

Actualization of the Reverence of *Santri* to the *Kiai* in Choosing a Life Partner in *Pesantren*

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Abstract

Choosing a life partner is an important decision in a Muslim's life and must be made with consideration of Islamic teachings. In a pesantren environment, the relationship between *santri* and *kiai* plays a crucial role in this decision-making process, where the *kiai* serves not only as a teacher but also as a respected spiritual figure. This study aims to explore the influence of students' devotion to their *kiai* in selecting a life partner at the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh bin Alawi al-Haddad in Kubu Raya. The research employs a qualitative methodology using a case study approach, involving observations and in-depth interviews. The findings reveal that *kiai* emphasizes the importance of *kafa'ah*, or equality, in terms of religion, wealth, and behavior as criteria for choosing a life partner, with a strong emphasis on religious compatibility as the primary factor. Additionally, students demonstrate their devotion by following the *kiai's* guidance, even when it may differ from their personal preferences. This research contributes to a better understanding of the dynamics of partner selection in pesantren contexts, highlighting the unique relationship between students and *kiai* as a foundation for family values.

Keywords: Choosing a Life Partner, *Kiai*, *Santri*, *Kafa'ah*, *Pesantren*

Abstrak

Pemilihan pasangan hidup merupakan keputusan penting dalam kehidupan seorang Muslim, yang harus dilakukan dengan mempertimbangkan ajaran Islam. Di lingkungan pesantren, hubungan antara santri dan kiai menjadi faktor krusial dalam proses pengambilan keputusan ini, di mana kiai tidak hanya berperan sebagai pengajar, tetapi juga sebagai sosok spiritual yang dihormati. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menggali pengaruh pengabdian santri kepada kiai dalam memilih pasangan hidup di Pesantren Habib Sholeh bin Alawi al-Haddad, Kubu Raya. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif dengan pendekatan studi kasus, melibatkan observasi dan wawancara mendalam. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kiai menekankan pentingnya *kafa'ah*, atau kesetaraan, dalam hal agama, harta, dan perilaku sebagai kriteria dalam memilih pasangan hidup, dengan penekanan pada kesesuaian agama sebagai faktor utama. Selain itu, pengabdian santri terlihat dalam keputusan mereka untuk mengikuti petunjuk kiai meskipun mungkin berbeda dari keinginan pribadi. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi baru dalam memahami dinamika pemilihan pasangan hidup di pesantren, dengan menyoroti hubungan unik antara santri dan kiai sebagai pondasi nilai-nilai dalam kehidupan berkeluarga.

Kata Kunci: Pemilihan Pasangan Hidup, *Kiai*, *Santri*, *Kafa'ah*, *Pesantren*

INTRODUCTION

Choosing a life partner is one of the most important decisions in a Muslim's life, both male and female. This process is not easy because it requires careful consideration and is in accordance with Islamic teachings. The criteria used in choosing a life partner must be in line with religious values, so it takes a long time. For someone who is about to get married, it is advisable to choose a partner with great care, considering the major role that will be carried out after marriage. A woman will play the role of wife, mother, and educator for her children, while a man will become a husband, head of the household, and responsible for the family's livelihood.¹

The success of a marriage depends greatly on the suitability and readiness of the prospective husband and wife. The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) has provided guidance on the criteria that need to be considered in choosing a life partner. Although the existing hadiths discuss more about choosing a wife, these principles can also be applied in choosing a prospective husband.² The Prophet SAW mentioned four main criteria in choosing a partner, namely wealth, descendants (*inasab*), beauty, and religion. However, there are also hadiths that only emphasize three criteria, namely wealth, beauty, and religion. Nevertheless, all of these hadiths emphasize the importance of religion as the main factor in choosing a life partner.³

Previously, many studies have been conducted on the criteria for choosing a life partner in Islam, such as those conducted by Najwah,⁴ Regina and Anshari,⁵ Anwar and Ramadhita,⁶ Haekal and Permana,⁷ Jufri,⁸ dan Baihaqy et al.⁹ However, these studies focused more on general aspects, such as the criteria of religion, wealth, and beauty.

¹ Syarifah Gustiawati and Novia Lestari, "Aktualisasi Konsep *Kafa'ah* Dalam Membangun Keharmonisan Rumah Tangga," *Mizan: Journal of Islamic Law* 4, no. 1 (June 13, 2018), <https://doi.org/10.32507/mizan.v4i1.174>.

² Arif Maulana and Usep Saepullah, "Telaah Prinsip *Kafa'ah* Dalam Hadis Tentang Kriteria Memilih Calon Pasangan (Pendekatan Kaidah al-â€™Adatu Muhakkamah)," *Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu Ushuluddin* 4, no. 1 (January 28, 2024): 33–46, <https://doi.org/10.15575/jpii.31723>.

³ Agusri Fauzan, "Studi Analisis Hadis Tentang Menikahi Wanita Karena Empat Perkara Melalui Pendekatan Sosiologi," *Al FAWATI'H: Jurnal Kajian Al Quran Dan Hadis* 4, no. 2 (December 1, 2023): 267–85, <https://doi.org/10.24952/alfawatih.v4i2.8274>.

⁴ Nurun Najwah, "Kriteria Memilih Pasangan Hidup (Kajian Hermeneutika Hadis)," *Jurnal Studi Ilmu-Ilmu Al-Qur'an Dan Hadis* 17, no. 1 (2016): 95–120, <https://doi.org/10.14421/qh.2016.1701-05>.

⁵ Nani Regina and Winning Son Ashari, "Adab Ta'aruf Dan Kriteria Memilih Pasangan," *SANGAJI : Jurnal Pemikiran Syariah Dan Hukum* 8, no. 1 (March 30, 2024): 93–109, <https://doi.org/10.52266/sangaji.v8i1.2605>.

⁶ Khoirul Anwar and Ramadhita Ramadhita, "Menggapai Keluarga Sakinah Melalui Berkah Kyai: Strategi Pemilihan Pasangan Hidup Santri Tradisional Di Kabupaten Malang," *Al-Ahwal: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 12, no. 2 (2019): 130–44, <https://doi.org/10.14421/ahwal.2019.12202>.

⁷ Rifky Haekal and Muhammad Yogi Galih Permana, "Kriteria Memilih Pasangan Hidup Alumni Pesantren Minhaj Shahabah Perspektif Hukum Islam," *SANGAJI : Jurnal Pemikiran Syariah Dan Hukum* 8, no. 1 (March 30, 2024): 156–68, <https://doi.org/10.52266/sangaji.v8i1.3063>.

⁸ Muhammad Jufri, "*Kafa'ah* Dalam Relasi Suami Istri Sesama Santri Untuk Mewujudkan Keluarga Sakinah," *Al-Hukmi : Jurnal Hukum Ekonomi Syariah Dan Keluarga Islam* 5, no. 2 (January 28, 2025): 27–36, <https://doi.org/10.35316/alhukmi.v5i2.6694>.

⁹ Abdur Rohman Baihaqy, Humaidi Humaidi, and Shofiatul Jannah, "Studi Tentang Pelaksanaan Ta'aruf Sebelum Pernikahan Di Pesantren Ar-Rohmah Tahfidz Hidayatullah Islam Malang," *Jurnal Hikmatina* 5, no. 1 (July 5, 2023): 42–53.

However, there has been no study that specifically examines how religious values, especially the devotion of students to the *kiai*, influence the process of choosing a life partner in the *Pesantren* environment. In fact, in *Pesantrens*, the relationship between students and *kiai* has a unique dynamic, where the *kiai* does not only act as a teacher, but also as a spiritual figure who is respected and obeyed.

This study aims to fill this gap by examining how the actualization of students' devotion to the *kiai* influences the process of choosing a life partner at the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh bin Alawi al-Haddad Kubu Raya. Thus, this study is expected to provide new contributions to understanding the dynamics of choosing a life partner among students, especially in the context of the unique relationship between students and *kiai* in the *pesantren* environment. This is important considering that *Pesantrens* are educational institutions that not only teach religious knowledge but also shape the character and values of students' lives, including in terms of marriage.

RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this study is qualitative, which aims to obtain descriptive data in word patterns, both in written and oral form, obtained from observations of individuals or observed behavior. Qualitative methods are an approach in a study that is intended to understand the phenomenon of society or human behavior in depth, with a focus on the interpretation of meaning, context, and complexity of a situation. Typically, qualitative research involves the collection of non-numerical data, either in the form of text analysis, observation, or interviews, to understand the subjective aspects of a topic. This qualitative approach is strengthened by the use of primary and secondary data sources.¹⁰

This study is a case study, which is a field research method that analyzes existing phenomena. Case studies are a method in in-depth and holistic research on a particular case, such as individuals, groups, organizations, events, or phenomena.¹¹ This method involves in-depth analysis of the context of the case and often requires data collection from various sources, such as documents, interviews, observations, or archival records that are relevant to the actualization of reverence of *Santri* to *Kiai* in choosing a partner at the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad, Kubu Raya.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad

During Habib Sholeh's time, the existence of *Pesantrens* in West Kalimantan was considered rare. The *Pesantren* Al-Jihad in Sei Jawi was established around 1969 AD. Thereafter, the *Pesantren* Darul Ulum appeared in Sungai Adong. Furthermore, the *Pesantren* Al-Salam in Paal V was established, precisely in 1982 AD. Before that year, Muslims who wanted to study Islam had to go to Java and Madura. In the midst of these limitations, Habib Sholeh wanted to establish an *Pesantren* and hoped for the emergence

¹⁰ Lexy J. Moleong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif* (Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya Offset, 2006).

¹¹ John W. Creswell, *Penelitian Kualitatif & Desain Riset: Memilih Diantara Lima Pendekatan* (Yogyakarta: Pustaka Pelajar, 2015).

of *Pesantrens* in Pontianak City. This was proven when Habib Shaleh rolled out the idea to H. Anwar Jakfar to establish an *Pesantren*. Furthermore, he advised Ust. Ridha bin Yahya to remain in Pontianak to take care of the *Pesantren*. Ust. Ridha came from Pekalongan. Previously, he had been involved in the world of education in Pekalongan and Solo. So, not long after, precisely in 1982 AD, Al-Salam *Pesantren* was born in Paal V. This was certainly with the consideration that *Pesantrens* have a number of advantages compared to madrasah schools. In *Pesantrens*, students do not just study religious knowledge. They are prepared to become students of religious knowledge, but they also receive the formation of Islamic mentalities and morals. They are prepared to be Muslim scholars who are ready to plunge into society. In that spiritual atmosphere, Habib on another occasion, still in that spiritual atmosphere, Shaleh advised one of his sons to establish an *Pesantren*. After quite a long time, after his death, Habib Mum succeeded in establishing an *Pesantren* called Raudhatul Jannah. The *Pesantren* was established in 1993 AD on Jln Trans Kaliman Parit Masigi, Sei Ambawang District, Kubu Raya Regency. The facility immediately received attention and support from a number of Habib Shaleh's students. They have helped establish the *Pesantren* institution. (*Pesantren Profile*, 2010)

However, during the period 1997–1999 AD, the *Pesantren* experienced a vacuum. This was due to a series of ethnic conflicts in West Kalimantan. The problem was considered to threaten the safety of the students, so they had to be returned to their parents. During that period of years, the activities of the *Pesantren* were stopped, even until 2003 AD.

After 2003 AD, the activities of the *Pesantren* began to appear to be stirring. Several students began to arrive at Parit Masigi. This was immediately followed by the return of Ust Hasan bin Musthafa to Pontianak. Previously, he studied at the Darul Lughah wad Dakwah *Pesantren* in Bangil, East Java. He then continued his studies in Hadramaut. Since then, Raudhatul Jannah has continued to be improved and managed more seriously. A number of Islamic scholars who are alumni of *Pesantrens* in Java, Hadramaut, and Medina began to be involved in Raudhatul Jannah.

On September 11, 2007, M. Raudhatul Jannah obtained legal recognition as an *Pesantren* institution based on Notary Deed of Pontianak Regency No. 8. Two years later, Raudhatul Jannah changed its name to *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh bin Alwi al-Haddad. The change in the name of the *Pesantren* marked the emergence of a new paradigm. This new paradigm asserted itself as the successor to Habib Shaleh's ideals in Islamic preaching in West Kalimantan.¹²

Life Partner Criteria According to Kiai at the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad

The criteria for a life partner, according to *Kiai* at the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad, is equality. Or what is known as the term *kafa'ah*. The term *Kafa'ah*

¹² Yadi Yadi, "Sejarah *Pesantren* Al Habib Sholeh Bin Alwi Al Haddad Kecamatan Sungai Ambawang Kabupaten Kubu Raya (1999-2021)" (Undergraduate Thesis, Pontianak, IAIN Pontianak, 2021), <https://digilib.iainptk.ac.id/xmlui/handle/123456789/2275>.

in marriage is a balance and harmony between prospective partners in terms of religion, economy, generation, wealth, education, and others. In Islam, it is recommended that before getting married, you recognize the equality and balance of your prospective partner so that each candidate does not feel burdened when they are about to get married. There are also criteria for a life partner for the *Kiai* at the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh, namely the obligation of *kafa'ah*, or equal. Habib Hasan al-Haddad, a *Kiai* at the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad, explained that equality in marriage is related to four factors, namely beauty, descent, wealth, and religion, with religion as the most important factor in this equality. According to him, in religion, there is unity and uniformity in carrying out worship so that harmony in the household can be realized. He said that those who value wealth or social status in marriage often regret it.

Habib Hasan al-Haddad explained that in marriage, the main priority is similarity in religion or belief. He believes a perfect home is one where the husband and wife are equal in all aspects, including religion, wealth, children, beauty, and conduct. He also emphasized that parents usually want their children to have partners who are on par with them. Ideally, people who are highly educated and have good professions such as civil servants, members of parliament, nurses, doctors, regional heads, teachers, and others will search for partners who are equal to them. However, what must be emphasized in this equality is religion, behavior, and similarity of religious interpretation.

Habib Hasan al-Haddad explained about *kafa'ah*/equality in marriage. The meaning of marriage itself is to unite a man and a woman through a legal contract according to Islamic law. On the other hand, the interpretation of *kafa'ah* presents a challenge to the validity of the marriage contract. He also gave an explanation about searching for a good partner according to the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad:

خَيْرُ النِّسَاءِ الَّتِي إِذَا نَظَرْتَ إِلَيْهَا سَرَّتْكَ وَإِذَا أَمَرْتَهَا أَطَاعَتْكَ وَإِذَا غَبَّتْ عَنْهَا حَفِظَتْكَ فِي مَالِكَ وَنَفْسِهَا
Meaning: “The best wife is the one who makes you happy when you look at her, obeys you when you order her, and guards her honor and your property in your absence.” (HR. Thabrani)

In the hadith, the Prophet SAW taught three things related to choosing a good partner. First, the partner must always be present and supportive in all situations, both in joy and sadness. Second, they must follow all the commands of Allah SWT. Third, they must be able to take care of themselves and their families when their husbands are working or in other circumstances.

In line with the hadith, Habib Hasan al-Haddad also tells a story about a wife who is very obedient to her husband. This story is found in the book *Al-'Uqud al-Lujain*. One day, the husband asked his wife to stay home while he went to work. However, suddenly the wife received news that her father was seriously ill. Although she felt worried and hesitant, she really wanted to accompany her father, but she still obeyed her husband's mandate to stay at home.

In the end, her father died while she was still living at home; she could not accompany him at the end of his life. Because of this incident, she was considered a disobedient child by others. One day, while he was sleeping, his father appeared in his dream and told him, “*Son, thank you for being obedient to your husband. Thank God all your father’s sins have been forgiven by Allah SWT.*” From this explanation, it can be understood that as wives, we must always be obedient to our husbands in marriage, as long as it does not involve sin. In addition, Habib Hasan al-Haddad also emphasized that unity in religion in marriage is very important. With a strong religion, all needs will be met. We must ensure that Allah SWT’s decisions and provisions for humans are the best. With all that, *kafa’ah* in religion, such as learning, stability, profession, and beauty, must always be prioritized.

Habib Hasan al-Haddad explained that *kafa’ah* in marriage means happiness in a household when husband and wife can understand each other and realize all the shortcomings and advantages of each. Never in choosing a partner look at wealth, beauty, handsomeness, rank, profession, and rank. Because all of that is just a temporary nature or a gift that Allah has given to His creatures.

He emphasized that when choosing a partner, one should prioritize their inner self and good deeds. When someone, be it a man or a woman, has good worship, God willing, their religion will be strong, and they can guide them into a happy family in the world and the hereafter.

Habib Hasan al-Haddad explained that *kafa’ah* in marriage is the same right for men and women in choosing a partner. He quoted the hadith of the Prophet SAW, which stated, “*Marry a woman for four reasons: beauty, wealth, lineage, and religion. But if it is because of her religion, that is the most important.*” In the hadith, it is very clear that choosing a partner because of their religion is the main priority, because with a strong religion, all worldly needs will follow.¹³

Habib Hasan al-Haddad also explained that *kafa’ah*/equality in marriage is the harmony between wife and husband in terms of religion, lineage, wealth, and appearance. He stressed that the most important thing in choosing a spouse is to pick someone with a strong faith so that their life will be happy and eternal, both in this world and the next. Habib Hasan al-Haddad explained that *kafa’ah* in marriage is about harmony between a wife and husband who are married by having similarities in various aspects. In choosing a partner, it is important to consider religion, behavior, descendants, beauty, and wealth. However, the most important thing is compatibility in religion and behavior, which means having the same principles and goals. Fiqh says *kafa’ah* is about creating harmony and balance between a husband and wife so that neither feels burdened by marriage. A family that is *sakinah, mawaddah, and rahmah* in the framework of Islam is one that lives in accordance with good beliefs and teachings, the consequences of which can lead to a blessed life full of peace, love, and affection.

¹³ Z. Rahman, F., Al-Nahdi, A., & Zurriyati, “The (In) Famous English Language Policy in *Pesantren*: What We Already Know and What Remains Unknown,” *Idarah (Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kependidikan)* 7(2), (2023).

In the Islamic perspective, choosing a life partner is not only based on love or physical attraction but also involves deeper considerations, such as morals, religion, and the ability to build a harmonious household. *Kiai* at the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad usually emphasize the importance of these aspects and provide guidance based on the Quran and Hadith. Through this guidance, it is hoped that students and the general public can understand the importance of choosing a life partner who is in accordance with Islamic values, which will ultimately lead to a family life that is *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*. Scholars from various schools of thought have outlined different criteria for *kafa'ah*. According to the Maliki school of thought, *kafa'ah* mainly includes aspects such as religiousness and freedom from physical deficiencies. In the Shafi'i school of thought, the nature of *kafa'ah* includes religiosity, nobility, independence, and profession. As for the Hambali school of thought, the provisions of *kafa'ah* include religion, profession, wealth, independence, and nationality. However, for the Hanafi school of thought, the criteria for *kafa'ah* include lineage, Islam, profession, independence, religion, and wealth. From all these schools of thought, it shows that *kafa'ah* is an important matter in choosing a life partner.¹⁴ Although *kafa'ah* is important in marriage, it is not a requirement for the validity of the marriage contract. *Kafa'ah* can be interpreted as the suitability or equality between the two parties who will marry, both in terms of religion, generation, wealth, profession, education, and so on. However, *kafa'ah* does not guarantee happiness in household life.¹⁵ Therefore, the caretaker of the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad, namely Habib Hasan al-Haddad, from his speech to the students, only recommends that students who want to have a partner who is *Sakinah mawaddah wa Rahmah* choose a partner who is *kafa'ah* or equal. This recommendation does not mean an obligation, but rather a *sunnah*.

In the concept of *kafa'ah*, prospective brides and grooms have the right to choose a husband and wife by considering various aspects such as religion, lineage, wealth, profession, education, and others. This is done to avoid incompatibility in living a household life.¹⁶ Therefore, the caretaker of the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad more often pairs alumni of male and female *Pesantrens*, because they are already *kafa'ah* in one aspect, namely their religious understanding.

Based on the results of observations and interviews with *kiai* at the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad, the author formulated that *kafa'ah* in selecting a partner is a criterion for a life partner determined by the *kiai* for his students. What is prioritized in selecting a partner is *sekafa'ah* in religion. This means that if someone has

¹⁴ Arif Rahman Hakim, Ahmad Badi, and Melvien Zainul Asyiqien, "Implementasi Konsep Kafa'ah Dalam Perkawinan Campuran: Studi Kasus Di Kantor Urusan Agama Kota Kediri," *Legitima: Jurnal Hukum Keluarga Islam* 1, no. 2 (July 31, 2019): 80–107, <https://doi.org/10.33367/legitima.v1i2.921>.

¹⁵ Nisaul Kamila and Muhammad Yasir, "Penerapan Kafa'ah Dalam Perkawinan Menurut Fiqh Al-Syafi'iah," *SYARIAH: Journal of Islamic Law* 6, no. 1 (June 30, 2024): 129–75, <https://doi.org/10.22373/jiis.v6i1.118>.

¹⁶ Misbah Mrd, Sawaluddin Siregar, and Nur Aminah Nst, "Konsep Kafa'ah Dalam Islam: Suatu Penerapan Dalam Pernikahan Ditinjau Dari Masalah Mursalah," *Jurnal AL-MAQASID: Jurnal Ilmu Kesyariahan Dan Keperdataan* 9, no. 2 (November 6, 2023): 227–39, <https://doi.org/10.24952/almaqasid.v9i2.9368>.

solid religious knowledge and can practice their knowledge, it is certain that they will become a family that is *sakinah*, *mawaddah*, and *rahmah*.

In Islamic teachings, choosing a life partner to form a household is not just a free decision. Islam offers advice on how to choose a partner for life. This guidance is reflected in the teachings of Allah SWT.

الْخَبِيثَاتُ لِلْخَبِيثِينَ وَالْخَبِيثُونَ لِلْخَبِيثَاتِ وَالطَّيِّبَاتُ لِلطَّيِّبِينَ وَالطَّيِّبُونَ لِلطَّيِّبَاتِ أُولَئِكَ مُبَرَّءُونَ مِمَّا يَقُولُونَ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَرِزْقٌ كَرِيمٌ ﴿١٦﴾

Meaning: “Wicked women are for wicked men, and wicked men are for wicked women. And virtuous women are for virtuous men, and virtuous men are for virtuous women. The virtuous are innocent of what the wicked say. They will have forgiveness and an honourable provision.” (QS. An-Nur: 26)

The verse says that bad people tend to gather with others like them, while good people do the same. This verse illustrates the principle that good relationships should be based on equality and equity between the two parties.¹⁷ This is also emphasized in the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad SAW.

حَدَّثَنَا مُسَدَّدٌ حَدَّثَنَا يَحْيَى عَنْ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ قَالَ حَدَّثَنِي سَعِيدُ بْنُ أَبِي سَعِيدٍ عَنْ أَبِيهِ عَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ عَنْ النَّبِيِّ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ قَالَ تُنْكَحُ الْمَرْأَةُ لِأَرْبَعٍ لِمَالِهَا وَلِحَسَبِهَا وَجَمَلِهَا وَلِدِينِهَا فَإِذَا ظَفَرَ بِذَاتِ الدِّينِ تَرَبَّتْ يَدَاكَ (رواه البخاري)

Meaning: “Musaddad narrated from Yahya, who heard from Ubaidillah, who said that Sa’id bin Abu Sa’id heard from his father, from Abu Hurairah, that the Prophet sallallaahu ‘alaihi wasallam said, “A woman is married for four reasons, namely because of her wealth, lineage, beauty, and religion. Therefore, choose her because of her religion, and then you will be successful.” (HR. Bukhari)

In this hadith, it is conveyed that in choosing a partner, it is important to seek equality. The Prophet Muhammad SAW emphasized that prospective partners should be chosen based on strong religious factors because obedience in religion is the key to happiness in life. The rules of *ushul fiqh* are:

الأمر بالشيء أمرٌ بوسائله وللوسائل حكمُ المقاصد

Meaning: “An order for something is also an order for the medium; for the medium, the law is the same as for the thing it is aimed at.”

¹⁷ Fatimah Umami Fauziah and Moh Abdul Kholiq Hasan, “Konsep *Kafa’ah* Dalam Q.S An-Nur Ayat 26 (Perspektif Tafsir Maqashidi Abdul Mustaqim),” *El-Waroqoh : Jurnal Ushuluddin dan Filsafat* 7, no. 1 (April 12, 2023): 1–20, <https://doi.org/10.28944/el-warqoh.v7i1.1023>.

This means that what is obligatory for something is also obligatory for its means or intermediary, and the law for the means is the same as for the intended purpose. *Kafa'ah* is one way to achieve the goal of marriage: a happy family. Therefore, the context of *kafa'ah* becomes important here as a tool or path to achieve the purpose of marriage.¹⁸ The selection of a partner based on the *kafa'ah* criteria refers to the concept of suitability or equality between a prospective husband and wife in various aspects of life, such as religion, behavior, generation, wealth, and beauty or handsomeness. In the context of selecting a partner from a teacher, the *kafa'ah* criteria become deeper because it involves the views and direction of a respected figure who is considered a religious or spiritual authority.

Teachers, especially in the context of *Pesantrens* or Islamic religious environments, have an important role in guiding and educating their students, not only in terms of religious knowledge but also in moral and spiritual aspects.¹⁹ Therefore, when a student is looking for a life partner, they often seek advice or guidance from their teacher, as they are considered to have a deeper understanding of the religious teachings and values that a prospective partner should possess. The teacher's choice of a partner is often based on very thorough *kafa'ah* considerations, including compatibility in religious beliefs, religious practices, moral values, and attitudes toward life. The teacher, who has extensive knowledge of the religious teachings and experience in guiding individuals in marriage, can provide valuable insight into the compatibility of prospective husbands and wives.²⁰

The Reverence of Students to the *Kiai* in Choosing a Life Partner at the *Pesantren* **Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad**

There are three relationships of devotion of students to *kiai* in choosing a life partner in *Pesantrens*. Namely:

1. Student Teacher Relationship

This close relationship has an important value for the students who live in the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad. This attitude of reverence is a strong foundation for forming respectful behavior toward teachers, as expressed by Al-Habib Hasan al-Haddad. He said that reverence is the same as obedience and respect for the *kiai*, as Allah commands:

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ إِلَّا رَجُلًا نُوحِيَ إِلَيْهِمْ فَسَلُّوا أَهْلَ الذِّكْرِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ لَا تَعْلَمُونَ

¹⁸ Mujenni Mujenni, Alfitri, and Husni Idris, "*Kafa'ah* Dalam Membina Keluarga Harmonis: Suatu Tinjauan Konseptual Dalam Pernikahan Perspektif Masalahah:," *Jurnal Kolaboratif Sains* 7, no. 6 (June 6, 2024): 1963–75, <https://doi.org/10.56338/jks.v7i6.5402>.

¹⁹ Asniah Asniah, Fitaulifia Evi, and Pahlevi Rijal, "Peran *Pesantren* Sebagai Lembaga Pendidikan Islam Di Indonesia," *ILJ: Islamic Learning Journal* 2, no. 1 (2024): 74–96, <https://doi.org/10.54437/iljislamiclearningjournal.v2i1.1371>.

²⁰ Febyana Carolyn et al., "Pendidikan Pra-Nikah Sebagai Upaya Pencegahan Perceraian: Pendekatan Praktis Dan Islami" 6, no. 3 (March 13, 2024): 16244–51, <https://doi.org/10.31004/joe.v6i3.5495>.

Meaning: “We did not send ‘messengers’ before you ‘O Prophet’ except mere men inspired by Us. If you ‘polytheists’ do not know ‘this already’, then ask those who have knowledge ‘of the Scriptures’.” (QS. An-Nahl: 43)

Al-Habib Hasan al-Haddad also provided a thoughtful explanation of the verse, highlighting how important it is for students to be polite to their teachers, while also noting that this respect should be appropriate and not go beyond certain limits. He explained:

“Obedience must indeed be attempted, but it is a form of civilized obedience and does not lead to sin. ‘The kiai gives orders like this, so this order must be violated.’ ‘Sometimes there are kiai who are too obedient, like telling their students to steal; that’s a misunderstanding. Because he is a kiai, he is expected to obey, which is a significant mistake. Then what are the binding limits? We students must obey our teachers unless it leads to sin.’”²¹

2. Family relationship

The connection between students and *Kiai* is thought to still exist. This is evident in every imtihan activity and Idul Fitri holiday at the *Pesantren*; many students stop studying and serve the *Kiai*ina. Ustad Muhaimin said about this:

“We as students cannot meet the Kiai during holidays, especially during the Kupati holiday. But the most important thing after my visit was that I got good guidance; for example, we cannot always forget. The teacher who taught us, don’t forget to remember your worship; no matter how busy you are, when you are in the middle of society, don’t forget to seek information. I am everywhere; I learn from everyone the basics of managing my own affairs and my family. ‘That you can support yourself if you have a good family, sakinahit.’”²²

3. Alumni Relations

The alumni association of the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad with the boarding school is very close, this is in accordance with what was explained by Ustad Aswadi:

“Graduates of the Pesantren Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad have ideal families when they attend Islamic board schools. However, for a student who enters society, the figure of a kiai is usually seen in society as an individual who is connected to society and is an example of the tradition of knowledge and leadership, pious, understands religious knowledge (tafaqquh fi al-din), and prioritizes noble attitudes that should be emulated by his people and closeness to the outside world, and the brotherhood of his people continues to grow so that the respect given by students and their community continues to increase.” Therefore, based on the fact that students must share gifts with other alumni to be more useful, such as sharing at work and continuing to

²¹ Habib Hasan al-Haddad, Interview Result, December 20, 2024.

²² Muhaimin Muhaimin, Interview Result with Ustadz, December 20, 2024.

*communicate via cell phone, they see Kiai's message to fellow students to always maintain ties of friendship with teachers."*²³

In the environment of the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad, the students' devotion to the *Kiai* becomes an important foundation in their lives, including in the aspect of choosing a life partner. The *Kiai* is considered a spiritual guide and a respected figure, so their decisions are highly considered by the students. The actualization of this devotion is often seen in situations where students must choose between maintaining their choice of life partner or following the direction of the *Kiai*, which may be different. This study reveals qualitative data through interviews with students to understand more deeply how this devotion is applied in practice.

*"I decided to ask permission from Kiai because I respect him very much and believe that he has deep wisdom about life, especially in matters of marriage. Kiai's blessing is very important to me. When I expressed my intention to marry my choice, Kiai listened carefully and then gave his views. He reminded me that marriage is not only about love but also about the compatibility of morals and the ability to build an Islamic household."*²⁴

The student named Nuriman demonstrated a high level of devotion to the *Kiai* by prioritizing the *Kiai*'s spiritual advice and guidance over his personal choices. The decision to leave a partner who did not receive the *Kiai*'s blessing reflects a deep belief in the *Kiai*'s wisdom and guidance. It also shows how the student values the religious and moral aspects of marriage, which is in accordance with the *pesantren*'s teachings.

*"When the Kiai stated that he would not give permission because he saw that my partner was not suitable in terms of religious commitment, I was very surprised and sad. However, after listening to the Kiai's explanation, which was full of wisdom, I began to understand his concerns. I ultimately made the difficult decision to leave my choice and follow the Kiai's instructions. I believe that this decision, although difficult, will bring goodness in the future because the Kiai always wants the best for his students."*²⁵

The student named Lisa also demonstrated deep devotion to the *Kiai*, although it was through a more complex emotional process. The decision to leave a partner who did not receive the *Kiai*'s blessing after further reflection and discussion shows immense appreciation for the *Kiai*'s spiritual guidance and advice. This incident emphasizes how important the role of the *Kiai* is in the lives of students, especially in major decisions such as choosing a life partner.

²³ Aswadi Aswadi, Interview Result with Ustadz, December 20, 2024.

²⁴ Nurimah Nurimah, Interview Result with *Santri*, December 20, 2024.

²⁵ Lisa Lisa, Interview Result with *Santri*, December 20, 2024.

From the two students, it can be concluded that the students' devotion to the *Kiai* at the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad is forceful. Students prefer to leave their personal choices and follow the direction of the *Kiai*, showing high trust in their wisdom and spiritual guidance. This attitude reflects the importance of the *Kiai's* role in guiding students to make decisions that are in accordance with Islamic values and bring goodness in the future.

One type of society, based on a strong religious foundation, is considered unique among the various models of society in Indonesia. The community with the most students values the advice of their teachers and the credibility of the *kiai*, who is wise and knowledgeable.

The values obtained from the students' respect for the *kiai* at the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad are considered the main capital for success and usefulness in life because teachers are a means for students to get closer to Allah SWT.²⁶ The *Kiai's* knowledge is thought to be the main belief about the abundance of God's grace in the family that will be established in the future. Obedience to the *kiai* is not just a form of complete surrender, but also because of the students' belief that the *kiai* is a mediator of God's grace to the students here and there. This belief forms the foundation for the students' loyalty to the *kiai*.

The selection of prospective student partners is based on an attitude of mutual respect, usually occurring in the typical behavioral environment of students, especially in Salafi *Pesantrens*. One of the noble attitudes that characterizes the ethics of students is respectful behavior. Respect is an attitude of obedience and respect to teachers who have given religious knowledge to their students.²⁷ This attitude is a special symbol in several Salafi *Pesantrens* in Indonesia, where this obedience is considered normal and has certain limits that do not violate religious norms.

The wedding preparations of the students and residents of the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad depend on the role of the *kiai* in creating a quality household and being able to fulfill their duties, obligations, and responsibilities. Therefore, the *kiai* must pay attention to the following things in gathering prospective partners:

1. Psychological Aspects

In a psychological context, prospective marriage partners must have a mature mindset. Maturity of thinking is important in creating and maintaining a household. In Islam, a couple's reaching puberty doesn't mean they're ready to marry. The beginning of human maturity depends on the psychological readiness of both partners. Therefore, the ideal marriage for young people is to wait patiently until they are psychologically mature enough to face marriage. Referring to Law Number 16 of

²⁶ Siti Huzaimah and Ahmad Mukhlisin, "Interaksi *Santri* nDalem Dalam Memaknai Ngalap Berkah Di *Pesantren* Walisongo Sukajadi Lampung," *JAWI* 3, no. 1 (August 21, 2020): 59–82, <https://doi.org/10.24042/jw.v3i1.7037>.

²⁷ Imtihanatun Mardiyah, "Internalisasi Sikap Patuh Dan Ta'dhim *Santri* (Studi Eksperimen Di *Pesantren* Darul Hidayah, Uman Agung Bandar Mataram)," *DIMAR: Jurnal Pendidikan Islam* 1, no. 2 (June 1, 2020), <https://ejournal.stit-almubarak.ac.id/index.php/DIMAR/article/view/23>.

2019 concerning Amendments to Law Number 1 of 1974 concerning Marriage, the minimum age limit for both men and women who are allowed to marry is 19 years.²⁸

2. Physical Condition

Regarding the possibility of having a family, it is advisable to undergo laboratory tests and premarital consultations. In a physical context, the absence of defects that can cause instability or an inability to participate in family life is more important than beauty or appearance. Although it is not required in Islamic law, choosing a life partner has a very important role. This process allows each couple to evaluate their partner's suitability and decide if they are fit for marriage.²⁹ There are several aspects of selecting a prospective companion for students in the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad area.

3. Economic Aspects

In the context of marriage, the economic aspect is crucial for a family. Economic well-being in the family is the main pillar in living a household life. The aspects of clothing (clothing), food (food), and shelter (residence) play an important role in preparing for marriage. Marriage does depend on affection alone and requires financial support as a foundation. Financial needs vary according to the socio-economic level of each individual. Due to these basic needs, both students and nearby residents hope to improve their economic status.³⁰ Therefore, the *kiai* also considers a companion who has economic stability, such as having assets such as land, gardens, or inheritance from the prospective parents. So, the chosen partner should be able to pursue a career or business. This aspect is in accordance with the Islamic principles stated in the Al-Quran Surah An-Nur verse 32.

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيَامَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ وَإِمَائِكُمْ ۚ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

Meaning: "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." (QS. An-Nur: 32)

This verse indirectly teaches about the blessings of marriage. Marriage is not just about creating a household with a husband, wife, and children, but also about opening the door to the blessings of household happiness. With the blessings of life given by God according to Islamic teachings, a household can achieve stability

²⁸ Yopani Selia Almahisa and Anggi Agustian, "Pernikahan Dini Dalam Perspektif Undang-Undang Perkawinan Dan Kompilasi Hukum Islam," *Jurnal Rechten : Riset Hukum Dan Hak Asasi Manusia* 3, no. 1 (April 22, 2021): 27–36, <https://doi.org/10.52005/rechten.v3i1.24>.

²⁹ Alvan Fathony and Moh Sholeh, "Memilih Pasangan Ideal Dalam Perspektif Tafsir Al-Misbah," *Al-Tadabbur: Jurnal Ilmu Al-Qur'an dan Tafsir* 6, no. 01 (June 26, 2021): 35–52, <https://doi.org/10.30868/at.v6i01.1171>.

³⁰ Dwi Nugroho, "Pesantren Wirausaha Payungi Sebagai Basis Gerakan Pemberdayaan Perempuan Muslim di Metro," *Eastasouth Journal of Impactive Community Services* 2, no. 03 (July 31, 2024): 144–62, <https://doi.org/10.58812/ejims.v2i03.38>.

without violating or deviating from religious principles. Many people get married because they feel it is time or can't wait to have a family, but it is better to marry financially in order to get Allah's pleasure alone. Therefore, the selection of a partner proposed by the *kiai* to the students is based on stable economic considerations, with the hope of achieving good goals in the overall family structure according to the structural functional theory, which states that the family is a social element in society. A well-functioning society also requires the achievement of good goals.³¹

CONCLUSION

The *kiai* at the *Pesantren* Habib Sholeh Bin Alawi Al-Haddad considers *kafa'ah*, or equality, as the criteria for a life partner. The *kiai* believes that what is most meaningful or prioritized in selecting a partner is *kafa'ah* in the religious aspect. *Kafa'ah* is a balance and harmony factor in Islamic morals and worship. This principle emphasizes that economic equality or social status in wealth or descent is not the main factor because, in the sight of Allah SWT, all humans are considered equal, with the only difference being in the level of piety. In Islam, religion is the only factor that matters in marriage; education, profession, wealth, role, property, and appearance are irrelevant. Then, the selection of a partner is based on *Kiai's* blessing. This means that the students have prepared themselves, the time, and the wedding agenda. Thereafter, they only need to complete the marriage contract. The *kiai's* blessing is only an announcement that the students will get married. For students who want to get married, their partners are chosen through direct selection by the *KIAI*. The students' wishes and both parties' agreement determine the potential partner. In this system, students prepare the prospective partner they want to marry. However, for them, the preparation is not complete if the time, place, and event of the wedding have not been discussed with the teacher (*kiai*).

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³¹ M. Amirur Rahman, "Ngalap Barokah Minuman Bekas *Kiai* Kajian Living Hadis Teori Sosial Emile Durkheim: Studi Kasus *Pesantren* An-Nur Komplek Nurul Huda Bantul Yogyakarta," *Musala : Jurnal Pesantren Dan Kebudayaan Islam Nusantara* 1, no. 2 (July 29, 2022): 123–41, <https://doi.org/10.37252/jpkin.v1i2.172>.

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