



## REVEALING THE HERESY ACCUSATION OF SALUTING THE NATIONAL FLAG

**Zainul Hakim**

UIN Kiai Haji Achmad Siddiq Jember

*Zainulhakim9@gmail.com*

### Abstract

Recently the extreme tendency in religion has strengthened (*conservative turn*). The online media also promoted the discourses and fatwas on prohibition and disbelief for Muslims to salute the Indonesian flag. This is also reinforced by some Muslim preachers who are indicated as part of the transnational Islamic movement (*takfiri*), which states that saluting the flag is a heresy (*bid'ah*) or *haram*. It can disrupt the unity and integrity of the Indonesian people (*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*; unity in diversity). Therefore, this article seeks to reveal the meaning of flag-saluting from the perspective of Islamic studies, including aspects of *taklifiy* and *wad'iy* ways in Islamic law. This effort is carried out by searching rigidly, both *lughowi* and *ma'nawi*. The results of this study conclude that saluting the national flag is not included in the category of *mahdhah* worship. Therefore, it cannot be called heresy (*bid'ah*) or *shirk*; moreover, the person who does it is called an apostate (*murtad*) or *kafir* (infidel). In such cases, honoring the flag based on ethics or moral behavior differs from worship based on theology. Thus, the article can help clarify and reflect on religious problems in society.

**Keywords:** *Heresy Accusation, Saluting the National Flag, Islamic Law, Worship.*



## Introduction

Recently, there have been writings, posts, or statements on various social media spreading noise and controversy about Islamic law. Some people with their perspective claim and accuse others of violating Islamic law (*sharia*) extremely. Muslims are accused of heresy (*bid'ah*) and infidels (*kafir*) out of saluting the national flag. It is essential to discuss the pros and cons of the extreme claims proportionately related to Islamic law to reveal the explanation and the basics of the argument.

This controversy had existed for a long time, notably on March 10, 1972, when Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, one of the founders of the al-Mukmin Islamic Boarding School Ngruki Sukoharjo Central Java, forbade his students to salute the national flag.<sup>1</sup> However, interestingly, for the same reason, in 2011, KH. A. Cholil Ridwan, Chairman of the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI) and also the leader of the Husnayain Islamic Boarding School Jakarta, wrote that Islamic teachings forbid respect for the national flag.<sup>2</sup> The Islamic University of

Medina graduate's opinion later became the consumption of his supporting media, such as *Suara-islam.com*<sup>3</sup> (now: *Suaraislam.id*), *Panjimas.com*,<sup>4</sup> *Atsar.id*,<sup>5</sup> *Nasihatsahabat.com*,<sup>6</sup> and others. Ridwan's view refers to the fatwas of Saudi Salafi-Wahhabi institutions and scholars,<sup>7</sup> such as *Lajnah Daimah li al-Buhuts al-'Ilmiyyah wa al-Ifta'* by Shaykh Ibn Jibrin and Shaykh Salih al-Fauzan—the short version is archived on the website of the Center for Police Education (Pusdikmin).<sup>8</sup> Even Abu Bakar

<sup>3</sup> "Menghormati Bendera Bolehkah?" *Suara-Islam.com*; <https://www.suara-islam.com/news/konsultasi/fiqih/2149-menghormati-bendera-bolehkah>, archived by *Jurnal Askatasuna* (March 22, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> "Bagaimana Hukum Upacara Bendera?" *Panjimas.com* (August 16, 2016); <https://www.panjimas.com/kajian/2016/08/16/bagaimana-hukum-upacara-bendera>, accessed on August 22, 2021.

<sup>5</sup> "Hukum hormat kepada bendera menurut Islam," *Atsar.id* (December 22, 2018); <https://www.atsar.id/2018/12/hukum-hormat-kepada-bendera-menurut.html>, accessed on August 22, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Ustadz Sofyan Chalid Ruray, "Hukum Upacara Bendera dan Menyanyikan Lagu Kebangsaan," *Nasihatsahabat.com* (August 21, 2016); <https://nasihatsahabat.com/hukum-upacara-bendera-dan-menyanyikan-lagu-kebangsaan>, accessed on August 22, 2021.

<sup>7</sup> Syarif, "Ajaran Wahabiyah Dasari Penolakan Hormat Bendera," *Monitoringindonesia.com* (June 16, 2011); <https://jurnaltoddoppuli.wordpress.com/2011/06/16/ajaran-wahabiyah-dasari-penolakan-hormat-bendera>, accessed on August 22, 2021.

<sup>8</sup> Pusdikmin Library, "Fatwa-fatwa Lajnah Daimah," <https://pusdikmin.com/perpus/file/Fatwa-fatwa%20Lajnah%20Daimah%202.pdf>.

<sup>1</sup> "Radicalism of Abu Bakr Ba'asyir," *Voi.id* (January 8, 2021); <https://voi.id/en/memori/25872/radikalisme-abu-bakar-baasyir>, accessed on August 24, 2021.

<sup>2</sup> "Ketua MUI Haramkan Penghormatan terhadap Bendera," *Jurnal Askatasuna* (March 22, 2011); <https://arieflmj.wordpress.com/2011/03/22/ketua-mui-haramkan-penghormatan-terhadap-bendera>, accessed on August 24, 2021.

Ba'asyir also supported Ridwan's statement.<sup>9</sup>

The prohibition of saluting the national flag resurfaced after the cancellation of the article writing competition by the theme "*Hormat Bendera Menurut Hukum Islam*" (Flag-Saluting According to Islamic Law) held by the Pancasila Ideology Development Agency (BPIP) in August 2021.<sup>10</sup> However, polemics in the media tend to be discussed after being associated with the urgency during the Covid-19 pandemic.

This study uses the descriptive analytical method to discuss the basis of Islamic law, whose primary sources are the Qur'an and Hadith, toward these controversial claims that saluting the flag is *haram*. Therefore, the analysis of linguistic aspects, especially on *taklifiy* and *wad'iy* manner, is needed to reveal the suspicions of some religious people against saluting the national flag.

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accessed on August 23, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Hendri F. Isnaeni, "Ada Apa dengan Bendera," *Historia.id* (March 31, 2011); <https://historia.id/politik/articles/ada-apa-dengan-bendera-6jq1P/page/1>, accessed on August 23, 2021.

<sup>10</sup> "Ganti Tema, BPIP Minta Maaf soal Tema Lomba 'Hormat Bendera Menurut Islam,'" *Detiknews.com* (August 16, 2021); <https://news.detik.com/berita/d-5683637/ganti-tema-bpip-minta-maaf-soal-tema-lomba-hormat-bendera-menurut-islam>, accessed on August 23, 2021.

## Meaning of Saluting the Flag

Language problems often lead to overlapping meanings. The term of *saluting the flag* means an act of a person (subject) paying respect to the flag as an object. The word salute means show respect or honor to someone (physical gesture). Physical gestures of respect such as bow, chest bump, curtsy, dap, doff, elbow bump, genuflect, prostration, handshake, salaam, vail, etc.<sup>11</sup> It also means reverent, solemn, and polite, as in the statement: we should respect our parents, or the audience simultaneously stands to salute the guests.<sup>12</sup> So, in expressing it or if respect is also expressed in specific ways (such as worshiping or bowing) because of reverence, reverence, courtesy, respect, upholding, acknowledging, or obeying an object that can be anything, leaders, elders, guests, including flags or other symbols.

Problems occur if this term is interpreted and expressed tendentiously or excessively. For example, reverence is meant to worship and is expressed in ways that are meant for worship. Of course, there is a different meaning between (ethical) respect and worship here. Respect is not correlated with wor-

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<sup>11</sup> "Salute," *Cambridge Dictionary*, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/salute>, accessed on August 23, 2021.

<sup>12</sup> Departemen Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan (Depdikbud) RI, *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia (KBBI) RI, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (Jakarta: Balai Pustaka), 357.

ship because it contains a moral purpose of appreciation. At the same time, worship is correlated with obedience, obedience, or worship. If interpreted excessively, this last word changes its nature into worship.

Furthermore, the word *salute* (synonym: respect, honor) means reverence is absorbed from the Arabic word, *takzim* (*fi'il tsulasi mujarrad*):

عَظَّمَ - يَعْظُمُ - عِظْمًا - وَعِظَامَةً

which means big, complicated, and hard to trouble. The adjective is الْعَظِيمُ وَالْعِظَامُ which means: the great, the important, the majestic, the glorious, the very beautiful, the good.<sup>13</sup>

Through the formation of a new pattern in the science of Sharaf by adding *tasydid* or *tad'if* to 'ain *fi'il* (*tsulasi mazid al-ruba'i* pattern) to become عَظَّمَ - يَعْظُمُ - عِظْمًا - تَعْظِيمًا means *glorify* (adjective), or تَحِيَّةٌ means *respect*.<sup>14</sup> Thus, it can be stated that the verbs respect, respect behavior, and respect reflect politeness as a form of morality, ethics, civility, or manners.

The word *flag* in the *Indonesia dictionary* (KBBI)<sup>15</sup> is defined as a rectangular or triangular piece of cloth (tied to the end of a stick, pole, etc.), usually used as a symbol of the state, associa-

tion, institution, and soon., or as a sign, a banner. In Arabic, the flag is referred to as sebagai الْعَلَمُ, أَلْوَاءُ or أَلَرِيَّةُ. While combining the two words *saluting the flag* from a language perspective, three elements will be found: the actor (subject) who pays respect, the act of respect, and the object that is respected (the flag).

From the meanings and explanations above, it can be said that *dzauq al-lughah* (sense of language) is a distinctive expression. It can be a reference from *dzauq al-lughah* to avoid misunderstanding and confusion of meaning. From a religious perspective, the act of giving respect is carried out by humans as servants of God to objects (flags, inanimate objects) that are glorified and designed to be the Indonesian national flag; it is a symbol of the identity of a country that represents all its greatness (الْعَظِيمُ وَالْعِظَامُ).

## Flag-Saluting as Worship and Ethics

The action for saluting also related to worshipping, prostration, bowing, kissing hands, bowing, bowing, standing with bowed shoulders, standing upright with bowing of the head, or standing upright with arms raised, as when paying respects to a leader or the flag in a ceremony, and so on. Thus, it has a specific meaning in terms of terminology. A defined classification is needed

<sup>13</sup> Ahmad Warson Munawir, *Al-Munawwir Kamus Arab-Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Pondok Pesantren al-Munawwir Krapyak), 1016.

<sup>14</sup> Munawir, 1017.

<sup>15</sup> Depdikbud RI, 115.

between the acts of respect in the worship or ethical category. The following is a description of the classification.

### Bowing and Prostrating

Worship in Arabic is derived from the word عَبَدَ - يَعْبُدُ - عِبَادَةً which means *submissive, obedient, submissive, and humble*. All of these words have similar meanings. In the worship category, every person who obeys submits, obeys, and humbles the worshiped creator is called 'abid (worship).<sup>16</sup> In this terminology, it can be stated that the act of worship is: "Completely praising and glorifying God as well as humiliating oneself and submitting the soul to Him." Thus, worshipping is a specific activity that involves physical and soul elements performed by 'abid (creature) to the ma'bud (creator) of Allah, such as prayer, which already includes acts of respect such as bowing and prostrating and examples of other types of *mahdhah* worship such as *tawaf* and *sa'i*.

The worship can be classified into *mahdhah* and *ghairu mahdhah* worship. *Mahdhah* worship has the following characteristics and criteria:

- a. *Mahdhah* worship must be based on the evidence of command, both from the Qur'an and authoritative hadith, as revelation should not

only be determined based on logical thinking alone.

- b. The procedure for worship must follow the guidelines of the Prophet —as the apostle's purpose was to set an example for the people.
- c. Supra-rational (beyond reason).
- d. The principle is obedience (*ta'abbudiy*). 'Abid demanded obedience and submission.

Forms and types of worship that are included in the *mahdhah* category include: *taharah* guidance (purification) such as ablution, *tayammum*, bathing, removing impurities, *adhan*, *iqamat*, prayer, *i'tiqaf*, reading the Qur'an, fasting, *hajj*, and *umrah*, taking care of corpses and others. As for *ghairu mahdhah* worship, these are apart from the worships above.

In the Qur'an and its interpretation, the terms *bowing* and *prostration* mean the servitude of 'abid to ma'bud. So the ulama agree to understand *bowing* and *prostration* in prayer as *tauqifiy* taught directly by the Prophet to his companions (and until today and will not change until the Day of Judgment). At the same time, *bow* that mean prayer (worship) is described in *Tafsir Ibnu Katsir* in interpreting the verse in Surah al-Mursalat [77]: 48-49.

وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمْ ارْكَعُوا لَا يَرْكَعُونَ (48) وَيُنَادِ الْمُكَذِّبِينَ (49)

<sup>16</sup> A. Rahman Ritonga Zainudin, *Fikih Ibadah* (Jakarta: Gaya Media Pratama, 1997), 1.

When it is said to them, "Bow down," they do not bow (48). Woe on that day to the deniers! (49).<sup>17</sup>

تفسير ابن كثير ط العلمية (8 / 306)  
وقوله تعالى: وَإِذَا قِيلَ لَهُمُ ارْكَعُوا لَا يَرْكَعُونَ  
أَيُّ إِذَا أَمَرَ هَؤُلَاءِ الْجَهْلَاءُ مِنَ الْكُفَّارِ أَنْ يَكُونُوا  
مِنَ الْمُصَلِّينَ مَعَ الْجَمَاعَةِ امْتَنَعُوا مِنْ ذَلِكَ  
وَاسْتَكْبَرُوا عَنْهُ، وَلِهَذَا قَالَ تَعَالَى: وَيُلْ يُؤْمِنُ  
لِلْمُكَذِّبِينَ<sup>18</sup>

The terms *bow* and *prostration* are also described in Tafsir al-Qurtubi on the following Surah Shad ([38]: 24):

تفسير القرطبي : (15 / 182)  
قَالَ لَقَدْ ظَلَمَكَ بِسُؤَالِ نَعَجْتِكَ إِلَى نِعَاجِهِ وَإِنَّ  
كَثِيرًا مِنَ الْخُلَطَاءِ لَيَبْغِي بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَى بَعْضٍ  
إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَقَلِيلٌ مَا  
هُمْ وَطَنَّ دَاوُودُ أُنْمًا فَتَنَّاهُ فَاسْتَغْفَرَ رَبَّهُ وَخَرَّ  
رَاكِعًا وَأَنَابَ (24)<sup>19</sup>

<sup>17</sup> Al-Hikmah, *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya* (Bandung: CV. Penerbit Diponegoro), 581. In the explanation, he noted: that some commentators (*mufasssir*) say that what is meant by bowing here is *submitting to Allah's commands*; and some say it means *prayer*.

<sup>18</sup> <https://shamela.ws>.

<sup>19</sup> He said, 'He has certainly wronged you by asking your ewe in addition to his ewes, and indeed many partners bully one another, except such as have faith and do righteous deeds, and few are they.' Then David knew that We had indeed tested him, whereat he pleaded with his Lord for forgiveness, and fell down prostrate and repented.

قَوْلُهُ تَعَالَى: " وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا وَأَنَابَ " أَيُّ خَرَّ  
سَاجِدًا، وَقَدْ يُعَبَّرُ عَنِ السُّجُودِ بِالرُّكُوعِ. قَالَ  
الشَّاعِرُ

فَخَرَّ عَلَى وَجْهِهِ رَاكِعًا ... وَتَابَ إِلَى اللَّهِ مِنْ  
كُلِّ ذَنْبٍ. قَالَ ابْنُ الْعَرَبِيِّ: لَا خِلَافَ بَيْنِ  
الْعُلَمَاءِ أَنَّ الْمُرَادَ بِالرُّكُوعِ هَا هُنَا السُّجُودُ، فَإِنَّ  
السُّجُودَ هُوَ الْمَيْلُ، وَالرُّكُوعُ هُوَ الْإِنْخِئَاءُ،  
وَأَحَدُهُمَا يَدْخُلُ عَلَى الْآخَرِ، وَلَكِنَّهُ قَدْ يَخْتَصُّ  
كُلَّ وَاحِدٍ بِهِيَّةً، ثُمَّ جَاءَ هَذَا عَلَى تَسْمِيَةِ  
أَحَدِهِمَا بِالْآخَرِ، فَسَيِّى السُّجُودُ رُكُوعًا. وَقَالَ  
الْمُهَذَّبِيُّ: وَكَانَ رُكُوعُهُمْ سُجُودًا.<sup>20</sup>

The verse above tells about Prophet Dawud having realized his mistake in deciding between two people who had a dispute; then he asked God for forgiveness (the worship of a servant to his Lord). The verse mentions the sentence *وَخَرَّ رَاكِعًا* which means *falling on the ground* in bowing, but Imam Qurtubi, in his interpretation, explains its meaning with the following sentence:

أَيُّ خَرَّ سَاجِدًا، وَقَدْ يُعَبَّرُ عَنِ السُّجُودِ  
بِالرُّكُوعِ.

*Falls on the ground in a state of prostration.* Furthermore, he emphasized that sometimes the word *ruku'* (bowing) is a substitute for *sujud* (prostration).

<sup>20</sup> <https://shamela.ws>.



M. Quraish Shihab explained various views of *mufassir* (commentators) about the meaning of prostration by quoting that: Imam Bukhari narrated that Imam Mujahid, one of the disciples of the Prophet's companions, Ibnu Abbas, once asked about the meaning of prostration in Surah Shad. He replied: "Didn't you read that God commanded the Prophet Muhammad to follow the example of the previous Prophets." This verse affirms that Prophet Dawud is one of his role models. Prophet Dawud prostrated, and the Prophet also prostrated. For this reason, Imam Malik judged that the verse above is one of the places where readers and listeners are encouraged to do *sujud-tilawah*. Imam Abu Hanifa also thinks so, but Imam Shafi'i disagrees with them.<sup>21</sup>

Based on these opinions, the writer concludes that bowing or prostration for the Ummah of the Prophet Muhammad is only appropriate as a symbol of devotion, respect, and worship of creatures to the creator. However, various forms of salute or honor, except bowing and prostration, can be performed according to customs and culture. These various respects are *sungkem* for Javanese traditions, for example, crawling for the courtiers in the royal tradition; shaking hands and kissing the hands—of chil-

dren to their parents, students (*santri*) to their teachers (*ustaz, kiai*); bowing or standing with bowed shoulders as seen by Chinese people; stand up straight with their heads down or stand up straight with their hands raised to the ceremonial master and the flag, etc.

## Islamic Law

*Law* is defined as a set of norms or rules that regulate human behavior, both unwritten such as customary law, and written law in legislation. These norms or regulations live in a society drawn up and enforced by the authorities. In the *Oxford dictionary*, as quoted by Muhammad Muslehuddin, the law is defined as "a collection of rules, both those originating from formal and customary rules, which are recognized by certain communities and nations, and these rules are binding on their members."<sup>22</sup>

While the definition of Islamic law is a set of rules or norms that are sourced from the arguments and become part of the Islamic religion. Allah and His Messenger as shari'a determine the formulation of Islamic law, the basis, and the legal framework. The established Islamic law regulates human relations with God and human relationships with them-

<sup>21</sup> M. Quraish Shihab, *Tafsir al-Misbah: Pesan Kesan dan Keserasian al-Qur'an*, Vol. 11 (Jakarta: Lentera Hati, 2021), 366.

<sup>22</sup> Muhammad Muslehuddin, *Filsafat Hukum Islam dan Pemikiran Orientalis: Studi Perbandingan Sistem Hukum Islam* (Yogyakarta: Tiara Wacana, 1997), 1.

selves, human relationships with other humans in society, and human relationships with objects and the natural environment around them.

The laws proclaimed in Islam consist of sharia and fiqh. Islamic law, categorized as sharia, does not require the existence of *ijtihad* by mujtahids because it already refers to the arguments of *muhkam*. Whereas in fiqh, as a product of *ijtihad* or *fuqaha* thought, it is necessary to have a strong *ijtihad* argument as a product of fiqh law. Therefore, the mujtahids also need to clarify a law. Furthermore, the legal products of fiqh are many and varied because of the different basis and *istinbath*,<sup>23</sup> so that Islamic law appeared in various madhhab.

According to *ushuliyyin*, Islamic law is defined by the word of God related to the rules of behavior of the *mukallaf* in the context of the demand or granting of the right to choose (*takhyir*) or the determination of something, whether it is a cause, condition, *mani'*, *sahih*, and *fasid*.<sup>24</sup> The judge in the Shariah law is the creator (Allah).

<sup>23</sup> Teuku Khairul Fazli, *Ushul Fikih Madzhab Syafi'i*, Cet. 1 (Jakarta: Rumah Fikih Publishing, 2018), 6.

<sup>24</sup> Tim Kodifikasi Anfa' Purna Siswa MHM Ponpes Lirboyo, *Tashilu Lubbil Ushul, Pengantar Memahami Lubbul Ushul, Syaikh al-Islam Zakariya al-Anshari* (Kediri: Lirboyo Press, 2015), 5.

## Theological Maddhab's View

For Ashariah, the law cannot be known except through revelation. Unlike the Mu'tazila, the law can be known by reason independently. This difference leads to *tahsin* (good claims) and *taqbiḥ* (bad claims), debated by the two madhabs.

Good or bad in question is an act that gets praise or humiliation in this world and gets a reward or punishment in the hereafter. According to Ashariah, both are shar'i. That is, to know it must go through the arguments of the shariah because if the ratio could reach it independently, surely people who lived before the time of the Prophet would be punished when they sinned, even though this was not the case. As Surah al-Isra' ([17]: 15) follows.

مَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ وَمَنْ لَّا فِئْتِمًا  
يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا وَلَا تَزِرُ وَازِرَةٌ وِزْرَ أُخْرَىٰ وَمَا كُنَّا  
مُعَذِّبِينَ حَتَّىٰ نَبْعَثَ رَسُولًا (15)

Whoever is guided is guided only for [the good of] his own soul, and whoever goes astray, goes astray only to its detriment. No bearer shall bear another's burden. We do not punish [any community] until We have sent [it] an apostle.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*, 283.



Meanwhile, according to the Mu'tazila, the ratio can differ between good and evil without revelation. Every action is an element of *maslahah* or *mafsadah* can be reached by rationality. Ratio serves to know that this is a command or prohibition of Allah because, for this madhhab, it must follow the values of virtue.<sup>26</sup>

According to the Sunnah experts, "good and bad is shar'i." Nevertheless, in defining the two, there are various opinions. According to *qaul ashah*, goodness is every commendable act based on the shari'ah, which includes *wajib* (obligatory) and *sunnah* (permissible). However, disgraceful acts are inherent in the haram law. While actions that are not commendable and not blameworthy are called *washitah*, which has the law of *sunnah*, *makruh*, and *khilaf al-aula*.

### Law in Religious Perspective

In religious perspective, laws are called *qanuns*. Salaf scholars define *qanun* as *kulliy* (comprehensive) rules that include the laws of *juz'iyyat* (parts). When the word *qanun* is mentioned together with the word *sharia*, it means a law made by humans to regulate life and relationships with other human beings, both individually, in society, and the state based on sharia (God's revelation). Meanwhile, *qanun* without sharia means a law based on *ra'yu*—a product of human thought.

<sup>26</sup> *Al-Qur'an dan Terjemahnya*, 283.

Indonesia has the 1945 constitution as the basis for the hierarchy of applicable laws (UUD 1945). Indonesia has decided many regulations and forced citizens to comply with these laws and regulations—as stated in the 1945 Constitution, Chapter X About Citizens, especially in Article 26 Paragraphs 1-2 and Article 27 paragraph 1. Furthermore, the amendment to the 1945 Constitution relating to state symbols are stated in Chapter XV about the Flag, Language, and State Emblem, as well as the National Anthem.

### Revealing the Meaning of Saluting the National Flag

Moreover, there is a need for a proportional study of the law to respect the national flag appropriately carried out at ceremonies or state activities in Indonesia.

People will instinctively have a sense of nationalism, a sense of belonging to the homeland where they were born, experience childhood, and become citizens of the country where they live and get protection. They must have an emotional feeling with their homeland because they have experience as humans, not robots or industrial machines. *Hubbul wathan min al-iman* became a concept of religious-nationalism as a form of expressed faith. For the citizen, one of the expressions of nationalism is honoring the national flag and singing

the national anthem *Indonesia Raya* in the national ceremony.

To strengthen nationalism, through formal education such as schools and madrasas, the government requires to hold a flag-saluting ceremony every Monday, based on:

1. Pancasila;
2. The 1945 Constitution (about the National Education System);
3. Presidential Instruction Number 14/1981 (about the order of the flag ceremony), and;
4. Instructions on detailed ceremony procedures as applicable nationally.

The flag ceremony is usually held in schools and madrasas every Monday morning, every 17<sup>th</sup>, and on certain national commemorative days such as the Anniversary of the Proclamation of the Republic of Indonesia, National Education Day, and celebrations of other national holidays. The flag ceremonies have six purposes, as stated in Article 3 of the Minister of National Education Number 22, 1018.

1. Strengthening the unity and integrity of the nation and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia;
2. Get used to being orderly and disciplined;
3. Improving leadership skills (leadership education);
4. Get used to cohesiveness, cooperation, and cooperation;

5. Cultivate a sense of responsibility;
6. Strengthen the spirit of nationalism and love for the nation.<sup>27</sup>

This study is to respond to the claims of some Islamic groups that campaign for the prohibition of saluting the national flag based on Khalid Al-Juraisiy's *Al-Fatawa al-Syari'iyah fi al-Masa'ili al-'Ashriyyah min Fatawa Ulama'i al-Balad al-Haram*. The fatwa states:

A Muslim is prohibited from saluting the flag and the national anthem. It includes *bid'ah* which must be denied, and because it was never done at the time of the Prophet Muhammad, nor at the time of al-Khulafa 'ar-Rasyidun *radiyal-lahu 'anhum*. This act is also contrary to the obligation and sincerity in perfecting tawhid to glorify the Allah alone. It leads to *shirk*, resembling the disbelievers (*kafir*), *taqlid* to them in a bad tradition and excessive to the leaders and its symbols, even though the Prophet Muhammad has forbidden us to imitate the disbelievers intentionally or unintentionally.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>27</sup> "6 Tujuan Upacara bendera Beserta Manfaatnya yang Diketahui," *Merdeka.com*. <https://merdeka.com/jateng/6-tujuan-upacara-bendera-beserta-manfaatnya-yang-perlu-diketahui-klm.html>, accessed August 20, 2021.

<sup>28</sup> "Hukum Menghormati Bendera dan Menyayikan Lagu Kebangsaan," <https://www.abumuslimsalafi.wordpress.com/2007/07/19/>

This fatwas and other often seem so easy to claim *bid'ah* or *haram* against an act that was never done at the time of the prophet; even tragically, they claim infidelity to the *ahlul qibla*. Because of this phenomenon, Abuya Sayyid Muhammad 'Alawi al-Maliki al-Hasani wrote a book entitled "Mafahim Yajibu an-Tushahhah." In the opening of the chapter "Awwal," he discusses *aqidah*.

التحذير من المجازفة بالتكفير  
يُخطئ كثير من الناس - أصلحهم الله -  
في فهم حقيقة الأسباب التي تخرج  
صاحبها عن دائرة الإسلام وتوجب  
عليه الحكم بالكفر، فتراهم يسارعون  
إلى الحكم على المسلم بالكفر لمجرد  
المخالفة، حتى لم يبق من المسلمين  
على وجه الأرض إلا القليل، ونحن  
نتلمس لهؤلاء العذر تحسیناً للظن،  
ونقول: لعلّ ...

There are so many mistakes most people (hopefully Allah corrects them) in understanding the essence that causes them to deviate from Islam and must be punished as unbelievers. So as you can see, they are in a hurry to justify Muslims with *kufr* just because of a difference of opinion until there are no Muslims left on this earth except

a few. And because of that, we are trying to explore their reasons and correct them with good prejudice, and I said: ...<sup>29</sup>

## Conclusion

From the discussion above, it can be concluded that saluting the national flag, as usually done by the Indonesian people in formal and other ceremonies, does not cause *shirk* or apostasy (*kafir*). It is because of the respect for the symbols of patriotism, and the state's greatness as stated in the constitution, while obeying the constitution is an obligation in religious law. The way of saluting the national flag is also not considered excessive respect (*al-ghulwu*), which can invalidate belief (*tawhid*) because it is different from bowing (*ruku'*) and prostration (*sujud*) of prayer that means the servitude of a believer/Muslim to Allah. Furthermore, respect for the flag is also not in the category of heresy (*bid'ah*) because it is not judged as a religious rule (*fi amrina hadza*) but as ethics and morals which lead to *tahsin* (good claims) and *taqbih* (bad claims) which is debated by the theological madhhab: Ashariah and Mu'tazila.

hukum-menghormati-bendera-dan-menyanikan-lagu-kebangsaan, accessed on August 12, 2021.

<sup>29</sup> Al-Sayyid Muhammad bin 'Alawi al-Maliki al-Hasani, *Mafahim Yajibu an-Tushahhah* (Hai'ah ash-Shofwah al-Malikiyyah, tt), 81.

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