking is often referred to as "Wahhabi style" and is considered not to reflect the moderate fiqh of NU.	The Salafi view is more in line with the Shafi'i school of thought than the NU view.

Further explanation of the analysis table above can be seen in the following sub-chapter discussion:

## Discussion

### 1. Salafi

Etymologically, salafi comes from the Arabic word سلف - سلفا (salafa-yaslufu- salafan) which means: the past. Al-Imam Ibn Manzhur mentions that salaf also means people who preceded you, therefore the first generation of Muslims is called al-salaf al-salih. (Manzhur, 1996).

In terms of terminology, salaf refers to the companions, tābi in and tabi al-Tabiin. Al-Ghazāli states that the true truth, which is not disputed, is the madhhab salaf, namely the companions and tabi'in. (Al-Ghazali, 1995). According to Naṣir bin 'Abd al-Karim al-'Aql, Salaf are the early generations of this community, namely the companions, tabi'in, and tabi' al-tabi'in. And everyone who emulates and follows their manhaj throughout the ages is called salafi as a form of attribution to them. (Al-'Aql, 1427.H). Thus, a Salafi is every Muslim who strives to follow the Qur'an and Sunnah with the understanding of the Salaf al-Ummah. (Al-Hilali, 1999).

Based on the definition of salaf presented by the scholars above, it can be concluded that the meaning of salaf is divided into two meanings:

First; the specific meaning, namely the companions, tabi'in and tabi al-tabi'in, who are pure and protected from deviation and corruption in religion. This meaning provides a time limit from a historical perspective. This is as mentioned in the hadith:

The best of people are my generation, then those who follow them, then those who follow them.

خَيْرُ النَّاسِ قَرِينِي ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلْوَهُمْ ثُمَّ الَّذِينَ يَلْوَهُمْ.

"The best of people are those of my generation (i.e., the Companions), then those who come after them (the Tabi'in), then those who come after them (the Tabi' al-Tabi'in)." (HR. Bukhari)

Second, the general meaning is not limited to the first three generations of Islam, but also includes the generations after them who followed in the footsteps of the three best generations and were committed to understanding the texts of revelation as they understood them. This second meaning does not impose historical time limits, but rather emphasizes methodology (Fahamsyah, 2020).

Historically, the roots of the Salafi school of thought can be traced back to the ideas of Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal (780-855), who is considered a reference figure in classical Salafism. In the 4th century AH, this school of thought revived the Salafi creed, which had begun to be mixed with ancient Greek philosophy and kalam science, and

fought against other ideologies that deviated from the Salafi manhaj. Ahmad bin Hanbal's main ideas globally focused on several principles:

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First, the texts of revelation, both the Qur'an and the Sunnah, must be prioritized over reason, and in understanding the texts of revelation, one must follow the understanding of al-salaf al-ṣalih (the companions of the Prophet) and reject any bid'ah (innovation) in religion. Second, rejecting kalam or ancient Greek philosophy. Third, it is obligatory to submit and obey the Qur'an and Sunnah and the ijma' (consensus) of the scholars of the righteous Salaf. Fourth, it is obligatory to listen to and obey the leaders of the Muslims in matters that are ma'ruf (good), and it is forbidden to rebel against Muslim rulers even if they are unjust, as long as there is no apparent disbelief. (Hanbal, 1411).

Salafi thought was revived by Ibn Taymiyah (d. 728 AH/1328 AD) and his student Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (d. 1350 AD) in the 7th century AH. Ibn Taymiyah was the successor to Ahmad bin Hanbal's thought in terms of fiqh, usul fiqh, and ideology (Aqidah). Ibn Taymiyah played a very large role in developing Salafi thought and refuting anyone who was considered to have deviated from the path of al-salaf al-ṣalih. Muhammad Rashid Rida said that he could not fully accept the Salafi school of thought until he frequently read the works of Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah (Rida, 1990).

During Ibn Taymiyyah's time, the dominant theological schools of thought in the Islamic world were Al-Ash'ariyyah and al-Maturidiyyah. During his time, there were also many occult and mystical figures with spiritual acrobatics who were overly confident in their interpretations and practices of superstition, blind imitation, and rigidity of thought that was almost universal among Muslims in terms of fiqh, worship, and aqidah (theology). It was in these circumstances that Ibn Taymiyyah called for the importance of returning to ijtihad and referring back to the Qur'an and Sunnah with the understanding of the righteous predecessors. Therefore, it was inevitable that

friction and hostility would arise from those who disagreed with Ibn Taymiyyah and his opponents who felt threatened by his existence. (Zaman, 2019)

In the 18th century, the Islamic world fell back into the deepest abyss of collapse, with a sharp decline in ethics and morals, a stagnation and rigidity in religious thought, and a population filled with blind imitation and sectarian fanaticism. Monotheism began to fade from people's hearts, and polytheism, superstition, and heresy became widespread. At that time, the Islamic world experienced widespread decline. (Achjat, 1981).

When the Islamic world was enveloped in such darkness, Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab (d. 1793 AD) appeared, calling for a return to the Qur'an and Sunnah and referring to the understanding of the righteous predecessors, inviting people to reject all interpretations that were difficult to understand from theologians, philosophers, and Sufis, and calling on people to reject all forms of shirk, bid'ah, and deviation that could corrupt the face of sharia. (Achjat, 1981).

Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was greatly influenced and inspired by the understanding of the salaf brought by Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah and his student Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah. Many of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's works were inspired by the books of Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyah. (Haris, 2012).

Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab developed his preaching based on fundamental principles. First, reviving Islamic sciences. Second, purifying monotheism and eradicating polytheism. Third, reviving the Sunnah and eradicating heresy. Fourth, purifying the treasury of Islamic sciences. Fifth, spreading the true teachings of Islam (ad-dakwah). Sixth, encouraging good deeds and preventing evil deeds (amar ma'ruf nahi munkar). Seventh, enforcing Allah's law in government and society (tatbiq al-Shari'at). Eighth, opening the doors of ijihad to answer contemporary issues of the ummah (al-ijihad). Ninth, defending the religion of Allah and Muslim countries with weapons (jihad fi sabilillah). Tenth, purifying the soul (at-tazkiyah). (Waskito, 2012).

Sheikh Ali al-Tantawi, in his book Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, as quoted by Abu Tami, said: "The majority of Muslims believe that the Prophet Muhammad and the righteous can bring benefits and harm, as can graves, trees, and places of pilgrimage. Muslims ask them for their needs, making them a place to ask for help in times of hardship, making vows and sacrifices for them. It was in these circumstances that Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was born. He eventually became one of the Mujaddid

(renewers) of this religion. In fact, he is the person most deserving of this title among the ranks of those considered mujaddid in our history." (Tami, 1999)

According to Al-Jabarti, a well-known intellectual and historian from Al-Azhar, he was one of those who researched and warned of the dangers of the "Wahhabi movement." At that time, the ideas of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab were known as the "Wahhabiyah movement." When Jabarti read articles, leaflets, and writings brought by pilgrims from the Hijaz, he finally understood the essence of the "Wahhabi movement." The thick leaflets contained sermons on monotheism and sunnah, eliminating shirk and bid'ah with arguments from the Qur'an and Hadith. (Al-Jabarti, 1998).

In the 19th century, the spirit of renewal and puritanism was revived and spread again in the era of Muhammad Abduh and his student Muhammad Rashid Rida. Muhammad Rashid Rida himself, through the magazine Al-Manar, revived Turath al-Ilmiyyah and the works of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, and proclaimed him as al-mujaddid (the reformer). In Muhammad Rashid Rida's opinion, Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab was a person who upheld the da'wah of renewal of tawhid and sincerity in worshiping Allah alone, in accordance with what is prescribed in the Qur'an and Sunnah, abandoning bid'ah and sin and re-establishing Islamic sharia (Al-Hindi, 2010).

The uniqueness of the Salafi approach and method of da'wah has made this group easily accepted and widespread, not only in the Middle East, but also as far as America, England, France, and the Netherlands. Of course, it has also spread to mainland China, North Africa, Somalia, Pakistan, India, the Malay Peninsula, and even Indonesia. In the case of Indonesia, the modern Salafi movement emerged around the 1980s, through the intermediary of some Indonesian students who graduated from the Islamic University of Madinah. The clear influence and widespread dissemination of Salafi da'wah also arose from the distribution and translation of Salafi books into Indonesian by Salafi scholars, both past and present. It is from these books that they came to know the Salafi methodology. (W.Snt, 2013).

## **2. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)**

### **a. History of NU's establishment**

Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) was officially established in East Java on 16 Rajab 1344 H / January 31, 1926 AD by K.H. Hasyim Asy'ari. However, NU's teachings and culture had actually been developing in Indonesia for a long time. Today, Nahdlatul Ulama is

one of the largest Islamic organizations in Indonesia, with branches and chapters throughout the country. Nahdlatul Ulama is not only active in politics but also strives to establish as many Shafi'i madrasas or Islamic boarding schools as possible, from elementary to higher education levels ('Abbas, 1972, p. 263).

The background to the establishment of this organization was initially an extension of a Hijaz committee that was built with two objectives: (1) to counterbalance the caliphate committee, which gradually fell into the hands of reformers, (2) to call on Ibn Saud, the new ruler of Arabia, to continue traditional religious practices (Zuhairini, 2004: 179). Zuhairini. (2004).

On its official website, it is explained that Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is guided by the Qur'an, Sunnah, Ijma', and Qiyas. In terms of creed, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) adheres to Islam according to the Ahlusunnah wal Jama'ah understanding. In the field of creed, it follows the madhhab of Imam Abu Hasan Al-Asy'ari and Imam Abu Mansur al Maturidi; in the field of fiqh, it follows one of the Four Madhhabs (Hanafi, Maliki, Syafi'i, and Hanbali); and in the field of Sufism, it follows the madhhab of Imam al-Junaid al-Baghdadi and Abu Hamid al-Ghazali. ([https://nukokop.or.id/mengenal-pedoman-aqidah-dan-asas-nahdlatul-ulama/?utm\\_source=](https://nukokop.or.id/mengenal-pedoman-aqidah-dan-asas-nahdlatul-ulama/?utm_source=))

#### b. Vision and Mission

The vision of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) organization on its official website is as follows:

- 1) To become a Jami'iyah diniyah Islamiyah ijtimaiyah that fights for the upholding of the teachings of Islam ahlusunnah wal Jamaah an Nahdliyyah
- 2) To realize the welfare of society, the progress of the nation, prosperity, justice, and independence, especially for NU members, and to create blessings for the universe within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila.

Meanwhile, the mission of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) organization is as follows:

- 1) To develop the movement to spread Islam Ahlusunnah Wal Jamaah An Nahdliyyah in order to create a community with the characteristics of tawassuth (moderation), tawazun (balance), i'tidal (uprightness), and tasamuh (tolerance).
- 2) To develop various services for the NU congregation in order to improve the quality of NU human resources and their welfare, as well as to achieve independence for the NU community.

3) Influencing policy makers and legislators so that the policies and laws produced are in the interests of the community in an effort to achieve prosperity and a sense of justice.

c. The Purpose of the Establishment of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)

The purpose of the establishment of the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) organization, as stated on its official website, is to uphold Islamic teachings according to the Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah understanding in the midst of society, within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) to realize a just social order for the benefit and welfare of the people and to create mercy for the universe.

In line with the above, Zuhairini (2004: 181) in his book states that the purpose of the NU association is to adhere to one of the four schools of thought, namely: (1) Shafi'i (2) Maliki (3) Hanafi (4) Hanbali, and to do whatever is beneficial for Islam. To achieve this purpose, the following efforts are made:

- 1) Establishing connections between scholars of the above schools of thought
- 2) Examining books before they are used for teaching, to determine whether they belong to the Ahlusunnah Wal Jamaah or the Ahli Bid'ah
- 3) Spreading Islam based on the above schools of thought through any appropriate means
- 4) Striving to increase the number of Islamic schools
- 5) Paying attention to matters related to mosques, prayer rooms, boarding schools, as well as the affairs of orphans and the poor
- 6) Establishing institutions to advance agriculture, trade, and businesses that are not prohibited by Islamic law

d. Organizational Efforts

According to its official website, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) carries out the following organizational efforts:

- 1) In the field of religion, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) carries out Islamic preaching and promotes a sense of brotherhood based on the spirit of unity in diversity.
- 2) In the field of education, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) provides education in accordance with Islamic values to develop Muslims who are pious, noble, and knowledgeable.
- 3) In the socio-cultural field, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) strives for the welfare of the people and a culture that is in accordance with Islamic and humanitarian values.

- 4) In the economic sphere, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) strives for equal opportunities to enjoy the fruits of development, with an emphasis on the development of the people's economy.
- 5) In addition, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) develops other businesses that are beneficial to the wider community. Zuhairini. (2004).

e. Symbol of Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)



**Figure 1.** NU Emblem

Nahdlatul Ulama has an organizational emblem as shown above, which the author found on the official NU website (NU Online). This emblem has its own meaning that reflects the organization. The meanings contained in this emblem are as follows:

- 1) The image of the globe: symbolizes the place of life, struggle, and charity in this world and also symbolizes that humans originate from the earth and will return to the earth.
- 2) The image of the map on the globe is a map of Indonesia: symbolizes that Nahdlatul Ulama was born in Indonesia and struggles for the glory of the Republic of Indonesia.
- 3) The knotted rope: symbolizes strong, solid unity; the two knots below symbolize the relationship between humans and God; and the 99 strands of rope symbolize the Asmaul Husna.
- 4) Nine stars consisting of five stars above the equator with the largest star at the top: symbolizing the leadership of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as the leader of mankind and the Messenger of Allah ﷺ; The other four stars symbolize the leadership of the Khulafaur Rasyidin, namely Abu Bakar Ash Shidiq, Umar bin Khattab, Uthman bin Affan, and Ali bin Abi Talib. The four stars on the equator symbolize the four madhhabs, namely Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hambali. The total number of stars, nine, symbolizes the nine guardians who spread Islam on the island of Java. 5) Arabic writing "Nahdlatul

Ulama": indicates the name of the organization, which means the awakening of the ulama. This Arabic writing is also explained with the letters NU in Latin script as an abbreviation of Nahdlatul Ulama.

6) Green and white colors: green symbolizes the fertility of Indonesia's soil and white symbolizes purity. ([https://jabar.nu.or.id/sejarah/mengenal-arti-lambang-nu-dcpyn?utm\\_source=](https://jabar.nu.or.id/sejarah/mengenal-arti-lambang-nu-dcpyn?utm_source=)).

### **3. Characteristics of Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin Religious Practices**

In contemporary Islamic thought, Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin are two religious movements that both claim to be based on the Qur'an and Sunnah. The difference between the two lies in their *manhaj al-fahm* (methodology of understanding) and approach to practicing Islam, not in the basic goals of religion itself. (Nasution, 1974)

#### **a. Salafiyyin Religious Principles and Practices**

Salafiyyin base their understanding of religion on the Qur'an and Sunnah as understood by the Salafus Shalih, referring to the first three generations of Muslims who are considered the best generation to have understood Islamic teachings authentically. (Hikma, 2024) In terms of creed, the Salafiyyin establish tawhid and the attributes of Allah as found in the text, without resorting to *ta'wil*, *tahrif*, *takyif*, and *tamtsil*, as explained by Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn al-Qayyim. (Taimiyyah, 1995)

The Salafi methodology is based on the main principle in understanding the attributes of Allah, namely: establishing the attributes as mentioned in the Qur'an and Sunnah without *tahrif* (changing the wording or meaning), *ta'thil* (rejecting), *takyif* (describing), or *tamtsil* (analogy) (Lanfas, 2025).

In the field of fiqh, the Salafiyyin do not bind themselves to a particular school of thought, but take the opinions of scholars with the strongest arguments. Among these are issues related to religion that are examined in this study. The Salafiyyin are also known for their strict stance against *bid'ah* in worship, based on the principle that every act of worship must have a valid argument. (Hikma, 2024).

#### **b. Principles and Practices of Nahdiyyin Religion**

NU is an organization that adheres to Ahlussunnah Wal Jama'ah Islam, following one of the four madhhabs in fiqh: Imam Hanafi, Imam Maliki, Imam Syafi'i, or Imam Hambali. Abu Hasan Al-Asy'ari and Abu Mansur Al-Maturidi are the madhhabs in theology. Imam Al-Ghazali and Junaidi Al-Baghdadi are the methodological approaches

in the field of Sufism, and Al-Mawardi is the methodological approach in the field of politics. (KRISTEVA, 2015)

In the field of fiqh, NU recognizes four schools of thought, namely Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'i, and Hambali (unlike PERTI, which only follows the Shafi'i school of thought), but in practice, the majority of NU members tend to follow the Shafi'i school of thought. ([https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nahdlatul\\_Ulama#:~:text=Di%20bidang%20fikih%20NU%20mengakui,Ghazali%20dan%20Junaid%20al%2DBaghdadi.](https://id.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nahdlatul_Ulama#:~:text=Di%20bidang%20fikih%20NU%20mengakui,Ghazali%20dan%20Junaid%20al%2DBaghdadi.)).

Nahdiyyin accept local religious traditions such as tahlilan, maulid Nabi, and ziarah kubur as long as they have a general basis in sharia and do not contradict the principles of tauhid. In their da'wah, Nahdiyyin emphasize a cultural and persuasive approach as a strategy for spreading Islam peacefully in a diverse society. (Madjid, 1992)

#### **4. Madhhab Claims and Religious Authority Legitimacy**

Salafiyyin claim theological authority through textual purification and criticism of bid'ah. This claim is reinforced through teaching, book studies, and literature-based da'wah. A literature review shows that some Salafiyyin practices actually have a strong basis in classical Shafi'iyyah literature, even though some consider them to be "pure Salafi Wahhabi." (Ibnu, 2023, Understanding Islamic Law in Salafi Groups.) This shows that the difference between claims and actual practices is not always clear-cut, but rather interpretive.

Meanwhile, the Nahdiyyin assert their authority through the inheritance of tradition and social legitimacy, even though their practices sometimes deviate from the Shafi'i texts. Their legitimacy is more widely accepted through Islamic boarding schools and the influence of local figures. Daily worship practices are sometimes not fully in accordance with classical Shafi'i guidelines. Some practices, such as scattering flowers on graves, performing the call to prayer before burying the dead, and others, demonstrate flexibility in dealing with tradition and social context. Nevertheless, Shafi'i reference books are still used as a theoretical basis, indicating that the claims of the madhhab remain a symbolic legitimacy, even though daily practices have undergone cultural adaptation.

## 5. Comparative Study between Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin in Indonesia

This section will conduct a comparative study of the differences in religious practices (amaliyah) between the Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin communities in Indonesia, emphasizing the methodology of understanding teachings and the forms of religious expression of each.

### a. Congregational zikir with loud voices after fardhu prayers

According to the Salafiyyin, this practice is considered bid'ah if done routinely because it was not exemplified by the Prophet ﷺ. This is based on several arguments;

In the book al-Um, the main book of the Shafi'i school of thought, Imam Shafi'i explains that he liked it when the imam and maknum recited zikir individually and did not recite it aloud. He said:

وَاحْتَازْ لِلإِمَامِ وَالْمَأْمُومَ أَنْ يَذْكُرَا اللَّهَ بَعْدَ الْإِنْصِرَافِ مِنَ الصَّلَاةِ، وَيُعْقِيَانِ الدِّكْرَ، إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ إِمَامًا يُجِبُّ أَنْ يُتَعَلَّمَ مِنْهُ، فَيَجْهَرَ حَتَّى يُرَى أَنَّهُ قَدْ تَعْلَمَ مِنْهُ، ثُمَّ يُسَرِّ، فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَزَّ وَجَلَّ يَعْلُمُ: ﴿وَلَا تَجْهَرْ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا تُخَافِتْ بِهَا﴾ [الإِسْرَاءُ: ١١٠] يَعْنِي — وَاللَّهُ تَعَالَى أَعْلَمُ — الدُّعَاءُ، وَلَا تَجْهَرْ لَا تُسْمِعْ نَفْسَكَ، وَلَا تُخَافِتْ.

"I choose for the imam and the congregation that each of them should remember Allah after finishing the prayer, and both should recite their remembrance softly, unless the imam wants the congregation to learn his remembrance, in which case it may be recited loudly, and if the congregation has learned from the imam, then the remembrance should be recited softly again. Allah says: "Do not raise your voice in prayer, nor lower it" (QS: al-Isra:110), meaning wallahu a'lam, in prayer. Then "do not raise your voice: do not raise your voice, do not lower it: until you yourself cannot hear it. (Asy-Syafi'i, 1990).

In the book al-Majmu' Sharh al-Muhadzab by Imam an-Nawawi, he quotes the opinion of the Shafi'i scholars regarding the sunnah of reciting prayers and dhikr softly. He said:

فَالْأَصْحَابُ: إِنَّ الدِّكْرَ وَالدُّعَاءَ بَعْدَ الصَّلَاةِ يُسْتَحْبِطُ أَنْ يُسَرِّ بِهِمَا، إِلَّا أَنْ يَكُونَ إِمَامًا يُرِيدُ تَعْلِيمَ النَّاسِ، فَيَجْهَرَ لِيَتَعَلَّمُوا، فَإِذَا تَعَلَّمُوا وَكَانُوا عَالَمِينَ أَسْرَهُ.

"Our companions (the Shafi'i scholars) said: Indeed, it is recommended to recite the dhikr and supplication after prayer softly, except when the imam wants to teach the congregation, in which case he may recite it loudly so that the congregation can learn it. And if the congregation has learned it and understood it, then the dhikr should be recited softly again." (An-Nawawi, 1997).

Meanwhile, according to NU, it is considered a good practice to strengthen togetherness. And those who disagree with it are considered to be following Wahhabi teachings (Siradj, 2008).

b. Tahlilan

According to the Salafi circle, this practice is considered bid'ah because there is no example from the Prophet and his companions, referring to classical Shafi'i literature, including:

Imam an-Nawawi (died in 676 AH), in his book al-Majmu' Syarah al-Muhaddzab, added to the list of Shafi'i scholars who explicitly stated that gathering for a meal at the home of the deceased's family is an innovation that is not recommended. (Annawawi, 1997). He said:

قَالَ صَاحِبُ الشَّامِلِ وَغَيْرُهُ: وَأَمَّا إِصْلَاحُ أَهْلِ الْمَيْتِ طَعَامًا وَجَمْعُ النَّاسِ عَلَيْهِ، فَلَمْ يُنْقَلِ فِيهِ شَيْءٌ، وَهُوَ بِدُعْةٌ غَيْرُ مُسْتَحْبَةٍ. هَذَا كَلَامُ صَاحِبِ الشَّامِلِ. وَيُسْتَدِلُّ لِهَذَا بِحَدِيثِ جَرِيرِ بْنِ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ، قَالَ: كُنَّا نَعْدُ الْاجْتِمَاعَ إِلَى أَهْلِ الْمَيْتِ، وَصَنَعْنَا الطَّعَامَ بَعْدَ دَفْنِهِ، مِنَ النِّيَاحَةِ. «رَوَاهُ أَحْمَدُ بْنُ حَنْبَلٍ وَابْنُ مَاجَهٍ بِإِسْنَادٍ صَحِحٍ.

The author of the book asy-Syamil and others said: "As for the family of the deceased preparing food and gathering people, this has never been narrated from anyone, and it is even considered an innovation that is not recommended." This is the opinion of the author of the book asy-Syamil, based on the hadith of Jarir bin Abdullah radhiyallahu anhu, who said: "We consider gathering together with food at the home of the deceased's family as a form of niyahah/mourning." (Hanbal, 2001).

In the book l'antut Thalibin by Abu Bakar Syatha ad-Dimyathi, he states that what has been done by most people, gathering at the home of the deceased's family and having food served by the deceased's family, is an act of bid'ah that is reprehensible. He said:

مَا يَفْعَلُهُ النَّاسُ مِنِ الْاجْتِمَاعِ عِنْدَ أَهْلِ الْمَيْتِ، وَصَنْعِ الطَّعَامِ، مِنِ الْبَدَعِ الْمُنْكَرِ الَّتِي يُثَابُ عَلَى مَنْعِهَا وَلِيُ الْأَمْرِ، شَبَّتَ اللَّهُ بِهِ قَوَاعِدَ الدِّينِ، وَأَيَّدَ بِهِ الْإِسْلَامَ وَالْمُسْلِمِينَ.

What people do when they gather at the home of the deceased and the family of the deceased provides food is an abominable innovation. The guardian/authority who prevents such actions will be rewarded. May Allah taala strengthen this religion, strengthen Islam and the Muslims. (Ad-Dimyathi, 1997).

Meanwhile, according to NU circles, this practice is viewed as a tradition of communal prayer that has religious and social value. Those who reject it are considered to be characteristic of the Wahhabi movement, as stated by NU figure KH. Makruf Amin: "Groups that reject tahlilan and the death rituals of Indonesian Muslims are generally affiliated with or influenced by Wahhabi ideology." (Amin, 2016).

### c. Grave Visitation / Religious Tourism

According to Salafis, this practice is permissible if it is to remember death, but it is prohibited if it contains tabarruk or istighatsah on the deceased. This refers to the Shafi'i school of thought as follows;

Imamul Haramain Abul Ma'ali al-Juwaini (died in 478 AH), in his book Nihayatul Mathlab Fi Dirayatil Madzhab, quoted his teacher's opinion which stated that it is forbidden to undertake religious journeys other than to the three mosques (Masjidil Haram, Masjid Nabawi and Masjidil Aqsa). He said:

وَقَدْ قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ: لَا تُشَدُّ الرِّحَالُ إِلَّا إِلَى ثَلَاثَةِ مَسَاجِدٍ: الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ، وَمَسْجِدِي هَذَا، وَمَسْجِدِ إِبْلِيَاءِ . «أَرَادَ الْمَسْجِدُ الْأَقْصَى . وَكَانَ شَيْخِي يُفْتَنُ بِالْمَنْعِ عَنْ شَدِّ الرِّحَالِ إِلَى غَيْرِ هَذِهِ الْمَسَاجِدِ، وَرُبَّمَا كَانَ يَقُولُ: يُكْرَهُ، وَرُبَّمَا كَانَ يَقُولُ: يَحْرُمُ، تَعْلُقًا بِظَاهِرِ النَّهْيِ .

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: "Do not undertake any journey except to the three mosques: the Sacred Mosque, my mosque (the Prophet's Mosque), and the Mosque of Eliya," which refers to the Al-Aqsa Mosque. (HR. Bukhari and Muslim), My own teacher issued a fatwa prohibiting religious travel except to the three mosques mentioned above. Sometimes he considered it makruh (disliked) and sometimes he considered it haram (forbidden) when commenting on the apparent prohibition in the hadith. "(Abul Maali, 2007).

A similar opinion was also quoted by al-Hafiz Ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (died in 773 AH) in his book Fathul Baari. He quoted the opinion of Abu Muhammad al-Juwaini and also al-Qadhi Husein regarding the prohibition of visiting mosques other than the three mentioned above. He said:

وَاحْتَلَفَ فِي شَدِّ الرِّحَالِ إِلَى غَيْرِهَا، كَالذَّهَابِ إِلَى زِيَارَةِ الصَّالِحِينَ أَحْيَاءً وَأَمْوَاتًا، وَإِلَى الْمَوَاضِعِ الْفَاضِلَةِ لِقَصْدِ التَّبَرُّكِ بِهَا وَالصَّلَاةِ فِيهَا . فَقَالَ الشَّيْخُ أَبُو مُحَمَّدٍ الْجُوَيْنِيُّ: يَحْرُمُ شَدُّ الرِّحَالِ إِلَى غَيْرِهَا، عَمَّا لَا يَظَاهِرُ هَذَا الْحَدِيثُ . وَأَشَارَ الْفَاضِلُ حُسَيْنٌ إِلَى احْتِيَارِهِ، وَبِهِ قَالَ عِيَاضٌ وَطَائِفَةٌ .

Scholars differ on the ruling on traveling to places other than the three mosques, such as traveling to visit righteous people, whether living or deceased, or visiting sacred places for the purpose of seeking blessings and praying there. Sheikh Abu Muhammad al-Juwaini said: "It is forbidden to make pilgrimages to

places other than the three mosques based on the apparent meaning of the hadith." Al-Qadhi Husain indicated that this opinion was his preferred opinion. This opinion is also the opinion of a group of other scholars. (Al-Asqalani, 1379H).

According to NU, this is only a form of respect for scholars and a means of prayer. Those who reject it are considered to be affiliated with or influenced by Wahhabi ideology. (NU Online)

d. Seeking blessings at the graves of saints

According to the Salafi, this practice is considered minor shirk or bid'ah because it is not in accordance with tauhid uluhiyah. They argue by quoting Imam as-Suyuthi in his book al-Amru bil Ittiba wa an-Nahyu 'an al-Ibtida, stating that rubbing one's body against the Prophet's grave ﷺ or kissing it in order to seek blessings is completely forbidden. If the Prophet's grave is forbidden, then what about graves other than the Prophet's ﷺ? He said:

وَكَذَلِكَ إِلَصَاقُهُمْ بُطُونَهُمْ وَظُهُورَهُمْ بِحَدَارِ الْقَبْرِ، وَتَقْبِيلُهُمْ إِيَاهُ، وَالصُّنُودُقِ الَّذِي عِنْدَ رَأْسِ النَّبِيِّ، وَمَسْحُهُ بِالْيَدِ.  
وَكُلُّ ذَلِكَ مَنْهِيٌّ عَنْهُ.

Similarly, rubbing one's stomach and back against the wall of the grave, then kissing the wall on the side of the Prophet's grave, peace be upon him, and then rubbing it with one's hands, is strictly prohibited. (As-Suyuthi, 1409 H).

According to NU, this practice is permissible as a form of tabarruk (seeking blessing) on the condition that one does not believe in any power other than Allah. The total prohibition of this practice is considered to be influenced by Wahhabi ideology (PBNU, 2011).

e. Reading Surat Yasin on Friday night

According to the Salafi community, there is no specific evidence that obligates this practice, and it is considered bid'ah idhafiyyah (an added innovation). Based on the explanation of Al-Khathib asy-Syirbini in the book Mughni al-Muhtaj, he quoted the opinion of Imam Shafi'i and other Shafi'i scholars that what is recommended is to read Surat al-Kahfi on Friday night. He said:

وَعَنِ الشَّافِعِيِّ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى عَنْهُ أَنَّهُ قَالَ: وَأَحِبُّ الْإِسْتِكْثَارَ مِنْ قِرَاءَةِ الْكَهْفِ فِي لَيْلَةِ الْجُمُعَةِ. وَجَرَى عَلَيْهِ  
الْجُرْجَابِيُّ، وَنَقَلَ الْأَذْرَعِيُّ عَنِ الشَّافِعِيِّ وَالْأَصْحَابِ أَنَّهُ يُسَنُّ الْإِكْتَارُ مِنْ قِرَاءَتِهَا فِي يَوْمِهَا وَلَيْتَهَا.

From Imam Shafi'i, he said: "I enjoy reading Surat al-Kahfi on Friday nights." Al-Jurjani said the same thing. Al-Adzrai quoted from Imam Shafi'i and his

companions (the Shafi'i scholars) that it is recommended to read Surah al-Kahfi frequently on Friday or at night. (Asy-Syrbini, 1994).

In the book Nihayatuz Zain, Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani al-Jawi emphasized the sunnah of reading Surat al-Kahfi on Friday night. He said:

وَيُسَنْ قِرَاءَةُ سُورَةِ الْكَهْفِ يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ وَلَيْلَتَهَا، وَيُسَنَّ حَبُّ الْإِكْتَارِ مِنْ ذَلِكَ، وَأَقْلَهُ ثَلَاثٌ، لِمَا صَحَّ فِي الْحَدِيثِ  
أَنَّهُ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ: مَنْ قَرَأَهَا يَوْمَ الْجُمُعَةِ أَضَاءَ لَهُ مِنَ النُّورِ مَا بَيْنَ الْجُمُعَتَيْنِ «أَيْ: وَإِنْ لَمْ يَقْرَأْهَا فِي  
الْجُمُعَةِ الْأُخْرَى».

It is recommended to read Surah al-Kahfi on Friday or Friday night, and it is recommended to read it at least three times, as authentically reported in the hadith, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) said: "Whoever recites Surah al-Kahfi on Friday night will be illuminated with light between the two Fridays," meaning even if he does not recite it on the following Friday. (Al-Bantani, 1999).

Meanwhile, according to NU, this practice is recommended based on analogy to the virtue of reading the Qur'an in general. Those who criticize it are often associated with Salafi/Wahhabi ideology. (NU Online)

f. Giving the recitation of the Qur'an as a gift to the deceased

The majority of Salafis reject this because there is no authentic evidence from the Prophet. According to Imam an-Nawawi's explanation in the book al-Minhaj Syarah Sahih Muslim, he states that in the Shafi'i school of thought and also in the jumhur, it does not reach the deceased. He said:

وَأَمَّا قِرَاءَةُ الْقُرْآنِ، وَجَعْلُ ثَوَابِهِ لِلْمَيِّتِ، وَالصَّلَاةُ عَنْهُ، وَتَحْوِهُمَا، فَمَذْهَبُ الشَّافِعِيِّ وَالْجُمُهُورِ أَنَّهَا لَا تَلْحُقُ الْمَيِّتَ.

"As for reciting the Qur'an, then giving the reward to the deceased, as well as giving the reward of prayer or other rewards, then in the Shafi'i school of thought and among the majority of scholars, it will not reach the deceased." (An-Nawawi, 1392).

According to NU, this is justified based on the ijma' (consensus) of some Shafi'i scholars and the tradition of ihda' al tsawab. Meanwhile, the view that this practice is bid'ah (innovation) stems from a puritanical approach, which in NU discourse is often associated with Salafi-Wahabi. (islam.nu.or.id – Shariah section).

g. Niqab (Face Veil)

According to the Salafi, this practice is considered a recommended sunnah and part of the identity of Salafi women. Referring to the words of Imam Shafi'i in al-Umm,

he stated that women performing tawaf during the day should extend their cloth to cover their faces. He said:

وَأَحِبُّ لِلْمَسْهُورَةِ بِالْجَمَالِ أَنْ تَطُوفَ وَتَسْعَى لَيَّلًا، وَإِنْ طَافَتْ بِالنَّهَارِ سَدَّلَتْ ثُوبَهَا عَلَى وَجْهِهَا، أَوْ طَافَتْ بِي سِنْتُرٍ.

"I am pleased for women who are known to be beautiful to perform tawaf and sa'i at night. If she performs tawaf during the day, she should extend her garment to cover her face, or she can perform tawaf wearing a veil." (Asy-Syafi'i, 1990)

In the book *at-Tanbih Fil Fiqh asy-Syafi'i*, by Imam asy. Syirazi, he states that the original ruling for women in ihram is that they are not allowed to cover their faces, but if she fears becoming a temptation for foreign men, then she should cover her face. He said:

وَلَا يَجُوزُ سِنْتُرٌ وَجْهِهَا، فَإِنْ أَرَادَتِ السِّنْتُرَ عَنِ النَّاسِ سَدَّلَتْ عَلَى وَجْهِهَا مَا يَسْتَرُهُ، وَلَا يَقْعُ عَلَى الْبَشَرِ.

Women in ihram are not allowed to cover their faces, but if they wish to cover their faces from foreign men who are not their mahrams, they may lower their cloth to cover their faces, provided that it does not touch the skin. (Asy-Syirazi, 1998).

Sheikh Nawawi al-Bantani said:

وَيُنْكِرُهُ أَنْ يُصَلِّيَ فِي ثُوبٍ فِيهِ صُورَةٌ، وَأَنْ يُصَلِّيَ الرَّجُلُ مُتَلِّثِمًا، وَالْمَرْأَةُ مُتَنَفِّيَةٌ، إِلَّا أَنْ تَكُونَ فِي مَكَانٍ وَهُنَاكَ أَجَانِبٌ لَا يَخْتَرُونَ مِنَ النَّظَرِ إِلَيْهَا، فَلَا يَجُوزُ لَهَا رَفْعُ النِّقَابِ إِلَّا إِذَا سَتَرَتْ وَجْهَهَا بِشَيْءٍ أَخْرَى.

"And it is makruh to pray while wearing clothing with images, just as it is makruh for men to pray while wearing a face covering. It is also makruh for women to pray while wearing a veil, except if she is in a place where there are men who are not her mahrams, who cannot control their gaze. In such circumstances, she should not remove her veil, unless she can cover her face with something else. (Al-Bantani, 1994).

Meanwhile, in NU it is permissible, but not obligatory. However, some NU figures consider the veil not to be an obligatory Islamic teaching, but rather an Arab culture, and is often brought by Wahhabi ideology. This is as stated by KH Said Aqil Siraj that, "The veil is not an obligatory Islamic teaching, but rather an Arab culture, and is often brought by Wahhabi ideology" (Siraj, 2018).

#### h. Short pants (above the ankles)

For Salafis, such clothing is considered sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ and a symbol of *ittiba'* salaf. Referring to the view of Imam an-Nawawi in *al-Minhaj Syarah Sahih*

Muslim, he explains that if isbal is done not out of arrogance, then it is makruh, and if it is done out of arrogance, then it is haram. He said:

الْحَدِيثُ الصَّحِيحُ أَنَّ الْإِسْبَالَ يَكُونُ فِي الْإِلَزَارِ، وَالْعَمَامَةِ، وَالْقَمِيصِ، وَالْعِمَامَةِ، وَأَنَّهُ لَا يَجُوزُ إِسْبَالُهُ تَحْتَ الْكَعْبَيْنِ إِنْ كَانَ لِلْحُلْيَلَاءِ، فَإِنْ كَانَ لِعِيْرَهَا فَهُوَ مَكْرُوْهٌ، وَظَوَاهِرُ الْأَحَادِيثِ فِي تَقْيِيدِهَا بِالْجَرْحِ حُلْيَلَاءَ تَدْلُّ عَلَى أَنَّ التَّحْرِيمَ مُخْصُوصٌ بِالْحُلْيَلَاءِ، وَهَكَذَا نَصُّ الشَّافِعِيُّ.

"A sahih hadith indicates that isbal can occur with sarongs, shirts, or imamah. Isbal should not extend beyond the ankles if it is done out of arrogance. However, if it is not done out of arrogance, then it is makruh. The apparent meaning of the hadith is that it is restricted to arrogance, which indicates that isbal is only prohibited if it is done out of arrogance, as determined by Imam Shafi'i." (An-Nawawi, 1392).

In the view of NU, wearing clothes above the ankles for men is not obligatory, as long as it is not out of arrogance; it is makruh if done with the intention of showing off. However, some NU figures consider the phenomenon of cingkrang and certain outward symbols to be often identified with Wahhabi ideology and not reflective of Islam in the archipelago. (Siradj, 2018).

#### i. Beard

According to the Salafi community, it is obligatory to maintain a beard as a strict sunnah of the Prophet. Based on the words of Imam an-Nawawi in the book Raudhatut Thalibin, he quoted Imam al-Ghazali's words regarding things that are makruh (disliked) in relation to beards, one of which is plucking newly grown beards. He said:

ذَكْرُ الْغَرَائِيْ وَعَيْرَهُ، فِي الْلِّحْيَةِ عَشْرَ خِصَالٍ مَكْرُوْهَةٍ : خِصَابُهَا بِالسَّوَادِ إِلَّا لِلْجِهَادِ، وَتَبَيِّضُهَا بِالْكِبْرِيَّتِ أَوْ عَيْرِهِ اسْتِعْجَالًا لِلشَّيْخُوْحَةِ، وَتَنْفُّعُهَا أَوْلَ طَلُوعَهَا إِيْنَارًا لِلْمُرْوَدَةِ وَحُسْنِ الصُّورَةِ.

Al-Ghazali and others mention 10 things that are makruh (disliked) regarding beards, including: dyeing the beard black except in the context of jihad, bleaching the beard with sulfur or other substances to make it look older, and plucking newly grown beard hairs in order to maintain dignity and appearance. "(An-Nawawi, 1991).

According to NU, it is sunnah muakkadah, but it is not a measure of piety. According to some NU figures, Islam is not measured by outward symbols such as beards, short pants, or veils, which are often associated with Wahhabi ideology. (Sirodj, 2018).

### j. Smoking

It is forbidden because it is harmful to the body (the principle of lā ḥarār wa lā ḥarār).

For Salafis, smoking is absolutely forbidden because it is harmful to the body (the principle of lā ḥarār wa lā ḥarār). Al-Bujairimi, in his book *Tukhfatul Habib*, says that the tobacco cigarettes that are currently on the market are a bad bid'ah and that the people who make them are even accursed. He says:

وَأَمَّا الدُّخَانُ الْحَادِثُ الْأَنْ مُسَمَّى بِالْتُّنْ، لَعَنَ اللَّهِ مَنْ أَحْدَثَهُ، فَإِنَّهُ مِنَ الْبَدْعِ الْقَبِيحةِ.

As for cigarettes today, known as tutun cigarettes, may Allah curse their makers, for they are considered a bad innovation (bid'ah). (Al-Bujairimi, 1995).

Meanwhile, according to NU, cigarettes are not haram but makruh. In public discourse, the attitude of absolutely prohibiting cigarettes is often referred to as the "Wahhabi style" (32nd NU Congress, 2010).

## D. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the differences in religious practices between the Salafiyyin and Nahdiyyin communities in Indonesia do not represent a normative conflict within the Shafi'i school of thought, but rather are rooted in differences in methodological understanding (*manhaj al-fahm*), epistemological orientation, and ways of expressing religious authority in the social sphere. A comparative study of various practices shows that both communities refer to the classical literature of the Shafi'i school, but make different selections and interpretations in accordance with their respective methodological frameworks and social contexts.

This study also reveals the irony of madhhab claims, namely when practices that are often stigmatized as "Salafi" or "Wahhabi" actually have strong legitimacy in the classical Shafi'i scholars' treasury, while some practices attached to the Nahdiyyin identity are not entirely rooted in the textual authority of the school, but are influenced by the acculturation of local traditions and socio-religious consensus. These findings confirm that schools of thought in practice often function as symbols of identity legitimacy, rather than merely as normative frameworks that are applied consistently.

The implication of this research for religious policy is the importance of encouraging a moderate approach to religion based on school of thought literacy and methodological awareness. Educational institutions, religious authorities, and policymakers need to avoid simplistic ideological labeling and prioritize a scientific

approach in responding to differences in religious practice, so that differences of opinion remain within academic and civilized boundaries.

Further research is recommended to expand the object of study by involving other madhab communities or different regional contexts, as well as integrating ethnographic approaches or discourse analysis to deepen understanding of the relationship between madhab, religious identity, and the socio-political dynamics of Muslims in Indonesia.

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