

VALENTINE'S DAY CELEBRATION IN THE LIGHT OF THE *TASYABBUH* HADITH: AN ANALYSIS OF MOHAMMED ARKOUN'S THOUGHTAlfi Karomah¹, and Nasrulloh²¹ Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University of Malang, Malang, Indonesia² Maulana Malik Ibrahim State Islamic University of Malang, Malang, Indonesia**Corresponding Author:**

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Abstract

Globalization has brought Valentine's Day into Muslim societies, including Indonesia, sparking debates over its status in Islam. Classical scholars generally reject it as a form of *tasyabbuh* (imitation) of non-Muslims, while contemporary scholars view it as a neutral social practice. This study aims to analyze the hadith "*man tashabbaha bi qawmin fahuwa minhum*" through the perspective of Mohammed Arkoun. The research addresses two questions: how classical and contemporary scholars interpret the hadith on *tasyabbuh*, and how Arkoun's deconstructive approach can be applied to the context of Valentine's Day. Using a qualitative library research method, this study examines primary hadith sources and relevant scholarly works. The findings show that Arkoun's deconstruction emphasizes the historical and contextual reading of religious texts, so the prohibition of *tasyabbuh* is not absolute. From this perspective, Valentine's Day can be reinterpreted as a form of popular culture that Muslims may engage with by promoting Islamic ethical values such as compassion, solidarity, and moral responsibility, while rejecting negative aspects like promiscuity and hedonism. The novelty of this research lies in applying Arkoun's critical thought to hadith interpretation, offering a more open and contextual approach for Muslims in facing global cultural phenomena.

Keywords: Mohammed Arkoun, *Tasyabbuh*, Valentine

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INTRODUCTION

The phenomenon of globalization has opened spaces for increasingly intense interactions across cultures, religions, and nations through mass media, information technology, and rapid communication flows. Local cultures and religious traditions are now easily disseminated and adapted by other communities, even those with different religious backgrounds. One tradition that has undergone global transformation is the celebration of Valentine's Day. This celebration was originally rooted in Western Christian tradition, particularly in commemoration of Saint Valentine; however, over time, it has lost its religious dimension and transformed into a form of universal popular culture. (Tamam, 2023)

In the context of popular culture, Valentine's Day is understood more as an opportunity to express love, friendship, or simply to follow social trends driven by the entertainment industry and global capitalism. (Yusmiranti et al., 2021) The impact of this transformation is the spread of Valentine's Day celebrations to Muslim communities, including in Indonesia. Young Muslims are the most affected group, due to their exposure to global culture through the internet, social media, and modern lifestyles. This raises a religious dilemma: does celebrating Valentine's Day mean imitating non-Muslims, or is it simply following a neutral The controversy surrounding Valentine's Day celebrations among Muslims intensified when the hadith of the Prophet, "*Man tashabbaha bi qawmin fahuwa minhum*" (Whoever imitates a people is one of them), was used as a basis for rejecting the practice. The majority of classical scholars understood *tasyabbuh* as a strict prohibition against imitating the traditions and religious identities of non-Muslims, in order to preserve the purity of the faith and the uniqueness of Islamic identity. (Muzakki et al., 2023)

Therefore, Valentine's Day celebrations are often considered haram because they originate from non-Islamic traditions and have the potential to open the door to immoral behavior, such as promiscuous dating or wild parties. However, some contemporary scholars try to offer a more moderate view, arguing that Valentine's Day in the modern era has shifted to become a social culture that is not always related to religious rituals, so its ruling needs to be viewed more contextually. (Annibras, 2017)

This situation highlights the importance of reinterpreting the hadith on *tasyabbuh* to avoid erroneous generalizations. If all forms of global culture are regarded as *tasyabbuh*, Muslims risk falling into an exclusive and closed attitude, making it difficult to adapt to the progress of the times. In fact, there is a fundamental difference between *tasyabbuh* in matters of faith and worship which are principled and *tasyabbuh* in social culture, which is profane. Therefore, a new approach that is more contextual, critical, and relevant is needed to understand this hadith in addressing global cultural phenomena, including the celebration of Valentine's Day.

In this context, Mohammed Arkoun's thought becomes significant to explore. Arkoun is known as a contemporary Muslim thinker who offers a critique of Islamic reason through a deconstructive approach to religious texts. According to Arkoun, religious texts must be read within the framework of historicity, plurality of meaning, and openness to the development of the times. With such a framework of thought, the hadith on *tasyabbuh* can be understood not rigidly and normatively, but dynamically, in accordance with the current social context of the Muslim community. (Nugroho, 2019) Arkoun's thought provides room to distinguish between principled prohibitions aimed at preserving faith and the acceptance of profane cultural practices that do not contain religious dimensions (Syifa Urrahmi, 2024).

The study of Valentine's Day in light of the *tasyabbuh* hadith through the analysis of Mohammed Arkoun's thought is both relevant and important. On one hand, Muslims are required to maintain their Islamic identity and morality amid the currents of globalization. On the other hand, they must also be adaptive and critical in responding to global culture by embracing positive values such as love, solidarity, and respect for fellow human beings, while rejecting negative values such as promiscuity, hedonism, and excessive commercialization. Thus, this research is expected to contribute to the discourse of contemporary Islamic law in understanding global popular culture in a more proportional and contextual manner.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a qualitative method with a library research approach. The data were obtained from primary sources such as hadith collections, hadith commentaries, and the works of classical and contemporary scholars, while secondary data were derived from books, journals, and scholarly articles discussing Valentine's Day, *tasyabbuh*, and Mohammed Arkoun's thought. Data analysis was carried out using a descriptive-critical method through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. This approach aims to describe scholars' perspectives on the *tasyabbuh* hadith while reexamining its contextual meaning through Arkoun's framework of the critique of Islamic reason.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Origins and Transformation of Valentine's Day Asal-usul dan Transformasi

Valentine's Day has its roots in Western Christian tradition and is associated with Saint Valentine, a Catholic martyr in the 3rd century AD. February 14 was originally celebrated as a day of religious observance to commemorate the sacrifice of Saint Valentine, who was considered to have defended the values of love and sincerity. In its early stages, this celebration was clearly religious in nature because it was closely related to church liturgy and Christian spiritual practices. However, since the Middle Ages, the meaning of Valentine's Day has begun to shift. (Yusmiranti et al., 2021)

In Europe, particularly in England and France, February 14 is associated with the bird mating season, which is symbolically equated with the tradition of human love. This is where the tradition of exchanging poems, love letters, and small gifts among the community originated. In the 18th century, this celebration became increasingly popular through the custom of sending valentine cards in England, which then spread widely throughout the Western world. Since then, Valentine's Day has slowly changed from a religious ritual to a more cultural romantic and social tradition. (Ramdani & Kurniawan, 2020)

The change in the meaning of Valentine's Day cannot be separated from the influence of modernization. The development of the media, music, and film industries has contributed to Valentine's Day becoming a commercial event involving various products, from flowers, chocolates, greeting cards, to jewelry. The capitalist industry has turned Valentine's Day from a mere tradition into a lucrative market opportunity. As a result, the spiritual meaning that was once attached to this celebration has become increasingly blurred, replaced by consumerist logic and popular lifestyles. (Harahap, 2019)

The process of globalization has accelerated this transformation. Through the internet, social media, and digital culture, Valentine's Day has spread throughout the world and is no longer seen as a religious ritual, but rather as a global social trend. In many Muslim-majority countries, including Indonesia, Valentine's Day is perceived more as part of modern culture

than as a Western religious tradition. Even the younger generation often sees it as a moment to openly express affection, without considering its historical roots or the ideological values behind it. Research conducted at SMU Muhammadiyah IV Yogyakarta shows that some Muslim teenagers celebrate Valentine's Day, for example by giving each other gifts, flowers, or chocolate, even though their understanding of the origins and religious laws regarding Valentine's Day still varies greatly.

This phenomenon raises an important question: can Valentine's Day still be considered a practice of *tasyabbuh* in the religious sense, or is it merely a neutral cultural phenomenon? For some people, Valentine's Day is still seen as a form of imitation of non-Muslim traditions that should be avoided. However, for others, Valentine's Day is merely a contemporary social expression that is no longer related to its theological dimension. It is this debate that makes the issue of Valentine's Day relevant to be studied from the perspective of hadith imitation and modern thought.

Hadith Tasyabbuh in the perspective of classical and contemporary scholars

Linguistically, according to *al-Qāmūs al-Muḥīṭ*, the word *tasybīh* is a verbal noun (*maṣḍar*) derived from the verb *syabbaha* (شَبَّهَ), which means “to liken” or “to make something resemble something else.” In the science of *balāghah* (Arabic rhetoric), *tasybīh* refers to the act of connecting two things based on a shared attribute, with the condition that this attribute is stronger or more prominent in the *musyabbah bih* (the object of comparison) than in the *musyabbah* (the thing being compared). This definition provides a conceptual foundation that resemblance is not merely an external or superficial act but also involves a relational meaning that can influence one's perception, values, and inner orientation. (Al-Fayrūzābādī, 1987)

The hadith concerning the prohibition of *tasyabbuh* (imitation) has deep historical roots. Since the early period of Islam, the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) warned his followers not to imitate the customs of the Jews, Christians, or the polytheistic Arabs in matters of faith (*‘aqīdah*), worship (*‘ibādah*), and their distinctive religious symbols. One of the primary hadiths cited as a reference is the narration from Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), which reads: (Al-Sijistānī, 1990)

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

It was narrated to us by ‘Uthmān ibn Abī Shaybah, who reported from Abū al-Naẓr, who reported from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Thābit, who informed us from Ḥassān ibn ‘Aṭīyyah, from Abū Munīb al-Jurashī, from Ibn ‘Umar (may Allah be pleased with him), who said: The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, “Whoever imitates a people is one of them.”

This hadith was narrated by Abu Dawud in his *Sunan* (Hadith no. 4031) and also by Ahmad in his *Musnad*. (Hanbal, 2001) The majority of scholars classify this hadith as *hasan* (good), although there is a slight weakness in the narrator ‘Abd al-Raḥmān ibn Thābit. However, this weakness is compensated by supporting narrations (*shawāhid*) from other chains, making the hadith acceptable as valid evidence (*ḥujjah*). Imam al-Suyūfī included it in *al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḡhīr*, while al-Albānī graded it as *hasan* in *Irwā‘ al-Ghalīl*.

When connected to the Prophet's hadith, the prohibition of *tasyabbuh* is not merely a ban on imitating outward forms or symbols; rather, it is also a warning for Muslims not to internalize the meanings and values embedded in the distinctive practices of non-Muslim communities. From a *balāghah* (rhetorical) perspective, external resemblance can lead to inner affinity just as similarity in rhetorical *tashbīh* implies an association of ideas and meanings.

This point is emphasized by classical scholars such as Ibn Taymiyyah, who argued that external imitation serves as an entryway to emotional and intellectual inclinations that may erode a Muslim's faith and identity.

Therefore, many scholars have interpreted this hadith from two main perspectives: classical and contemporary. The majority of classical scholars view it as a strict prohibition against resembling the identity, symbols, or religious rituals of non-Muslims. The Prophet ﷺ cautioned that outward resemblance could lead to inner resemblance, as imitation often stems from admiration, which then develops into affection and attachment of the heart. Ibn Taymiyyah asserted that maintaining distinctiveness (*mukhālafah*) is a religious obligation because external imitation can influence internal belief.

Within the framework of Islamic jurisprudence, any means that could potentially lead to harm (*mafsadah*), even indirectly, must be avoided. Hence, Ibn Taymiyyah classified prohibited *tasyabbuh* into two primary forms: (1) intentional imitation of characteristics specific to non-Muslims, such as participating in Easter rituals; and (2) unintentional imitation, either of practices rooted in other religions (such as celebrating Christmas) or of general customs that merely coincide with non-Muslim practices where the latter is not considered forbidden. (Taymiyyah, 1992)

Contemporary scholars, however, offer a more flexible framework of discussion. Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, for instance, in his book *al-Ḥalāl wa al-Ḥarām fī al-Islām*, emphasizes that the prohibition of *tasyabbuh* should be limited to matters that are clearly religious symbols (*shī'ār*) of other faiths or that involve sinful behavior. He asserts that universal aspects related to social, cultural, or humanitarian domains such as technology, general clothing styles, or everyday forms of interaction do not automatically fall under the prohibition of *tasyabbuh*. (Al-Qardawi, 1994)

Similarly, Wahbah al-Zuhayli, in *al-Fiqh al-Islami wa Adillatuh*, explains that what is prohibited is imitation that undermines religious identity, whereas the adoption of neutral cultural elements that do not lead to violations of Islamic law is not considered blameworthy *tasyabbuh*. (Az-Zuhaili, 1985) This view affirms that the prohibition in the hadith "*man tashabbaha bi qawmin fahuwa minhum*" is not absolute but contextual, taking into account the objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-sharī'ah*) and the social realities of Muslim communities. (Al-Bu'ti, 1999)

Thus, the interpretation of *tasyabbuh* from linguistic, rhetorical (*balāghah*), and legal (*shar'ī*) perspectives indicates that the Prophet's prohibition was not limited to mere physical imitation but also concerned the potential internalization of the values and identities underlying such practices. From this standpoint, the discourse on *tasyabbuh* becomes relevant to be analyzed within the context of contemporary culture. One of the most debated phenomena in this regard is the celebration of Valentine's Day, which, although it has undergone secularization, still retains historical traces of its Western Christian origins.

In relation to the interpretation of the *tasyabbuh* hadith, it is also important to compare it with contemporary epistemological approaches to hadith studies. As emphasized by Nasrulloh, "the epistemology of knowledge must be renewed, deconstructed, and reconstructed, particularly in the study of hadith, which plays a significant role in the realm of Islamic law in responding to the complex dynamics of the ummah's problems." Accordingly, the interpretation of hadith should no longer be confined to merely repeating the rigid exegesis of classical scholars but should instead present new readings that are relevant to the current socio-historical context. (Nasrulloh, 2018)

From this perspective, Arkoun's approach to the *tasyabbuh* hadith linking it to the historicity of early Muslim identity becomes highly relevant. It aligns with the epistemological ideas of Muhammad Shahrur as discussed by Nasrulloh, who argues that hadith should be understood as the Prophet's *ijtihad* within a specific historical context rather than as an absolute and static text. (Nasrulloh, 2018) Thus, the prohibition of *tasyabbuh* can be seen not merely as a cultural restriction but as a historical strategy of early Muslims to preserve their identity one that must be reinterpreted in accordance with the needs of the modern era.

Deconstruction of the *Tasyabbuh* Hadith According to Mohammed Arkoun

Mohammed Arkoun employs deconstruction, inspired by Jacques Derrida, not to dismantle religious texts entirely, but as an epistemological critique followed by an effort at reconstruction. The purpose of this approach is to deconstruct the modes of thinking (*episteme* or reasoning) within the Islamic tradition that tend to freeze the meaning of religious texts, making interpretation static. (Tamam, 2023) In the context of the *tasyabbuh* hadith "*man tashabbaha bi qawmin fahuwa minhum*" deconstruction serves to reveal how a text originally produced within a specific socio-historical context during the Prophet's time was later solidified as a universal norm, assumed to be absolute and timeless, without due consideration of its historical circumstances. (Silalahi, 2024)

One of the key principles in Arkoun's methodology is distinguishing between the infinite Divine revelation and human interpretation, which is always bound by historical context. Within this framework, the *tasyabbuh* hadith can be understood as a historical response of the early Muslim community to construct their identity and differentiate themselves from other religions. However, when this hadith is frozen into a rule applied across all times, its historical nature is ignored, and it transforms into an ideological instrument. As a result, this hadith is often used to restrict social interaction and to close off the space for creativity among Muslims in the modern era. (Masthuriyah Sa'dan, 2023)

Arkoun argues that the mode of reasoning in classical Islamic thought tends to be logocentric, that is, centered on the text and treating it as a closed corpus. Within this framework, the *tasyabbuh* hadith has often been understood literally and dogmatically by religious authorities, leading to its extension into detailed prohibitions concerning clothing, food, and even certain celebrations. However, according to Arkoun, this hadith should instead be understood as part of the *discours prophétique* (prophetic discourse), which is fluid, contextual, and open to reinterpretation. (Arkoun, 1994) The ossification of meaning carried out by orthodox scholars throughout history has been more closely related to the political and social needs to assert boundaries of identity rather than stemming purely from the original prophetic message. (Andris Nurita Dan Masruhan, 2021)

The deconstruction proposed by Arkoun aims to dismantle these ideological layers and open space for the *impensé* the unthought dimension within religious texts. In the case of the *tasyabbuh* hadith, this process involves freeing the text from narrow interpretations that focus solely on external forms and redirecting it toward a more universal ethical message. Through this renewed reading, the hadith is no longer seen merely as a prohibition against cultural imitation but as a call to preserve the moral and spiritual identity of Islam while respecting the humanistic values that transcend cultures. This new interpretation renders the hadith relevant to contemporary pluralism and the dynamics of globalization that demand openness. (Haryanto, 2021)

After deconstruction, Arkoun emphasized the importance of reconstructing Islamic reasoning. He proposed reformulating critical, contextual reasoning that is open to developments over time. This reconstruction, when applied to the hadith *tasyabbuh*, means interpreting it not as a command for cultural isolation or absolute rejection of other traditions, but as an encouragement to maintain the spiritual integrity of Islam while remaining open to cultural interaction, knowledge transfer, and civilizational development. With this spirit, Muslims can learn from various cultures without losing their religious identity. (Solahudin, 2021)

Valentine's Day Celebrations in the Spotlight of Arkoun's Thought

Valentine's Day celebrations, which originated from Western traditions and Christian rituals, have now transformed into a massive global cultural phenomenon, penetrating various layers of society around the world, including Muslim communities. This fundamental shift has transformed Valentine's Day from a religious ritual into a universal cultural practice that emphasizes the expression of love. This is especially true among the younger generation, who see it as part of the trend of modernization and globalization. However, the introduction of this foreign cultural practice has drawn sharp criticism and controversy among traditional Islamic scholars and intellectuals, who tend to view the celebration as a form of *tasyabbuh* (imitation) of non-Muslims. This dominant normative view often equates Valentine's Day with non-Muslim identity in absolute terms, leaving no room for cultural interpretation. (Ramdani & Kurniawan, 2020)

Mohammed Arkoun offers a radically different lens of thought, using a deconstructive approach to analyze such issues. According to Arkoun, every sacred text, including the hadith on *tasyabbuh* which forms the main basis for prohibition, should not be frozen within the framework of limited classical interpretation. He emphasizes that religious texts must always be reread (recontextualized) taking into account the social and historical conditions that surround them. (Zakiy et al., 2024) If the prohibition on imitating non-believers during the time of the Prophet Muhammad SAW focused on specific aspects of worship, then the contemporary context of Valentine's Day celebrations has shifted significantly. Today, Valentine's Day more reflects a secular-global culture that celebrates universal emotions, namely love. (Ramdani & Kurniawan, 2020) Therefore, Arkoun argues that interpretations that automatically consider Valentine's Day as *tasyabbuh* are problematic and inadequate because they ignore the dynamics and changes in historical and cultural realities.

Within Arkoun's framework, the tendency to reject foreign popular culture entirely reflects what he calls closed reasoning (*raison close*). (Sovia, 2021) This closed reasoning is a characteristic of classical Islamic thinking that tends to be self-limiting and rejects critical dialogue with new social realities and developments of the times. In the context of global culture such as Valentine's Day, closed reasoning only sees the negative aspects and rejects the practice without conducting an in-depth analysis of the shift in its cultural meaning. Arkoun's criticism is very relevant here: the issue of Valentine's Day should be analyzed more comprehensively, not just answered with dogma or a rigid normative approach. For Arkoun, religious interpretation should prioritize open reasoning (*raison ouverte*) that is capable of embracing and accommodating social complexity and dynamics, including the ongoing evolution of popular culture.

Furthermore, Arkoun emphasizes the importance of distinguishing between the essential and the accessory dimensions of a culture. (Chabibi, 2022) Essentially, the purpose of the prohibition of *tasyabbuh* is to preserve the purity of faith (*'aqidah*) and worship (*'ibadah*)

from being contaminated by the rituals of other religions. However, if the modern celebration of Valentine’s Day has detached itself from its ritualistic roots and functions as an expression of universal culture, then rejecting it absolutely risks isolating Muslims from global socio-cultural realities. Arkoun would propose a path of reinterpretation in which Muslims are encouraged to adopt the positive dimensions of such universal practices such as the cultivation of love, compassion, and care while at the same time avoiding the accessory elements that explicitly contradict Islamic moral principles. In this way, his critique is not one of outright rejection but rather an offer of a more contextual methodology. (Andris Nurita & Masruhan, 2021)

Arkoun’s perspective on the importance of epistemological openness or what he calls an “open reason” provides a theoretical foundation for re-evaluating how Muslim communities engage with global cultural phenomena. While there remains a need to preserve moral integrity, there must also be space for critical engagement with popular culture so that Islam does not appear exclusive or antagonistic toward modernity. According to Arkoun, popular culture such as Valentine’s Day is part of the dynamic and ever-changing social imagination of humanity. Therefore, Muslims should not automatically view it as a threat to their identity but rather as a cultural arena that can be infused and enriched with Islamic ethical values, such as an emphasis on love grounded in responsibility and moral dignity.

In conclusion, through the lens of Arkoun’s thought, the celebration of Valentine’s Day can, in fact, serve as a catalyst for Muslims to engage in critical reflection on how religious texts interact with the modern world and global culture. (Silalahi, 2024) Arkoun’s deconstructive approach invites Muslims to move beyond superficial prohibitions. (Jailani & Nurkholis, 2021) By rereading the *tasyabbuh* hadith through a historical-critical lens, Muslims will be trained to carefully distinguish between cultural aspects that genuinely threaten the integrity of faith and those that are merely cultural or accessory in nature open to reinterpretation and adaptation in accordance with Islamic ethics. In this way, Islam can preserve its authenticity while remaining actively and constructively engaged with modern realities, rather than becoming trapped in overly rigid “permissible–forbidden” dichotomies.



Figure 1.1 Diagram of Arkoun’s Deconstructive Thought

Thus, Arkoun’s ideas emphasize that Islam should not be confined within rigid literal interpretations, but rather, a critical space must be opened so that the sacred texts remain relevant throughout time. This process is not merely about dismantling tradition but about filtering out the universal and essential values while contextualizing those that are cultural in

nature. The ultimate result is an Islamic reasoning that is open, inclusive, and ready to engage with science, global culture, and societal pluralism without losing its core identity.

Implications for Contemporary Muslim Identity

The most fundamental implication of Mohammed Arkoun's critical project for contemporary Muslim identity is the liberation of that identity from the grip of an exclusive or rigid *raison close* (closed reason). (Laila Sari Masyhur et al., 2025) confronted with foreign cultural phenomena such as Valentine's Day, a closed mode of reasoning tends to define Muslim identity defensively and reactively viewing every form of cultural interaction as a threat that must be completely rejected under the label of *tasyabbuh* (imitation of others). Arkoun urges Muslims to recognize that this defensive definition of identity is a product of historical interpretation that can and should be critically questioned (Nugroho, 2019) Through the application of deconstruction, Muslim identity is shifted from being merely an external list of what is lawful and unlawful to becoming an internal ethical consciousness capable of dialogue. The goal is to build an authentic identity that adheres firmly to moral principles while remaining adaptive to global dynamics.

The open reasoning advocated by Arkoun transforms the position of Muslims from mere imitators who fear imitation (*tasyabbuh*) into active cultural agents. Contemporary Muslim identity need not feel threatened by global popular culture; rather, such phenomena should be seen as open spaces that can be infused with Islamic values. Instead of prohibiting universal practices like the expression of affection the very essence of Valentine's Day Muslims are encouraged to embrace this essence and reinterpret it within the moral framework of Islam, such as love grounded in compassion and responsibility. Consequently, Muslim identity shifts from being passively resistant to becoming proactive and constructive, capable of giving new meaning to global cultural practices in accordance with the noble ethics of the religion. (Karomah & Hidayati, 2025)

Arkoun's thought requires contemporary Muslims to be critical toward the sources of religious knowledge, recognizing that religious interpretation is a human construction bound by historical context. (Laila Sari Masyhur et al., 2025) This awareness gives rise to internal pluralism within Muslim identity, where differences in interpretation and methodology are considered legitimate. Embracing universal celebrations within the framework of Islamic ethics does not signify a departure from identity but rather represents an intellectual maturity capable of navigating the complexities of modern life. Thus, Muslim identity is understood as an ongoing project that must continuously be reflected upon in response to the challenges of the times, ensuring that Islam remains relevant as an ethical force rather than a static heritage or historical artifact (Hidayat, 2024)

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that Valentine's Day, which originally stemmed from Western Christian tradition, has undergone a major transformation into a global popular culture phenomenon that is largely profane. Nevertheless, some Muslims still regard it as a form of *tasyabbuh* (imitation) of non-Muslims, thereby sparking debates over the legitimacy of this celebration from an Islamic perspective. The differing views between classical and contemporary scholars indicate that the understanding of the hadith "*man tashabbaha bi qawmin fahuwa minhum*" cannot be separated from its surrounding social and historical contexts.

Through Mohammed Arkoun's framework of deconstruction, the *tasyabbuh* hadith can be understood in a more critical and contextual manner. Arkoun distinguishes between the absolute Divine revelation and human interpretation, which is historical in nature; thus, the prohibition of *tasyabbuh* should not be interpreted rigidly or absolutely. In the modern context, Valentine's Day is better understood as a neutral form of popular culture that can be infused with Islamic ethical values such as love, responsibility, and solidarity. In this way, Muslims can preserve their identity without isolating themselves from global culture.

The implication of this reading is that Muslims need to cultivate an open mode of reasoning in engaging with global culture. Contemporary Muslim identity is not something static but rather an ongoing project that must continuously be reflected upon in response to the challenges of the times. With a critical and selective attitude, Muslims can adopt the positive values of popular culture while rejecting its negative aspects that contradict Islamic moral principles. This ensures that Islam remains relevant, contextual, and a living ethical force, rather than a frozen historical legacy.

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