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## UNDERSTANDING OF ULAMA (RELIGIOUS SCHOLARS) IN THE SALAFI METHODOLOGY IN DETERMINING THE CRITERIA FOR SPOUSE (CASE STUDY IN THE CITY OF BANJARMASIN)

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**Abstract:** The abundance of religious traditions in Banjarmasin often becomes a topic of controversy among the community. Some claim that these traditions are considered *bid'ah* or innovations in religion, lacking evidence or examples from the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), his companions, the *Tabi'in*, and the *Tabi'ut Tabi'in*. This research aims to understand how scholars following the Salafi methodology determine the criteria for choosing a spouse, the legal evidence supporting their understanding, and the standards of compatibility (*kafa'ah*) in marriage. The study is beneficial for recognizing changes in the phenomenon related to the determination of spouse criteria among the community. This empirical legal research focuses on Salafi scholars in the city of Banjarmasin as research subjects, utilizing interview methods to gather data on the scholars' understanding of determining spouse criteria. The findings of this research indicate that the understanding among the four informants is relatively similar, emphasizing the selection of a partner with a strong religious foundation, good character, and a shared Salafi methodology.

**Abstrak:** Banyaknya tradisi keagamaan di Banjarmasin sering menjadi polemik dikalangan masyarakat. Ada yang mengatakan tradisi-tradisi yang ada merupakan perbuatan *bid'ah* atau suatu perkara baru dalam agama yang tidak ada dalil atau contoh dari Rasulullah Shallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam. maupun para sahabat, *tabi'in*, dan *tabi'ut tabi'in*. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui bagaimana pemahaman ulama *manhaj salaf* dalam penentuan kriteria

pasangan hidup, dalil hukum dalam memberikan pemahaman, dan terkait standar ukuran *kafa'ah* dalam pernikahan. Penelitian ini bermanfaat untuk mengetahui adanya perubahan fenomena dikalangan masyarakat terkait penentuan kriteria pasangan hidup. Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian hukum empiris yang menjadikan ulama *manhaj salaf* di Kota Banjarmasin sebagai subjek penelitian dengan menggunakan metode wawancara yang menghasilkan data berupa pemahaman ulama *manhaj salaf* dalam penentuan kriteria pasangan hidup. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pemahaman empat informan relarif sama, yaitu menganjurkan untuk memilih pasangan yang mempunyai agama, akhlak yang baik dan memiliki paham keagamaan yang sama yaitu sama-sama ber*manhaj salaf*.



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## A. INTRODUCTION

Choosing a spouse is the first step before entering the realm of marriage. Everyone shares the same desire: to have a good spouse for both the worldly and the hereafter, as marriage is a lifelong commitment. Therefore, in selecting a spouse, one cannot be careless. Islam strongly encourages individuals to choose a prospective spouse with good morals, piety, and devotion to their faith.<sup>1</sup> Islam also advises constant prayer and supplication to Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala to be granted a righteous spouse, as depicted in Surah al-Furqan/19:74.

رَبَّنَا هَبْ لَنَا مِنْ أَزْوَاجِنَا وَذُرِّيَّاتِنَا قُرَّةَ أَعْيُنٍ وَاجْعَلْنَا لِلْمُتَّقِينَ إِمَامًا

"Our Lord, grant us from among our wives and offspring comfort to our eyes and make us an example for the righteous." (Q.S. al-Furqon/19:74)

In determining a spouse, it is recommended to choose someone of similar status, compatibility, and equality. While not mandatory, this aims to achieve harmony in marital life and prevent conflicts that may lead to divorce.

Banjarmasin is one of the cities in South Kalimantan, where the majority of the population, reaching 667,489<sup>2</sup> in 2022, adheres to Islam. With a considerable Muslim population, it is possible that there is diversity in religious

<sup>1</sup> Ukasyah Abdul Mannan At-Thibi, *Pendamping Hidup*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Azzam, 2001), pp. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Badan Pusat Statistik Kota Banjarmasin <https://banjarmasinkota.bps.go.id/indicator/12/8/1/jumlah-penduduk.html>. Accessed on October 26, 2023. 16.36 PM.

perspectives, including the Salafi school of thought. Generally, the Salafi ideology focuses on purifying Islam from two main issues: shirk (associating partners with Allah) and *bid'ah* (innovation in religious practices).<sup>3</sup>

There are various religious traditions practiced by the people of Banjarmasin, such as Maulid (celebration of the Prophet's birthday), Haul (commemoration of a saint's death anniversary), Tahlil (recitation of prayers), and others. These traditions often spark debates within the community, with some considering celebrations like *Maulid* and *Tahlil* as innovations (*bid'ah*)<sup>4</sup> without clear evidence or examples from the Prophet Muhammad Shallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam. or his companions. Salafi scholars consistently warn against engaging in *bid'ah* and advise avoiding gatherings of those who promote innovation in religious practices. Associating with such individuals may lead to developing affection towards them, despite Allah's command to detest and oppose them. Those who participate in gatherings of innovators are seen as violating Allah's command and face severe consequences.<sup>5</sup>

## B. METHODS

This study is an empirical legal research that utilizes field data as the primary source, such as the results of direct interviews conducted in the field.<sup>6</sup> It is termed empirical legal research because the author investigates to directly understand how scholars in the Salafi methodology provide guidance to followers of the Salafi methodology regarding the process of selecting a spouse using interview methods. The research results will be analyzed using theories related to a field incident through qualitative analysis and interpretation of results, which will yield descriptive analytical data.<sup>7</sup>

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Zainal Abidin dan Yulia Hafizah, *Conflict and Integration In The Salafi-Wahabi Purification Movement In South Kalimantan*, Jurnal Ilmiah Agama dan Sosial Budaya (2019), 191-201.

<sup>4</sup> Hammud bin Abdullah al-Mathar, *Ensiklopedia Bid'ah* (Jakarta: Darul Haq, 2007), p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Yazid bin Abdul Qadir Jawas, *Syarah 'Aqidah Ahlus Sunnah wal Jama'ah*, (Jakarta: Pustaka Imam Syafi'I, 2006), pp. 515-533.

<sup>6</sup> Bambang Sunggono, *Metodelogi Penelitian Hukum* (Jakarta: PT Raja Grafindo Persada, 2003), pp. 43.

<sup>7</sup> Muhaimin, *Metode Penelitian Hukum* (Mataram: UPT Mataram University Press, 2020), pp. 105.

## **Understanding Of Ulama (Religious Shcolars) In The Salafi Methodology In Determining The Criteria For Spouse : A Case Study In The City Of Banjarmasin.**

In this research, the informants are four scholars of the Salaf methodology who typically participate in discussions in the city of Banjarmasin. They are Ustadz Khairullah Anwar Luthfi, Lc., Muhammad Hafizd Anshari, Lc., Arif Usman Anugraha, Lc., and Muhammad, Lc.

The first informant is Ustadz Khairullah Anwar Luthfi, Lc. In determining the criteria for a spouse, he explains that attention should be given to religion and character. The measure of someone's religious goodness is their regular attendance at congregational prayers in the mosque, as stated by the Prophet Muhammad, Shallallahu 'alaihi wa sallam:

إِذَا رَأَيْتُمُ الرَّجُلَ يَعْتَادُ الْمَسَاجِدَ فَاشْهَدُوا لَهُ بِالْإِيمَانِ قَالَ اللَّهُ : إِنَّمَا يَغْمُرُ مَسَاجِدَ اللَّهِ مَنْ آمَنَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ

"If you see a man regularly attending the mosques, bear witness that he truly has faith. Allah, the Almighty, says: "The mosques of Allah are only to be maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day." (Hadith narrated by Tirmidhi)

Furthermore, the measure of someone's good character, as stated by the informant, is based on the opinions of Umar bin Khattab. It includes their interactions during travels, business transactions, and behavior at home. And "manhaj" (methodology) is equality in understanding religious doctrines.

The second informant is Ustadz Muhammad Hafizd Anshari, Lc. In determining the criteria for a spouse, he referring to hadith:

تُنْكَحُ الْمَرْأَةُ لِأَرْبَعٍ، لِمَالِهَا، وَلِحَسَابِهَا وَلِجَمَالِهَا، وَلِإِدِينِهَا، فَظْفَرِ بِذَاتِ الدِّينِ تَرَبَّتْ يَدَاكَ

"A woman is married for four reasons: her wealth, her family status, her beauty, and her religion. Therefore, choose the one with religion; you will prosper."

The informant expresses the opinion that the mentioned hadith is general in nature and applies to both men and women when determining the criteria for a spouse. The informant elaborates on several points. If a woman is married for her wealth, there is a possibility that the wealth or prosperity may disappear over time. If it is for her lineage, it is uncertain whether she comes

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from a noble lineage. If it is for her beauty, beauty is temporary and may fade over time. However, marrying someone for their religion is considered fortunate. This is because if someone is married for their religious commitment, the three aspects mentioned earlier (wealth, lineage, and beauty) can be found in the goodness of the person's religion. Someone with strong religious values is less likely to become arrogant about their wealth, feel superior and degrade their spouse, be proud of their noble lineage, or be conceited about their beauty.

The informant also suggests that the goodness of someone's religion in determining the criteria for a spouse can be observed through three aspects. Firstly, their relationship with Allah Subhanahu wa ta'ala, secondly, their relationship with fellow beings, and thirdly, their methodology (*manhaj*). Their relationship with Allah can be assessed through their religious practices such as prayer, fasting, and others. Their relationship with fellow beings refers to how they behave towards parents, friends, others, and even animals. The most crucial aspect is having a similar methodology (*manhaj*) because forming a family aims to live a peaceful and harmonious life without disputes. Therefore, seeking a partner with a similar Salafi methodology helps minimize disagreements about religious understanding within the household.

The third informant is Ustadz Arif Usman Anugraha, Lc. he believes that experts in innovation (*bid'ah*) can be divided into two categories: those who pioneer or specialize in innovative activities, such as scholars and experts, and lay individuals who simply follow such activities. The informant provides an explanation about the recommendation to avoid the gatherings of the innovators. It is advised to stay away from the gatherings of those innovators who are considered experts, as their influence can incline hearts towards their actions. However, sitting in gatherings with lay individuals who follow innovations is considered permissible.

The informant perspective is that marrying an expert in innovation, especially if the difference lies in the methodology related to creed (*aqidah*) that may lead to disbelief, is considered haram (prohibited). If the difference in methodology is limited to ritual practices, it may be acceptable, but the

informant strongly recommends seeking a partner who shares the same Salafi methodology to avoid any negative influence.

In supporting their opinion, the informant presented evidence in the form of hadiths:

إِذَا تَزَوَّجَ الْعَبْدُ فَقَدْ اسْتَكْمَلَ نِصْفَ الدِّينِ فَلْيَتَّقِ اللَّهَ فِي النِّصْفِ الْبَاقِي

"When someone gets married, it means they have completed half of their religion. So, let them fear Allah for the remaining half." (Hadith narrated by Baihaqi).

تُنكح المرأة لأربع، لِمَالِهَا، وَلِحَسَابِهَا وَلِجَمَالِهَا، وَلِيَدِينِهَا، فَظَفَرِ بِذَاتِ الدِّينِ تَرَبُّثٌ يَدَاكَ

"A woman is married for four reasons: her wealth, her family status, her beauty, and her religion. Therefore, choose the one with religion; you will prosper."

إِذَا جَاءَكُمْ مِنْ تَرْضَوْنَ دِينَهُ وَخُلُقَهُ فَأَنْكِحُوهُ ، إِلَّا تَفْعَلُوا تَكُنْ فِتْنَةٌ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَفَسَادٌ

"If there comes to you a man whose religion and character you are pleased with, then marry him. If you do not do so, there will be slander and widespread corruption on the earth."

The criteria that can serve as benchmarks in determining a husband are religion, character, a sense of responsibility, and leadership qualities in leading the household as the head of the family.

"Kafa'ah" is also an aspect that needs attention when choosing a spouse. The equality referred to by the informant is the similarity in terms of religion and lineage. In terms of religion, it means the practice of religion, for example, a man who is devoutly religious is not encouraged to marry a woman who is not inclined towards religious practices. And in terms of lineage, for example, a man of noble descent marrying a woman of working-class lineage is not recommended. Therefore, it is recommended to seek a spouse who is equal so that the purpose of the marriage can proceed as desired."

The fourth informant is Ustadz Muhammad, Lc. the opinion is when determining the criteria for a spouse, what needs to be considered is the similarity in understanding of religion. The informant does not insist that

individuals following the Salafi methodology must marry someone from the same Salafi background. This is because a person not adhering to the Salafi methodology can still be considered *ahlussunnah wal jama'ah* (people of the Sunnah and the community) as long as they do not engage in anything that nullifies their declaration of faith. However, the informant emphasizes that when deciding on the criteria for a spouse, the crucial factor is the understanding of religion.

Informant states that marriage is a lifelong worship, aiming to seek peace and tranquility, as mentioned in the Quran, Surah ar-Rum (30:21).

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ

"And of His signs is that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who give thought."

The informant quoted several legal proofs as references in determining the criteria for a spouse, including:

الرَّجُلُ عَلَى دِينِ خَلِيلِهِ فَلْيَنْظُرْ أَحَدُكُمْ مَنْ يُخَالِلُ

"A person is on the religion of his companion. Therefore, one of you should look at whom he befriends." (Narrated by Tirmidhi and Abu Dawud)

تُنكح المرأة لأربع، لِمَالِهَا، وَلِحَسَابِهَا وَلِجَمَالِهَا، وَلِبِدِينِهَا، فَظُفِرَ بِدَاتِ الدِّينِ تَرَبَّتْ يَدَاكَ

"A woman is married for four reasons: her wealth, her family status, her beauty, and her religion. Therefore, choose the one with religion; you will prosper."

الْحَبِيبَاتُ لِلْحَبِيبِينَ وَالْحَبِيبَاتُ لِلْحَبِيبَاتِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ ؕ أُولَٰئِكَ مُبَرَّءُونَ مِمَّا يَقُولُونَ ؕ لَهُمْ

مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ

"Corrupt women are for corrupt men, and corrupt men are for corrupt women; and good women are for good men, and good men are for good women. Those are declared innocent of what people say. For them is forgiveness and noble provision." (Q.S an-Nur/18:26)

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From the various legal proofs mentioned above, the informant concludes that determining the criteria for a spouse should be based on religious understanding to attain happiness in both this world and the hereafter. This is because true happiness cannot be achieved when there are differences in understanding. The informant also states that it is permissible to marry someone with a different methodology (*manhaj*) if the difference is limited to jurisprudential matters (*fiqh*). However, if the difference in methodology involves differences in creed (*aqidah*), the informant does not permit it.

Regarding the concept of "kafa'ah" (compatibility), the informant expresses the opinion that the limits of compatibility can be observed in worldly aspects such as lineage (*nasab*) and social status. Lineage refers to descent, for example, an Arab person should not marry a non-Arab (Persian), and social status implies that the child of a tailor should not marry the child of an official.

In general, several informants who participated agree that when providing guidance on determining the criteria for a spouse, the key considerations should be the person's religion and character. This is not different from the criteria held by the general public. However, one additional criterion was identified by the writer during the interview process, namely, informants emphasized that besides religion and character, it is also important to choose a potential partner based on their religious methodology or "*manhaj*." They stress to their followers the importance of selecting a partner with similar religious understanding criteria.

The author analyzes the understanding of Salafi scholars in providing guidance to their followers by introducing one additional important criterion: similarity in religious understanding. However, the author did not find such a recommendation either in positive law or in Islamic law, represented by the Quran and Sunnah. The reason behind this is that achieving the goals of marriage requires both vision and mission alignment in building a family. Therefore, an individual should seek a partner who aligns with their religious beliefs to ensure compatibility in forming a household.

It is essential to understand that religious beliefs constitute a doctrine that can influence the thoughts, temperament, and character of individuals who



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either listen to or study them. The author observes that individuals adhering to the Salafi ideology tend to be more obedient and submissive in following the guidance of Salafi scholars, both in terms of commands and prohibitions. They show a preference for Salafi scholars and sometimes reject knowledge or refrain from acquiring it if it doesn't come from Salafi scholars. For instance, when encountering a religious teaching, they may seek validation or verify its correctness by consulting Salafi scholars due to concerns about engaging in innovations (*bid'ah*).

From various criteria regarding "kafa'ah" mentioned by the informants, their explanations are almost similar to what is described in the theoretical framework. Some prioritize one aspect among several. In terms of religion, they place it in the first position, followed by character, lineage, and social status. The informants state that equality in religion refers to a religious understanding that encompasses both the level of knowledge and practice.

Therefore, based on the writer's analysis, similarity in religious methodology or equality in religious understanding becomes a new criterion in the standard of "kafa'ah." This can be one of the aspects to be considered in determining the criteria for a spouse and can contribute to the harmony within a marriage.

#### **D. CONCLUSIONS**

In determining the criteria for a spouse, the guidance from Salafi scholars generally aligns, emphasizing aspects such as religion, character, and methodology (*manhaj*). Theoretically, the writer did not find that similarity in religious understanding is explicitly stated as a formal requirement for marriage. The informants also do not explicitly mention it as a requirement but rather as a factor that can contribute to the harmony within a marriage, aligning with the goals of marriage.

The legal evidence used in providing guidance includes several hadiths concerning how to assess the goodness or badness of someone's religion and character.

"Kafa'ah" can be examined from two aspects: worldly and religious. Worldly "kafa'ah" involves lineage (*nasab*) and social status. Religious "kafa'ah"

pertains to equality in religious understanding, encompassing both knowledge and practice.

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