



## Islamic Messages on the Ritual of Finding a Soulmate in Malay Marriage Customs

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### ARTICLE INFO

*Keywords:* Islamic Message,  
Looking for a Soul Mate,  
Malay Marriage

*Received :* 5 April

*Revised :* 23 May

*Accepted:* 23 June

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### ABSTRACT

Malay society is very strict about traditional marriage rituals . Malay people know it as " Adat bersendikan Syarak and Kitabullah", this research aims to find out how the message of Islam is in the traditional ritual of finding a soul mate in Malay marriages. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method. There are three findings from the results of this research, first, the Islamic message in the traditional ritual of finding a soul mate is the Lita'arofu message, a message that contains the value of respecting and glorifying one's partner, second, it contains a teaching message, which teaches the value of love and affection as taught by the Prophet to his people, third, there is the value of the message of sakinah Mawaddah and Warohmah, and this message is also the goal of marriage that is expected for every couple who enters the gates of the household

## **INTRODUCTION**

Malay society has various traditions, because tradition for Malay society is a legacy that cannot be forgotten from generation to generation, and always develops in the life of society so that tradition will continue to accompany the journey of society until the end of its life. One of the traditions of Malay society that is very thick with its traditional rituals is the tradition of marriage, in this marriage tradition in the implementation of a very long ritual procession and takes a lot of time. For Malay society, marriage is something very sacred and has a very important meaning accompanying the historical records of human life. In the Malay traditional marriage ritual, it contains the value of adhering to the teachings of Islam which are stated in the term, "Adat berndikan Syarak, and Syarak bersendikan Kitabullah", or in the Malay term 'tunjung ajar', Adat says, Syarak uses, , means, whatever is said by syarak and syarak is used, then that is what is used by adat in Malay society, known as adat really adat, namely custom which contains the meaning of traditional principles. which regulates the way of life of a community that is in agreement so that it cannot be changed, replaced or abandoned. DWI Saputri, A. T. I. K. H. A., Rahmawati, N., & Arieta, S. (2023). Malay marriage customs regulate the customs of the pre-marriage procession, preparation and implementation of the marriage, and the procession after the marriage, from these 3 processions, it begins with the customs before the marriage, which is called the procession in the matchmaking ritual, Malay customs that are inspired by Islam that have been arranged in such a way, and become a cultural heritage that must be upheld whose implementation is based on Islamic teachings, so that in this marriage custom it is standardized and cannot be changed. In the custom of finding a match for the Malay community, it is the first step taken by the man to the woman who will be his partner, to get an ideal partner, in finding a match and limiting matches, and how to choose a partner who is worthy of being a prospective wife and husband. The function of parents is very strong in determining a match for their children, because parents are believed to have the ability to see a person's attitude and behavior from existing experiences Pane, H. (2020). In the past, there were quite a few couples who were matched by their parents, and they did not even know each other at first. Only after they were married did they get to know each other and were considered successful in establishing a household.

Determining a child's mate lies in the hands of his parents. The matter of finding a soul mate is so important that it is determined by both parents that marriage is not a matter to be taken lightly, marriage is still a custom that has been established and has been attached to the breath of social life in society. The first step in the custom of finding a soul mate in the traditional ritual of the Malay community is "Merisik", which is an effort to introduce and search for information or find out the whereabouts of the desired female candidate, which is carried out by the male family's envoy to the woman's family's house. The search activity was carried out after both parents agreed to their child's matchmaking, because the parents knew better about the whereabouts of their prospective daughter-in-law, both in terms of religious knowledge, heredity, property, as well as beauty, character and behavior. Zulfa, Z. (2010). Messages in

Islam are communication products that are considered capable of changing attitudes and behavior, to direct each individual to the truth, communication behavior has started a long time ago, since the creation of the first human being, namely Adam AS, who is the ancestor of humans, since then Allah has known communication tools, consisting of sight, hearing, and complete with Fuad, namely the heart, then humans began to be taught by Allah to recognize the senses and their functions, and at the same time a form of human respect for the creator, namely Allah SWT. So humans with their senses will be asked to convey messages according to Islamic religious rules controlled by Fuad, so that humans can convey good messages to others, and have value. Benefits. The message of Islam which is seen from its urgency certainly refers to the Qur'an and Hadith where these two things are the main sources of Islamic teachings SM, U. A. R., & Chandra, M. (2020). In Hasibuan's research (2022), he said that Islam and cultural development are an interesting combination, so that both can coexist without experiencing the slightest obstacle of dispute and conflict Hasibuan, K. R., Rubino, R., & Mailin, M. (2022). So the existence of religion and culture is a complement and strengthening of cultural identity itself, so that the two complement each other into a very complex combination. Likewise, in the Malay marriage tradition, especially the ritual tradition of finding a soul mate, the ceremony of finding a soul mate is very identical to the combination of Islam and Malay culture which begins with a ta;arafu/introduction ceremony between two families, ta.arauf in Islam symbolizes a friendly relationship which aims to create a good relationship between the two so that it becomes a prosperous and happy relationship physically and mentally. In the merisik activity which begins with ta;aruf, it is a communication activity to convey the message of Islam that both of them are open to each other in conveying honest and trustworthy messages, so that honest messages will produce loyal, eternally harmonious relationships. Marriage is a sacred relationship that legitimizes a legitimate relationship as a husband and wife in order to produce pious offspring, so that the sacredness of marriage for everyone who carries it out, so for the Malay community in their rituals they must carry out a number of traditional ceremonies in accordance with the noble values that have been passed down by their ancestors from generation to generation Hasibuan, M., Arifin, D., Dahlan, S., & Sikumbang, A. T. (2024). In the traditional ritual of finding a soul mate, there are communication messages that are considered important in each ritual, so that the abilities possessed by the communicator in the ritual are a way to establish relationships between two partners as well as brotherhood between two families, so the communication skills that occur in human life as a blessing given by Allah SWT, to regulate His people, because with communication humans succeed in realizing their essence as part of humans are social beings Arindita, M. S., Raykhani, M. A., Ra'uf, N., Ardianoor, R., & Suharyat, Y. (2022). Marriage that is bestowed upon humans is part of worship when both partners who carry it out sincerely are both ready to carry out the relationship. Marriage according to Islamic terms is called ijab qabul, which permits association between men and women who are not mahram so that from this relationship will arise rights and obligations between the two

partners which are spoken in words, in accordance with the law in Islamic law. In a specific sense, marriage is a contract, namely submission and acceptance between the guardian of the prospective bride and the prospective groom. Submission and acceptance in a very broad sense accompany the beginning of one's own life as a couple to achieve the perfect goal of life Malisi, A. S. (2022). As explained in the verse of the Qur'an, Surah Arrum verse 21:

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ ﴿٢١﴾

Meaning: "Among His signs is that He created for you mates from yourselves, that you may find rest in them. He has placed between you love and mercy. Verily in this are signs for a people who give thought."

In the process of finding a soul mate, someone is ordered by the man to visit the house of the female candidate, which has previously been agreed upon by both parties through a negotiation process. This process is carried out very carefully, because they want to initiate a holy intention. Hendra, D. F. (2023). In this case, the parents and the family bring the proposal equipment which consists of a number of words-connecting equipment, such as the perisik betel palm, the promiscuity betel palm, and the promise-binding betel palm, plus other equipment as accompaniment, then the matchmaking process ceremony begins with rhyme communication as the opening speaker:

Male side:

The tree is low with low branches  
Scattered on the earth are bidara fruit  
I've been drinking betel already  
Can we open a conversation?

Women's side:

Why sparrows fly low  
Siraja prawns catch fish  
The water is already betel  
What are your wishes, please let me know

And so on, replying to the rhyme, until the negotiation process takes place between the two parties, until both parties reach an agreement.



Figure 1. Traditional Ritual Procession of Finding a Soulmate (Proposing Marriage)

However, along with the development of the era, the influence of modernization, and the conditions of a multicultural society, the ritual of finding a partner in Malay marriage customs has begun to shift, people have begun to abandon several rituals, such as, *merisik*, *meminang*, and *hantar tande*, even though this process is very important in determining a choice of a prospective partner to achieve a happy, prosperous household physically and mentally. In this study using a qualitative approach with the type of field research, using the type of field research and the process of collecting data directly to the field, this type of descriptive research was conducted to find out how the message of Islam in traditional rituals, finding a partner in Riau Malay marriage customs Sujarweni, V. W. (2014). The subjects in this study are data sources or those related to the target in data collection collected through information sources, so in this study the subjects are informants who are involved and know about the Ritual of finding a partner in Malay marriage, each of which has been determined by Moleong, L. (2010).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Messages are communication products. In the Indonesian dictionary, a message is a symbol or symbol in the form of words, either verbally or in writing. While the term message communication is a meaning conveyed by a communicator to the communicant to provide an understanding and similarity of perception between the two. In the communication process, messages are a very crucial part, and are one of the elements of communication Laila, D. K. (2021). Islamic communication is the process of conveying messages from the communicator to the communicant based on Islamic values. In short, Islamic communication refers to the delivery of messages of goodness based on Islamic law. Humans as communication creatures that are used as a process of self-actualization in interacting, humans become an important part of communication, with communication humans can get to know each other, not only as acquaintances, but with communication a person is able to reach the world so easily and have very wide access. As a creature of Allah, communication is also a tool for establishing a relationship with the creator, namely Allah SWT, through worship activities carried out by a servant to the creator. In a series of prayer services, for example, a servant is establishing a communication relationship with Allah, through Prayer in prayer, then the closest form of communication with Allah is prayer, because prayer consists of prayers. In Islamic communication there are three types of communication carried out by humans, these three types are activities to carry out the process of establishing a relationship between the communicator and the communicant in conveying messages, the three types are, namely Communication with the creator, namely Allah SWT, which takes place when humans worship, pray, *dhikr*, fasting, *zakat* and *infak*, and *hajj*, then communication within humans, or communication carried out by every human being when dealing with themselves to make a decision, then human communication with others, as a form of social relations that occur between humans as social beings. The study of communication science

is very interesting, because communication is a multidisciplinary study, meaning that communication science discusses problems of social life in society using the approach of various disciplines, where the object of study is the same as other sciences, especially closely related to human science in the life of society Hendra, T. (2020).

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method, which is a study designed to see descriptive studies. In this study, it generally sees and understands social phenomena and symptoms that occur in society and discusses society and its culture, and can find out a complex picture of society, and can be presented in words and detailed reports about the data sources obtained to answer the research problem Fadli, M. R. (2021). The subjects in this study are the community, or someone who understands the problems in this study and knows some of the information they want to obtain, in this research subject the author uses a purposive sampling technique, where the research informants who have been considered based on certain criteria, then the informants in this study, 2 traditional figures, 1 religious figure, and 1 community figure. The data collection process through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation of Melatyu marriage customs, as well as Islamic messages contained in the traditional ritual of finding a match in Malay marriage. The data that has been obtained is processed using the MILES Huberman and Saldana data analysis technique, all data that has been successfully collected is processed and verified and conclusions are drawn.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The traditional ritual of finding a soul mate in a traditional Malay marriage is a process that involves quite a long time and each ritual is carried out in a structured manner, so that it involves a very long deliberation process between two families, which starts from the merisik, wooing and hantar tande ceremonies. The traditional ritual of finding a soul mate in Malay marriage traditions really involves the parents, because parents are considered to be figures who have experience in finding a soul mate, parents also have the most right to determine their children's partners, getting a happy compatible partner leading to a sakinah mawaddah and warohmah household. The results of this research contain Islamic messages in the traditional ritual of finding a soul mate in Malay marriages, in the ritual and customary stages:

### **Sub Discussion**

Messages are communication products delivered by a communicator to a communicant to change attitudes, so Islamic messages can be understood as messages containing Islamic values that are guided by the Qur'an and hadith, or it can be said that Islamic messages are messages of goodness that can invite someone or the target of the message itself to do good according to the demands of Islamic law. So the message of goodness in Islam consists of, messages of truth, messages of invitation to goodness, and messages that are identical to using polite language, or called messages of politeness. These Islamic messages refer to the messages conveyed in the Qur'an, first the message of goodness, identical in

the Qur'an called Qoulan Sadida, or good and correct words. Found in the Al-Ahzab surah, verse 70:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَفُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا ﴿٧٠﴾

Meaning: "O you who believe, fear Allah and speak the right words."

In the Malay marriage tradition, the ritual of finding a soul mate is carried out by the family, namely the man's parents determine who their child's future partner will be. In this case, the family determines their child's mate referring to the criteria that have been determined in Islam, such as their religion. The second criterion is heredity, when looking for a life partner, Islam teaches to choose a partner who is of good descent, or lineage, such as who his parents are, his grandparents, and the entire family of his descendants, whether he is a descendant of a scholar, nobleman, public leader, and so on. Because good and quality offspring will produce quality generations. Next is the criteria of wealth, in choosing a partner, it is very important to choose a prospective partner from a group that has wealth, because wealth is identical to one of the supporting aspects to achieve happiness in married life, the last criterion is beauty, beauty is a form of expression of attitude and behavior, When choosing a woman who is beautiful in appearance, then it must be accompanied by beautiful morals and manners, gentle, polite, and knowledgeable. So it is very important to find a partner in the Malay marriage tradition which is in line with finding a partner in Islam, so there are stages of finding a partner in the Malay marriage ritual:

- a. Merisik, in the traditional ritual of finding a soul mate in the Malay marriage tradition, begins with merisik, namely finding out/information about the whereabouts of the girl who will be his future wife. In this process the man's family sends a mak terangkai/messenger to visit the house of the prospective ideal woman to carry out the risik process, with the aim of getting to know the two families, and at the same time tracing the whereabouts of the prospective ideal woman based on four criteria in finding a mate that suits her. Islamic law, as a result of the researcher's interviews with Malay traditional figures who usually act as interpreters, or supervisors in the viewing ritual, that:

"In the menilik ceremony, it is carried out with the aim of introducing the two prospective families, as well as seeking information about the whereabouts of the prospective woman, then in this ritual, the mak Jangkakai opens the conversation with the sentence Assalamualaikum, then introduces herself, and conveys the purpose and purpose of her arrival, using clear, polite, and simple language, then a very long conversation takes place between the two parties, the mak Jangkakai plays the role of a good, skilled, and professional spokesperson, so that the message conveyed is in accordance with the hopes of the two prospective families, questions asked to the prospective family are about the whereabouts of the ideal woman, such as her daily life, intelligence, ethics, worship, and socializing in the

community, discussions that take up quite a bit of time, until a number of the information needed has been fulfilled."

From the results of the interview, it was found that in the traditional ritual of Merisik, Mak Terangkai is a professional task bearer, with the communication skills she has, such as opening with a greeting, using simple language, and full of authority, making communication smooth until the end of the ritual.

- b. Proposing, is asking for approval from a woman of her choice to continue with a clearer relationship, the proposal is carried out after the merisik ceremony, then as a result of the merisik ceremony the family deliberates to determine the choice between continuing a more serious relationship or deciding not to continue. In the proposal ceremony, the men's entourage carries betel palms to the house of the female candidate, before opening the conversation, the family first appoints a professional spokesperson to lead the procession in the proposal ritual, so in this ritual the language of rhymes is strictly required, from the beginning to the end, in this ceremony there is deliberation between the two families, to determine whether the proposal is accepted or rejected, as per the results of the researcher's interview with one of the sources:

"The proposal ceremony is to ask for permission from a woman through her family to be married, in this ceremony the man and woman through a spokesperson begin the conversation with pantun, because the language of pantun is an expression, a figure of speech, which is easy to understand, but does not hurt the feelings of the person being spoken to, verse after verse of pantun is delivered, until the proposal ceremony ends, in this long process, it is not only to ask for permission, but the two families are able to establish a closer relationship, a sense of brotherhood, kinship, mutual cooperation, and shared destiny emerges".

From the interview, it was found that the betrothal ceremony begins and ends with pantun language, which expresses a number of words in conveying the intent and purpose, but does not offend the feelings of the person being spoken to in the slightest. Furthermore, this ceremony is also able to establish closeness between the two families, a feeling of shared fate, and both feel that this event is a family event that upholds family values.

- c. Hantar Tande, the hantar tande ceremony, is tying the promise of the man to the woman, usually the tande is given by the man in the form of a 24 carat gold ring, with the weight adjusted according to the man's ability, this ring is given as a sign that someone already has the woman of their dreams, in this case the woman who wears the tande ring has made a promise to the man of her dreams and will be able to live together through a marriage that is legal according to religion. The hand-off ceremony after the proposal is accepted by the woman's family. In the ritual of delivering the tande, the male group returns to the house of the female candidate to deliver the tande, which is accompanied by betel slapping, proposing marriage, and betel slapping delivering the tande, then the ring. As the results of the

researcher's interview with the Chair of the Malay Traditional Institution, said that:

"The hantar tande ceremony is a form of promise between a man and a woman to lead to a legal marriage ceremony, in this ceremony the woman who has accepted the proposal is tied with a ring, as a sign that the woman is already taken, so that if there is a group, or another man who comes in to propose, then it is no longer allowed, even though it is only tied with a ring, the Malay community considers it sacred, because the ring is a ring that binds the promise, where a promise is a debt that must be fulfilled by the person who made the promise, thus according to custom, certain sanctions are set for those who violate or break the promise"



Figure 2. Traditional Ritual Procession of Hantar Tande

From the results of the interview, it was found that hantar tande is a promise between a man and a woman for a serious relationship leading to marriage, so in Malay customs a promise is a debt that must be fulfilled, therefore according to custom it is not permissible for either of them to break their promise, until later their relationship becomes that of a husband and wife.

#### **Islamic Messages in Traditional Rituals of Finding a Soulmate in Malay Marriage Customs:**

The message of Islam refers to a message that invites to goodness according to Islamic law, in this case the message of Islam is identical to the message of da'wah, because da'wah is an act that contains an invitation, call, and a call to direct someone to the path of Allah. According to Abu Bakar Zakaria, da'wah is an effort made by da'i to provide teaching, encouragement, and activities to guide mad'u to the path of truth that is approved by Allah SWT. For that reason, the existence of da'wah in Islam is very important to provide guidance to all mankind so that they do not go astray in living their lives in this world and the hereafter. As the legal basis for da'wah is contained in the Qur'an, Surah An-Nahl, verse 125:

أُدْعُ إِلَى سَبِيلِ رَبِّكَ بِالْحُكْمَةِ وَالْمَوْعِظَةِ الْحَسَنَةِ وَجَادِلْهُمْ بِالَّتِي هِيَ أَحْسَنُ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِمَنْ ضَلَّ عَنْ سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ ﴿١٢﴾

Meaning: "Call (humans) to the path of your Lord with wisdom and good teaching and debate them with a better way. Indeed, your Lord is the one who knows best who has gone astray from His path and He (also) knows best who has been guided."

So the Islamic message is very identical to the message that comes from the Koran, which consists of the message of monotheism which emphasizes the unity of Allah, the message contains invitations and calls for worship, because worship is a form of self-servation to Allah SWT, the message contains the formation of morals, because morals are a form of good behavior that must be possessed by every human being, the Muamalah message is a message containing rules that regulate relationships between human beings, about how to live all aspects of life Wahyudianto, A. (2017). So, from the research results and researchers' findings, they can be categorized as follows:

- a. Spying, an activity carried out by the man to the woman of his choice, to find and collect some information about the whereabouts of the prospective woman who will be made a partner, then this activity is not just looking for information, in the stages of the activity it aims for ta;aruf, or introduction between the two families, then the mother is connected to convey information as widely as possible about the whereabouts of the woman to the man, then in the process of introduction and the process of finding information that takes a long time, there is a communication process that contains Islamic messages based on the Koran which emphasizes how morals and ethics are highly respected between men and women to achieve noble intentions and goals, then the form of Islamic communication that emphasizes the value of muamalah to maintain good relations between two families because, marriage does not only unite the relationship between two people, it will continue to unite the relationship between two large families. So in this process the message is packaged very carefully, so as not to offend the feelings of the interlocutor.
- b. Proposing, the ritual of proposing, is also called the process of asking for approval from the woman through her family to ask for permission to continue the relationship leading to marriage, then the man brings a number of proposal groups, to ask for permission to marry the girl of his choice, in this procession each party sends a professional spokesperson to convey the intent and purpose, in the communication process opening and closing with pantun language, as an expression of self-expression from each party, pantun is a powerful means of communication to achieve goals, because the language in pantun, is not long-winded, and easy to understand, Islamic messages are highly prioritized in conveying pantun language, in this case the singer prioritizes morals and composes words that are easy, light, so as not to make the other party emotional, or offended, besides that in the process of proposing, maintaining a close relationship between the two parties, there is chatter, and laughter, this is deliberately

- engineered, so that two families can establish a closer relationship, and be in one strength until one big family is formed that upholds family values.
- c. Hantar Tande, in this procession, accompanying Tande is a bond of promise between a man and his ideal woman, with a sign given that the woman has made a promise, and is ready to become a wife through an *ijab Kabul*. Swt, because in Islam a promise is a debt that must be fulfilled, then when a woman has made a promise to a man, she is obliged to fulfill it, and is ready to continue a religiously valid relationship through consent, and in the future is willing to become a wife. So in custom, through the principles of *Sharaq* and the Book of Allah, both parties who make a promise and those who are bound by the promise are obliged to accept the consequences of the promises they both made in this process, so that according to custom, if one of them violates it, they will be subject to customary sanctions, unless they die.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the results and findings in the study, the message of Islam in the ritual of finding a match in Malay marriage customs, that there is an Islamic message in 3 stages of the ritual of finding a match, namely first, the ritual of *merisik*, that in an effort to find some information collected by the *mak rangkai*, then the next goal is an introduction between the two families, it is clear that the message of Islam is in the form of moral values and *muamalah* values, prioritizing ethics in respecting the communication process, and maintaining a relationship of mutual respect between the two. Second, there is an Islamic message in the ritual of proposing, asking for the approval of the chosen woman to go to a more serious relationship through the family, so in the message of Islam this ritual prioritizes the value of manners, morals when a man wants to marry the woman of his choice, then the ethics must first ask permission, or approval from her parents. Third, in the ritual of delivering the *tande*, the man's family delivers a ring to the woman's house, as a sign of binding the promise, the promise is the ongoing agreement between a man and a woman to be willing to carry out a sacred relationship through *ijab kabul*, so the message of Islam contains the value of worship, because a promise in Islam is a debt that must be fulfilled by the party who made the promise. So when they fulfill the promise, they have also carried out worship.

### Thank-You Note

On this occasion, the author would like to express his gratitude to the Research Team, State Islamic University of North Sumatra, to the Communication Science Study Program, FIKOM, Islamic University of Riau, as well as to the resource persons, the Riau Malay Customary Institution, and all parties involved and contributed to the completion of this research.

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