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Tunkaḥu al-Mar'atu li Arba': Functional Reception of the Hadith on Soulmate Criteria Among Married Couples in Coastal Sumatra

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Abstract: This research aims to explore how married couples perceive the hadith on soulmate qualifications. According to this hadith, the ideal criteria for a soulmate include wealth, lineage, beauty, and religion, which together contribute to a harmonious family life. The study employs qualitative data analysis, gathering data from various groups: prospective married couples, couples who have been married for 10, 20, and 30 years, as well as divorced couples. Additionally, it utilizes information from lectures by religious counsellors (*penyuluh agama*). The research shows that the interpretation of the hadith on soulmate qualifications has evolved dynamically since the introduction of Islam in the region in the early 17th century. Religious leaders (*tokoh agama*) and traditional leaders (*tokoh adat*), along with religious counsellors, have played a significant role in this transmission. People interpret the hadith in diverse ways. Couples who marry young initially focus on wealth, but as they age, their focus shifts to serenity. Similarly, their focus changes from physical beauty to inner beauty over time. Generally, couples view an ideal mate as someone who can maintain a lasting household, provide offspring, and uphold honour. The findings suggest that couples' understanding of religious texts grows deeper as their marriage matures.

Keywords: Functional reception of hadith; Soulmate qualifications; maintaining family continuity; enhancing lineage; and elevating the family's social status.

Abstrak: *Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengungkap resepsi pasangan suami isteri (pasutri) terhadap hadis kualifikasi jodoh. Hadis ini menginformasikan harta, keturunan, kecantikan dan agama sebagai kriteria ideal yang mengantarkan mereka menjadi keluarga sakinah. Penelitian ini menggunakan analisis data kualitatif dengan menggali data dari lapangan. Data pertama diperoleh dari calon pasangan suami isteri (pasutri), pasutri dengan masa pernikahan 10, 20, 30 tahun, serta pasutri yang telah bercerai. Selain itu, penulis juga menggunakan data ceramah penyuluh agama di lapangan. Penelitian ini membuktikan bahwa transmisi hadis tentang kualifikasi jodoh terjadi secara dinamis seiring dengan masuknya Islam di wilayah tersebut awal abad ke-17. Dalam hal ini, tokoh agama dan adat serta penyuluh agama (penghulu) berperan penting. Masyarakat memaknai hadis tersebut beragam. Pasutri dengan umur pernikahan masih muda berorientasi kepada harta dan berubah kepada ketenangan di usia senja seiring dengan bertambahnya umur pernikahan mereka. Demikian juga dari orientasi kecantikan fisik hingga kecantikan hati. Umumnya mereka memaknai jodoh yang ideal adalah yang dapat menghadirkan rumah tangga yang langgeng dengan keturunan serta kehormatan terpelihara. Temuan ini membuktikan bahwa pemahaman teks agama pasutri berbanding lurus dengan usia perkawaninan mereka.*

Kata Kunci: *Resepsi fungsional hadis; kualifikasi jodoh; kelanggenan keluarga; memperbaiki keturunan; meningkatkan stratifikasi social*

INTRODUCTION

One aspect of researching religious texts, such as hadith, is examining their informative and performative functions. The informative function provides insight into the content of the text, while the performative function influences societal beliefs and behaviours. The transmission and transformation of sacred texts such as hadith can be analysed through social reception theory(S. K. Dewi, 2017). In Muslim society, one prominent example is the hadith about soulmate qualifications, which is interpreted in various ways over time. As individuals progress through different stages of marriage, their understanding of this hadith evolves. This research focuses on how communities interpret a hadith and how it affects their daily actions.

Previous studies on community reception of hadith include Ahmadi's research on the *Jamaah Tareqat Shiddiqiyyah* and *Majelis Sholawat* communities, where hadith is integral to their rituals, viewed as sacred, and recited for mercy (*rahmat*), blessings (*berkah*), and ease (*yassarah*)(Ahmadi, 2020). Wendry studied the *surau* community in Padang Pariaman, examining their practice of *mamakiah*, motivated by their understanding of the Quran and hadith about almsgiving (Wendry & Chalida, 2017). Other related studies have been conducted by Maqom (Maqom, 2020), Rafi'i etl al (Rafi'i & Qudsy, 2020), Mustofa (Mustofa, 2019), Rouhullah (Rouhullah, 2021), Muhammad Alwi HS (Alwi, 2019), Sapta Wahyu Nugroho (Nugroho, 2022), Syahidil Mubarik (Mubarik, 2021), Ihsan Nurmansyah (Nurmansyah, 2019) and Muhammad Ragil Hasan (Hasan, 2022).

Research on mates and married couples has been conducted by several researchers. Riza explored the *al-muashirah* manuscript, focusing on the preferences of Javanese, Sundanese, and Minang millennials when choosing partners. Each community had different responses to physical appearance: the Sundanese preferred attractive and handsome partners; the Minang focused on posture and physical traits; and the Javanese had no particular preferences. For men, the ideal partner is a polite woman, reflected in her clothing, language, and behavior, and preferably from a good family background. However, some men are flexible and accept candidates from broken homes or families with criminal records. Among the three communities, only the Minang community is unwilling to marry a widow (Yulfira Riza, 2020).

Chadijah focused on the concept of managing a family of *sakinah* (harmonious and tranquil), identifying factors that contribute to such a family. She argued that a *sakinah* family is built on a loving relationship between husband and wife, characterized by pure intentions, openness, politeness, wisdom, effective communication, deliberation, tolerance, forgiveness, fairness, and patience. Gratitude for the family's circumstances is also crucial (Chadijah, 2018). Related work has been done by Arif Sugitanata (Sugitanata, 2020), Anisa Kumala Masjhadi and Yulistin Tresnawaty (Kumala & Tresnawaty, 2019), Abdul Kholik (Kholik, 2019) and Mahmud Huda and Thaif (Huda & Thoif, 2016).

Meanwhile, Mustaqim et al (Mustaqim et al., 2021), Budiman et al (Aris et al., 2017), Carsono (Carsono, 2021), Al Faruq (Faruq, 2019), Khairi et al (Khairi et al., 2020), Karim (Karim, 2020), Qamaria et al (Qamaria et al., 2021), Dewi (L. K. Dewi, 2019), and Iskandar (Iskandar, 2017) focus more on premarital course management for prospective brides and grooms. They argue that counseling or courses for couples about to marry are vital efforts to foster *sakinah* families and reduce divorce rates. These educational programs aim to equip couples with the knowledge, understanding, and skills necessary for building a stable household. Couples are encouraged to approach and resolve family issues wisely. Effective

implementation of these courses positively impacts family life, and the material needs to be engaging and easily comprehensible for the participants.

This paper examines how the hadith on soulmate qualifications is received and understood by various couples in the coastal areas of Indonesia, specifically the South Coast of West Sumatra. The first focus is on the historicity of Islam in the local community, particularly the transmission process of Islamic teachings, including the hadith on soulmate qualifications, to the region. The second aspect is how local married couples receive this hadith. Lastly, the paper looks at the motivations and interpretations of each partner. The research posits that the understanding of a hadith varies among married couples depending on the length of their marriage.

METHOD

This research employs qualitative methods, gathering data directly from the field. Field research involves selecting specific locations to investigate particular phenomena occurring there (Abdurrahman, 2006). This approach allows researchers to descriptively capture events or situations that are significant in society, providing a detailed picture of the incident (MA, 1995). The study focuses on the natural socio-cultural conditions of the community as its main discussion point (Sugiyono, 2017). The research was conducted in Sutera District (*Kecamatan*), Pesisir Selatan Regency (*Kabupaten*), chosen because this area preserves religious values embedded in their customs and has a densely populated, highly mobile community.

The primary sources of information for this research are the residents of Sutera District, particularly married couples. The main data are collected through in-depth interviews with three couples from each stage of marriage: prospective brides and grooms, couples married for 10 years, 20 years, and over 30 years, as well as divorced couples. Additional data is gathered from five *penghulu* (a village-level state-appointed religious official), and *penyuluh agama* (religious counselors) in Pesisir Selatan Regency. The research also includes documentation techniques to collect data related to divorce lawsuits, divorce records from religious courts, and family consultation data from the Religious Affairs Office in Sutera District. The collected data are organized and selected based on the research objectives. The data are then interpreted and analyzed by connecting various pieces of information to draw conclusions (Kaelan, 2010).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Tunkaḥu al-Mar'atu Li Arba'in: Transmission of Text to Context

This section explores the historical connection between the arrival of Islam in Sutera District, Pesisir Selatan Regency, and the community's understanding of the Prophet's hadith texts. Islam is believed to have entered the region around 1616 AD, as evidenced by the establishment and development of the Inderapura Kingdom during that year. This is further supported by a letter from Sultan Muhammadsyah, the king of Inderapura, to the Kerinci Kingdom, which included the phrase "*Allah subhanahu wata'ala*" (Sudarman et al., 2020).

Islam continued to flourish in the Inderapura Kingdom. In 1867 AD, Tuangku Marah Muhammad Arifin officially built the first mosque, named the Palupuh Mosque, constructed with woven bamboo walls and floors. In 1881 AD, Regent Marah Muhammad

Bakhi Sultan Firman Syah Tuanku Baliduang relocated and renovated the mosque, renaming it the *Masjid Agung Inderapura* (Grand Mosque of Inderapura) (Agency, n.d.).

The influence of Islam spread to Sutera District, leading to rapid religious development. According to the Ministry of Religion's Mosque Information System (*Sistem Informasi Masjid/Simas*), there are currently 50 mosques and 93 *musholla* in the area. Various religious organizations such as Nahdhatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah, and Persatuan Tarbiyah Islamiyah have also emerged. In terms of religious beliefs, the community includes followers of *Ahlussunnah wal Jama'ah* (Aswaja), Tarekat, Salafi, and others (*Data Masjid*, n.d.). This historical data indicates that the initial Islamic authority in the region was established by the Inderapura Kingdom. Traditional leaders (*pemangku adat*) and religious figures (*tokoh agama*) played a crucial role in the spread of Islam, contributing to its rapid development in Sutera District, Pesisir Selatan Regency.

According to Bagindo, assimilation between local culture and Islam has been occurring for a long time. This connection is evident in the structure of traditional leadership, which includes roles such as *datuk, manti, katik,* and *imam*. *Katik* and *Imam* serve as religious scholars who teach and educate children, nephews, and relatives about Islamic matters, including the qualifications for a soul mate based on the Prophet's hadith (J. Bagindo Ibrahim, personal communication, April 2, 2023). This integration is also reflected in the religious advice given by traditional leaders, as follows:

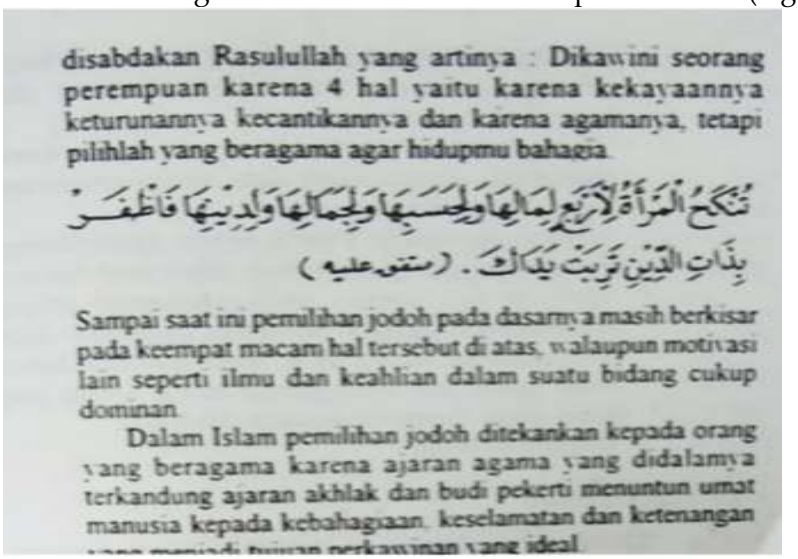
> " Religion regulates how to choose a partner. The Prophet said in his hadith:
>
> تنكح المرأة لأربع لمالها ولحسبها و لجمالها ولدينها فاظفر بذات الدين تربت يداك
>
> Artinya bahwa wanita itu dinikahi berdasarkan empat sebab, *pertamo karano hartanyo, artinyo caliek pekerjaan calon menantu, ini perintah nabi karano erat kaitannyo yo tanggungjawab sebagai kapalo keluarga. Kaduo, karano keturunannyo, artinyo ibarat mancari bibit cari dari rumpun yang elok karano anak adalah fotocopy orangtuonyo. Katigo, karano cantik, artinyo tidak hanyo elok fisiknyo sajo namun sampai kapado elok pi'i parangainyo. Kaampek, karano agamonyo, artinyo urang yang baagamo itu identik dengan urang elok utamokan agamo hidup akan bahagia*.
>
> (Meaning that a woman may be married for four reasons: firstly, her wealth, which involves considering the potential mate's occupation as per the Prophet's guidance, as it is closely tied to their role as the family's leader. Secondly, her lineage, which means seeking qualities akin to those of a good family's lineage, as children often reflect their parents' traits. Thirdly, her beauty, which encompasses not just physical appearance but also good character. Fourthly, her religion indicating that individuals who adhere to religious teachings are typically regarded as virtuous. Therefore, try to get one who is religious, as it leads to a happier life)"(A. K. Malin Mandaro, personal communication, December 7, 2022).

This description elucidates the process of disseminating this hadith within society. The historical context provided illustrates the pivotal role of traditional leaders and religious figures in popularizing the hadith among the Sutera community. Traditional meeting halls (*balai adat*), mosques, *musholla*, and other similar venues serve as supporting platforms for spreading this hadith to the wider population. This dissemination effort is extensive, to the extent that the criteria for a spouse outlined in the hadith have become integral considerations within society.

The endeavors of traditional leaders and religious figures have garnered recognition from the government. Institutionally, this hadith has been formally recognized and

incorporated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs through a legal process. This process was initiated with the launch of a national campaign by Mr. BJ Habibie, President of the Republic of Indonesia, aimed at combating HIV/AIDS by promoting values of faith, devotion, and noble morals. Subsequently, Decree of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia Number 3 of 1999 and Decree of the Director General of Islamic Community Guidance and Hajj Affairs, number D/7/1999, were issued (Agama, 2004).

The authority in the transmission process of the hadith is entrusted to the *penghulu*, as specified in Regulation of the Minister of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia number 16 of 2021. This regulation delineates the functional position of the *penghulu*, emphasizing their role as marriage registrars or officers tasked with providing services and guidance on marriage or reconciliation, as well as leadership development and guidance within the Islamic community (*Produk Hukum | JDIH Kemenag*, n.d.). Additionally, an educational module for the development of a *sakinah* family was introduced, with one of the teaching materials focusing on the hadith on soulmate qualifications (Agama RI, 2003).



disabdakan Rasulullah yang artinya : Dikawini seorang perempuan karena 4 hal yaitu karena kekayaannya keturunannya kecantikannya dan karena agamanya, tetapi pilihlah yang beragama agar hidupmu bahagia

تُنْكَحُ الْمَرْأَةُ لِأَرْبَعٍ لِمَالِهَا وَلِحَسَبِهَا وَلِجَمَالِهَا وَلِدِيْنِهَا فَاظْفَرْ بِذَاتِ الدِّيْنِ تَرِبَتْ يَدَاكَ . (متفق عليه)

Sampai saat ini pemilihan jodoh pada dasarnya masih berkisar pada keempat macam hal tersebut di atas, walaupun motivasi lain seperti ilmu dan keahlian dalam suatu bidang cukup dominan.

Dalam Islam pemilihan jodoh ditekankan kepada orang yang beragama karena ajaran agama yang didalamnya terkandung ajaran akhlak dan budi pekerti menuntun umat manusia kepada kebahagiaan, keselamatan dan ketenangan

Figure 1.
A photograph of the *Sakinah* Family Development Module issued by the Ministry of Religion, serving as a guide for *penghulu* in providing guidance to prospective brides and grooms

Amrizal, a *penghulu*, explained the hadith as advice given to prospective brides and grooms, stating:

> "...for young men and women, the Prophet provided criteria for finding a soulmate through his hadith;
>
> تنكح المرأة لأربع لمالها ولحسبها و لجمالها ولدينها فاظفر بذات الدين تربت يداك
>
> This hadith teaches us that there are four criteria to consider when looking for a soulmate. First is wealth, which is defined as having substantial possessions. Second, lineage refers to a person's family background, such as being a descendant of royalty, a business family, or someone of high rank. Third, beauty, indicating physical attractiveness. Fourth is religion, which is the most crucial factor. A strong religious foundation ensures a successful household, providing peace and stability. However, from a mathematical perspective, religion alone can seem insignificant. For instance, assigning a value of 0 to wealth, lineage, and beauty, while assigning a value of 1 to religion, results in an overall value of just 0.1. However, prioritizing religion leads to a remarkable outcome. For example, assigning a value of 1 to

> religion and a value of 0 to wealth, lineage, and beauty results in a score of 1000. Therefore, to achieve happiness in a household, prioritise religion." (Amrizal, personal communication, January 2, 2023).

This explanation underscores the crucial role the Ministry of Religious Affairs plays. The hadith regarding soulmate qualifications is used as educational material for prospective brides and grooms. Related modules have been published and distributed throughout the archipelago, enabling officials to offer marital guidance at the KUA. Prospective brides and grooms are expected to follow and apply this guidance in their lives to achieve a *sakinah* family. The referenced hadith can be found in Sahih Bukhari, in the book of marriage, hadith number 8090. The full text is as follows:

حدثنا مسدد حدثنا يحي عن عبيد الله قال حدثنى سعيد بن ابي سعيد عن أبيه عن ابي هريرة رضي الله عنه عن النبي صلى الله عليه و سلم قال تنكح المرأة لأربع لمالها ولحسبها و لجمالها ولدينها فاظفر بذات الدين تربت يداك (al Bukhari, 2002)

> *"Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) reported Allah's Messenger (ﷺ) as saying: A woman may be married for four reasons: for her property, her status. her beauty and her religion, so try to get one who is religious, may your hand be besmeared with dust".*

Married Couples' Understanding of the Hadith on Soulmate Qualifications

This understanding reflects the process of grasping the meaning, concepts, situations, and facts related to the criteria for finding a soulmate as taught by the Prophet. We categorize this understanding into three clusters: prospective brides and grooms, married couples, and divorced couples. These clusters are detailed as follows:

Prospective Brides and Grooms

The views and responses of prospective brides and grooms are illustrated through interviews. According to Imal, his ideal mate compensates for his weaknesses (Imal, personal communication, September 1, 2023), Iman anticipates that his prospective spouse will assist him in settling down (Iman, personal communication, September 1, 2023), Iten believes the most important aspect is that the person is good (Iten, personal communication, September 1, 2023) and Santi is attracted to her candidate because of his strong faith, hoping he will remind her to engage in worship (Santi, personal communication, September 1, 2023).

The statements of prospective brides and grooms indicate that they refrain from criticizing their potential partners. They perceive their potential spouse as ideal and believe these four qualities are present in them. They hope their partners will complement their own deficiencies, provide mutual support to maintain good morals, and enhance their worship of Allah SWT. This perspective is closely tied to their status as prospective brides and grooms, who have not yet experienced the dynamics of married life and therefore see only the positives.

This understanding implies that one's circumstances at the time of marriage do not predetermine their future life. Allah has the ultimate authority in shaping a person's future. It is possible for someone to be financially disadvantaged at the time of marriage but to achieve wealth and success with Allah's permission. This is inspired by Allah's words in the Qur'an, Surah an-Nur/24: 32,

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ ۚ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ(Agama, 2007)

"Marry off the ˹free˺ singles among you, as well as the righteous of your bondmen and bondwomen. If they are poor, Allah will enrich them out of His bounty. For Allah is All-Bountiful, All-Knowing"

Married Couples

Married couples are classified into two groups: those married for ten years and those married for twenty years or more.

Ten-Year Marriage

According to Irul, who has been married for seven years, the initial focus of the marriage was religiously oriented. However, over time, the necessity for financial stability became apparent. Wealth significantly impacts the marriage because everything requires money, and financial assets play a crucial role in maintaining household integrity (Irul, personal communication, August 1, 2023)

This indicates a shift in the marriage during the ten-year phase. Addressing family life demands—such as habitual problems, high expectations, financial issues, and children's needs—creates dynamic household challenges. Effective management of these issues requires extreme caution. At this stage, couples can appreciate life, be grateful for their time together, embrace simplicity, and value the tests Allah gives. Happiness begins with self-concept, fostering a happy family, and sharing joy. Everything feels easier and more beautiful with the passionate effort of both partners to maintain a warm, loving relationship.

Twenty Years and Beyond

Couples who have been married for twenty to thirty years or more experience different conditions. Over time, perspectives on family life shift from lust-driven motivations to a focus on peace of mind. Iram, married for 15 years, expressed that with time, the dynamics of his family have become more deeply influenced by faith, love, and affection (Iram, personal communication, August 1, 2023) Siap, married since 2001, shared a similar sentiment, noting that their initial criteria for a partner had been realised and upheld within his family (Siap, personal communication, July 1, 2023).

Interestingly, this phase reflects the mindset of prospective brides and grooms. These long-married couples possess positive perspectives about their partners. They view their partners as perfect, believing they meet all four criteria for a potential companion. This belief has been tested and validated in their real-life experiences as a married couple.

Divorced Couples

Deviant behaviours are common in society, including elevated crime rates and various actions that violate moral and ethical standards. Activities such as alcohol consumption, gambling, adultery, and drug use have been evolving into new forms in the modern era. People view divorce as a formal process within the social contract between two individuals. Technological advancements and widespread use of social media platforms like Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Facebook have been accelerating social interactions, impacting family structure and negatively affecting family cohesion. This has significantly been influencing the lives of married couples in Sutera District, Pesisir Selatan Regency, as evidenced by high divorce rates. In Pesisir Selatan Regency, there were 725 recorded divorce cases in 2020, followed by 638 in 2021, and 571 in 2022 (*Direktori Putusan*, n.d.). Specifically, in Sutera District, divorce rates increased from 9 couples in 2020 to 22 couples in 2021 and 40 couples in 2022.

To address the high divorce rates, the KUA (Religious Affairs Office) provides consultation and mediation. According to Nafrizal, couples seeking assistance at the KUA receive advice and strategies to resolve domestic matters (Nafrizal, personal communication, October 2, 2023). Anti, a woman whose husband had been missing for a year, stated that the hadith on soulmate qualifications no longer held any significance; initial love had turned into profound hatred (Anti, personal communication, September 1, 2023). Intensive counselling is provided to help individuals recognise their shortcomings and reconsider their decision to divorce.

Motivation of Couples in Practicing the Hadith on Soulmate Qualifications

The analysis of interviews with couples reveals that there are four main types of motivation to create a *sakinah* family as an application of the hadith on soulmate qualifications: maintaining family continuity, enhancing lineage, enhancing offspring's welfare, and elevating the family's social status.

Ensuring family continuity

Creating an everlasting and eternal family life is a universal dream. The Ministry of Religious Affairs, as the official government body overseeing family affairs, emphasises that maintaining household continuity should be framed within the concept of a *sakinah* family. This involves building a valid marriage that meets legal requirements and is officially registered according to applicable regulations. It should also meet both spiritual and material needs, foster love among family members, create a harmonious and balanced family environment, and deeply appreciate and practice the values of faith, piety, and noble morals in daily life (Agama, 2004)

Many people, especially in Sutera, dream of a happy household. As believers, the goal is to achieve happiness in both this world and the afterlife. According to Tamir, this is not easy, and many obstacles can impede this dream. Strong and effective collaboration between married couples is crucial for achieving this goal (Tamir, personal communication, July 1, 2023). Siti Chadijah observed that a loving relationship between husband and wife can form a *sakinah* family through the maintenance of sincere intentions, openness, politeness, wisdom, communicative and deliberative relationships, tolerance, forgiveness, fairness, and patience. Additionally, it involves expressing gratitude for the family's circumstances (Chadijah, 2018).

It is also essential to emulate the family life of pious individuals. Showcasing the household profiles of pious people can have a significant impact on the longevity of the family. Successful households that build harmony between husband and wife and educate their children as the next ideal generation serve as models. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW), Prophet Ibrahim (AS), and others have exemplified this.

Enhancing Lineage

Adhering to the Prophet's guidance is highly relevant for enhancing the quality of offspring. As the future generation, children are anticipated to surpass their parents, leading to familial happiness both physically and mentally. They are seen as reflections of their parents (Rina, personal communication, September 2, 2023) The Prophet further elucidated on this matter through his hadith found in Sunan Abu Daud, within the chapter discussing the disapproval of marrying a woman unable to bear children, hadith number 2050, which reads as follows:

حَدَّثَنَا أَحْمَدُ بْنُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ حَدَّثَنَا يَزِيدُ بْنُ هَارُونَ أَخْبَرَنَا مُسْتَلِمُ بْنُ سَعِيدٍ ابْنَ أُخْتِ مَنْصُورِ بْنِ زَاذَانَ عَنْ مَنْصُورٍ يَعْنِي ابْنَ زَاذَانَ عَنْ مُعَاوِيَةَ بْنِ قُرَّةَ عَنْ مَعْقِلِ بْنِ يَسَارٍ قَالَ جَاءَ رَجُلٌ إِلَى النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ فَقَالَ إِنِّي أَصَبْتُ امْرَأَةً ذَاتَ حَسَبٍ وَجَمَالٍ وَإِنَّهَا لَا تَلِدُ أَفَأَتَزَوَّجُهَا قَالَ لَا ثُمَّ أَتَاهُ الثَّانِيَةَ فَنَهَاهُ ثُمَّ أَتَاهُ الثَّالِثَةَ فَقَالَ تَزَوَّجُوا الْوَدُودَ الْوَلُودَ فَإِنِّي مُكَاثِرٌ بِكُمْ الْأُمَمَ (al-Sajastani, 1423)

"Narrated Ma'qil ibn Yasar: A man came to the Prophet (ﷺ) and said: I have found a woman of rank and beauty, but she does not give birth to children. Should I marry her? He said: No. He came again to him, but he prohibited him. He came to him third time, and he (the Prophet) said: Marry women who are loving and very prolific, for I shall outnumber the peoples by you".

This statement affirms that having children is a fundamental human instinct that should be satisfied in life. This fulfilment must align with religious permissions and adhere strictly to Sharia regulations. Lineage is of great importance in the family structure, representing a highly respected emblem that demands protection and preservation. Islam regards it as a practice of honour, with beneficial consequences for the well-being of both families and society when upheld favourably. Conversely, having a poor lineage can result in adverse consequences for social interactions.

Enhance the offspring's well-being

Islam places significant emphasis on ensuring the well-being of future generations. The hadith on soulmate qualifications serves as a strong encouragement to enhance the welfare of offspring. This noble objective, according to Iram, should manifest as a contented and dignified life in both this world and the hereafter (Iram, personal communication, August 1, 2023). This sentiment resonates with the teachings of the Quran (Quraish/106: 3–4), as follows:

فَلْيَعْبُدُوا رَبَّ هَٰذَا الْبَيْتِ ﴿٣﴾ الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَآمَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ ﴿٤﴾ (Agama, 2007)

"Let them worship the Lord of this ˹Sacred˺ House (3) Who has fed them against hunger and made them secure against fear (4)"

This verse teaches that constant drawing closer to Allah leads to prosperity in life. This attitude reflects the development of spiritual values and human dependence on God. Spiritual experiences bring peace of mind, as Allah is the ultimate source of calm and tranquillity. Increasing the intensity of worship and internalizing its values leads to prosperity for humans.

Establishing a sound economic order is another critical measure. Meeting basic material needs is essential for creating prosperity since humans require food, drink, shelter, and transportation to sustain themselves. One should meet these needs moderately and only in accordance with their actual requirements. Unethical practices such as corruption, fraud, and extortion should be avoided.

Another important aspect is fostering a sense of security in life, which involves eliminating fear to establish safety, comfort, and peace. The absence of crime and immoral acts is essential for creating a peaceful society, enabling individuals to freely engage in various activities in their lives.

Enhance the social status of the family

Social interactions create groups through the process of social stratification, consisting of layers with distinct statuses and roles within society (Maunah, 2015). These societal layers are formed based on the values held by individuals; those with higher values occupy

higher positions. In Islamic communities, classification is based on devotion, belief, power, honour, and knowledge (Syamsuriah, 2015).

The Prophet's qualifications for a soulmate represent the ideal criteria for establishing a family. The goal is for the family's social status to be esteemed in the eyes of Allah SWT. Self-improvement should go beyond external aspects, transforming into commendable traits and attitudes that serve as a societal model. Wealth should be understood as spiritual richness, enabling individuals to assist society regardless of their circumstances. Similarly, descendants are seen as a blessing intended to ensure generational continuity, fostering the emergence of exemplary future generations.

CONCLUSION

The transmission of the hadith on soulmate qualifications occurs dynamically, facilitated by Islamic religious counsellors, religious leaders, and traditional leaders. This hadith informs the community and influences their behaviour in choosing a life partner to create a *sakinah* family. It becomes a source of knowledge and guides actions and behaviours in daily life, evolving into ingrained habits within society. People interpret this hadith in various ways.

For prospective brides and grooms, they see no faults in their partners, assessing them positively and firmly believing that the criteria outlined in the hadith are present in their chosen partners. Married couples who have been together for around 10 years perceive changes in their married life, acknowledging the demands and busyness of family life. Initially, their marriage had a religious orientation, but over time, the need for financial stability has become a primary concern.

For couples married for 20 to 30 years, the pursuit shifts towards seeking peace. They value not just external attributes but also inner qualities. To them, a wealthy person is not only financially prosperous but also rich in heart; beauty is not merely physical but encompasses a kind heart and good temperament. For divorced couples, the perception of soulmate qualifications has drastically changed. What once was profound love has turned into deep hatred.

Embodying the essence of this hadith in married life encourages couples to strive for an enduring and lasting family life, protect offspring as a crown of honour that must be safeguarded, improve the welfare of descendants, and elevate the family's social status in society, setting an example for other families.

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