



From Syariah to Berkah: The Tradition of *Ṣiḥḥah* Akad Nikah at Jam'iyah Rifa'iyah

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Abstract: This article examines the *ṣiḥḥah* of marriage, still practiced by the Rifa'iyah community. The implementation of *ṣiḥḥah* begins with negotiations between families and religious leaders, the selection of guardians, and the appointment of marriage witnesses. In addition, the bride-to-be learns the sciences of marriage, the improvement of two sentences of shahada. This research uses an ethnographic approach, focusing on the Jema'ah and Kyai Rifa'iyah. Data were collected in the field through observations, interviews with relevant parties, including the kyai (Rifa'iyah religious leader) and congregations, and documentation. Data analysis is an interactive process, namely data reduction, data display, and data verification. The research shows that the practice of *ṣiḥḥah* until now is one of the efforts to preserve Tradition in the Rifa'iyah congregation, and its meaning has undergone a shift - from syari'ah - the ratification of the previous marriage *akad* - to *berkah* - hoping for blessings from the kyai, especially Rifa'iyah.

Keywords: akad nikah; berkah; change; jam'iyah rifa'iyah; *ṣiḥḥah*; syari'ah

Abstrak: Artikel ini mengkaji *ṣiḥḥah* nikah yang masih dilakukan oleh jama'ah Rifa'iyah. Pelaksanaan *ṣiḥḥah* diawali dengan perundingan keluarga dan tokoh agama menyangkut pemilihan wali dan saksi nikah. Di samping itu, calon pengantin belajar ilmu-ilmu pernikahan, membenahan dua kalimat syahadat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan etnografi yang dilakukan kepada Jema'ah dan kyai Rifa'iyah. Data dikumpulkan dari lapangan dengan cara observasi, wawancara kepada para pihak terkait seperti kyai/tokoh agama Rifa'iyah dan jema'ah, serta dokumentasi. Analisis data secara proses interaktif yakni reduksi data, display data, dan verifikasi data. Dilakukannya *ṣiḥḥah* hingga kini merupakan salah satu upaya pelestarian tradisi di jama'ah Rifa'iyah, dan maknanya sudah mengalami pergeseran - dari

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syari'ah – pengesahan akad nikah sebelumnya - ke tabarruk-an – mengharap berkah dari para kyai khususnya Rifa'iyah.

Kata Kunci: akad nikah; berkah; jam'iyah rifa'iyah; *ṣiḥḥah*; syari'ah

Introduction

One of the marriage rituals practised by the Rifa'iyah is the occurrence of two marriage *akad*. These two *akad* are performed by the prospective bride and groom, one of which is conducted in the presence of the kyai of the Rifa'iyah Jam'iyah. The community refers to this as *ṣiḥḥah* or marriage according to sharia law. The reasons many people outside the Jam'iyah, from the past to the present, view the Rifa'iyah as a controversial Islamic sect (Djamil, 2001).

As observed on 27 September 2021 in Karangsari Village, Kendal Regency, one of the prospective bridal couples held two marriage ceremonies. The first ceremony was held by a marriage registrar (*pengulu*), while the second was held by a religious leader from Jam'iyah Rifa'iyah, with the guardian and witnesses chosen from among religious leaders. The ceremonies were held on the same day, with the first, conducted by the KUA official, taking place in the morning and the second, held in front of the Rifa'iyah kyai (religious leader), in the evening.

The *ṣiḥḥah* procession began during the time of KH. Ahmad Rifa'i and continues to this day. *Siḥḥah* is performed because KH. Ahmad Rifa'i considered marriages conducted by a *penghulu* (religious leader) to be invalid (Djadjasubrata, 1981). The parties involved in the marriage, including the guardian and witnesses, were deemed unqualified and did not meet the criteria for fairness (Djamil, 2001). KH. Ahmad Rifa'i did not consider marriages conducted before a *penghulu* to be valid, because in the past, *penghulu* were categorised as pious believers who practised Islamic law but were also willing to work for and submit to Dutch colonial rule (Kartodirjo, 1984)(Asyhadie, 2020). The view was actually based on religion, but it was considered strange because it differed from that of Muslims in general. The movement led by Ahmad Rifa'i then drew a response from the Dutch colonial government and the Muslim community at large (Padli & Amrulloh, 2022). They considered the religious movement led by KH Ahmad Rifa'i to be deviant.

To date, numerous studies have been conducted on marriage among the Rifa'iyah community. Parno's study, entitled "The Implementation of Customary Marriage Law Among the Rifa'iyah Community in the Modern Era of Government in Kendal Regency" (Parno, 2016). This study focuses on the implementation of customary marriage law from the perspective of the Rifa'iyah community in modern Kendal Regency, including the obstacles and solutions. Dahrul Muftadin with the title "Repetition of the Marriage Akad (*Ṣiḥḥah*) in the Tradition of the Rifa'iyah" (Muftadin, 2021). This study examines the practice of *ṣiḥḥah* from the colonial period to the present day and the factors behind it. This study found that although the Indonesian government is no longer a colonial government, some members of the Rifa'iyah community still practise *ṣiḥḥah* due to conflicts with religious leaders. Ikhsan Intizam, entitled "The Validity of Marriage at the KUA: A Case Study of Jam'iyah Rifa'iyah in Kendal Regency" (Intizam, 2016). This study focuses more on the reasons for doubting the validity of marriages conducted at the KUA (Office of Religious Affairs) from the perspective of the Jam'iyah Rifa'iyah. The practice of remarriage is indeed a tradition of the Jam'iyah Rifa'iyah.

Methods

This study uses qualitative research methods with a legal ethnography approach. Legal ethnography is a legal research method commonly developed in legal anthropology studies to uncover the legal behaviour of a particular group or community. This method focuses on in-depth legal research, targeting the legal behaviour of a microgroup of people with all their cultures (Wasitaatmaja, 2020).

The object of this study is the Rifa'iyah community in Kendal Regency, in the villages of Tanjunganom, Karangsari, and Rowosari, in the Rowosari Subdistrict. These villages are home to many members of the Rifa'iyah congregation who still adhere closely to the traditions and teachings/doctrines of KH. Ahmad Rifa'i. The informants in this study are members of the Rifa'iyah community, particularly influential religious figures, and include direct interviews with community members.

Data collection was conducted through face-to-face interviews, observations, and document studies. First, the interview technique involved direct interviews with a prepared interview guide that covered only the main points. Second, the type of observation conducted was participant observation. In this case, the researcher is part of the natural setting where the observation takes place. The procedure can be developed in several ways, including having a researcher join a group to conduct an observation (Miles & Huberman, 1992). Third, in the document study, the researcher used the primary information-gathering technique, namely, all processes or rituals related to the implementation of the şihħah tradition in marriage.

Furthermore, the author will collect several scientific papers related to the research. This effort is carried out to supplement the data, such as the book *Tabyin al-Işlah*, by KH. Ahmad Rifa'i, the implementation of the şihħah procession and other supporting data. Data validity testing is carried out by comparing data from interviews with data from observations, and data from interviews with data from documentation. In this way, the researcher can identify valid and reliable data, despite the possibility of contradictions or other issues (Webley, 2010).

The data analysis process is conducted interactively, whereby the first stage involves data reduction. From the data obtained, the researcher will select and transform the raw field data, extract the necessary data, and discard the unnecessary data. The second stage is data display, in which the necessary data from the research is filtered and then analysed. At this stage, the data is presented in narrative form as a set of organised information that allows conclusions to be drawn. The third stage is data verification/concluding (Miles & Huberman, 1992).

Literature Review

Marriage and its legal requirements

Marriage, according to Law No. 1 of 1974, is a spiritual and physical bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife, to form a happy and lasting household based on the one and only God (Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 1974). Meanwhile, according to Islamic law, marriage is defined as a powerful bond (*mitsaqan ghalidhan*) to obey Allah's commands, and fulfilling it is an act of worship (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam (Hukum Perkawinan, Kewarisan, Dan Perwakafan)*, 2012). Everyone who wishes to get married must fulfil several requirements, both administrative and substantive. These requirements are regulated to provide the parties to the marriage with legal certainty and to realise the purpose of marriage, namely to form a happy and lasting family based on the one true God (Imron, 2011).

Marriage laws in Indonesia remain diverse (R. Subekti, 1990). Islamic law, as codified in the Compilation of Islamic Law, is recognised as positive law in the Indonesian legal system. The Compilation of Islamic Law, which is still considered the maximum form and accumulation of Islamic legal rules in the Indonesian legal system, is a concrete manifestation of the clash between the interests of the implementation ('amaliyah) of Islamic religious law and the socio-political desires of state law (Wahid, 2014). The compilation of Islamic law is a legal product

whose sources and substance are derived from the books of fiqh, namely the Shafi'i school of thought, which applies in Indonesia (Rokhmadi, 2016).

The principles and requirements for a valid marriage for Muslims are stipulated in the Compilation of Islamic Law. First, the prospective bride and groom must meet the following requirements: the prospective husband must be at least 19 years old, and the prospective wife must be at least 16 years old (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam*, 2012). Prospective brides and grooms who are under 21 years of age must obtain permission from both parents. Marriage is based on the consent of the prospective bride and groom. There are no obstacles to the prospective husband and wife getting married. The prospective bride and groom are not currently bound in marriage to another person (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam*, 2012).

Secondly, the marriage guardian must be a man who fulfils the requirements of Islamic law, namely that he is Muslim, of sound mind, and has reached puberty (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam*, 2012). *Third*, the requirements for two witnesses are that they must be Muslim men, fair, of sound mind, of age, with no memory impairment, and not deaf or mute (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam*, 2012). *Fourth*, the *ijab* and *qabul* between the guardian and the prospective groom must be clear and consecutive, without any time lag. The marriage akad is carried out privately by the guardian concerned or by a guardian representing another person (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam*, 2012).

The validity of a marriage, according to Law No. 1 of 1974, Article 2, paragraph (1) states, "a marriage is valid if it is in accordance with the laws of their respective religions and beliefs". In addition to Article 2, Article 6 provides an indirect explanation of the requirements for marriage (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam*, 2012). There are five elements of marriage in Marriage Law No. 1 of 1974, namely a physical and spiritual bond between a man and a woman as husband and wife, forming a happy and lasting family (household), and based on belief in one God (*Undang-Undang Nomor 1 Tahun 1974*, n.d.).

The bond between husband and wife must be grounded in the one true God, making marriage sacred. The sanctity of this bond cannot be separated from the religion professed by the husband and wife. For followers of Islam, the marriage law is part of Islamic teachings that must be obeyed and implemented in accordance with the provisions stipulated in Islam, and there are no provisions/norms in the Marriage Law that contradict Islamic law (Rachman, 2014).

Ṣiḥḥah Marriage Aqad

The Jam'iyah Rifa'iyah performs *Ṣiḥḥah* as one of the ratification procedures in marriage. However, considering the two cases described above, what exactly is the concept of *ṣiḥḥah*? Is it merely a formality in marriage, or is it a marriage tradition carried out as an identity of the Rifa'iyah so that it does not disappear, or are there other reasons behind it all that are not yet known to the broader community?

This *ṣiḥḥah* procession began during the time of KH. Ahmad Rifa'i and continues to this day. The *ṣiḥḥah* is performed because KH. Ahmad Rifa'i considered marriages conducted by a *penghulu* (religious official) to be invalid. The parties involved in the marriage, such as the guardian and witnesses, were considered not to meet the requirements and criteria for fairness (Djamil, 2001). KH. Ahmad Rifa'i did not consider marriages conducted before a *penghulu* to be valid, because in the past, *penghulu* were categorised as pious believers who practised Islamic law but were also willing to work for and submit to Dutch colonial rule (Kartodirjo, 1984). The poems, written in Javanese Pegon script, convey anti-colonial messages, with terms such as *alim adil* (righteous scholar), *alim fasik* (wicked scholar), *kafir* (infidel), and *munaḥik* (hypocrite) referring to anti-Dutch colonialism and representing a form of non-physical and covert resistance that was nonetheless capable of rallying Islamic students and the community (Taḥsīnah et al., 2022). Writing books in Pegon was not only a form of resistance against the Indonesian language but also a strategy to avoid detection by the colonisers (Rosyid, 2020a). A total of 14 manuscripts were written, serving as guidelines for the Rifa'iyah community on various aspects of Islam (Noviani,

2021). Rifa'iah women played a significant role in maintaining the manuscript through regular recitations, TPA education, and Islamic boarding schools (Rosyid, 2020b). The majority of the guidelines in the manuscript were learned using the *Nadhom* model so that they would be easy to memorise and fit with the writing of the Qur'an (Farid, n.d.).

The teaching is as described in a *macapat* poem popular during the time of Ahmad Rifa'i.

Jalma alit tuwin pra priyayi

Puruita dhateng kalisalak

Dipunsekseni Islame

Sarta ningkah winangun

Nadyan janmawus kaki-kaki

Denya semah rabinya

Pan wus padha mabluk

Den nikahken malih iya

Sebab nggone ningkah kalanira nguni

Punika dereng esah

(Djadjasubrata, 1981).

This *mocopat* means that both ordinary people and dignitaries came to study at Kalisalak, "witnessed" their Islam, and "nikah winanggung" (renewed their marriage vows), even though they are already grandparents, they live with their wives, their hair has turned white, they are remarried because their previous marriage was not declared valid (Djadjasubrata, 1981).

As quoted from Steenbrink, before independence, village chiefs were official government officials appointed by the Governor-General or on his behalf, through nominations from the Regent with the resident's approval. In general, they came from families or acquaintances of the Regent and Wedono. As employees, they received wages/salaries directly from Batavia (Steenbrink, 1984). In addition, they hold religious duties, such as managing mosques or religious courts. They are also often assigned the task of administering compulsory vaccinations to residents to prevent disease outbreaks (Nuhriison, 2007).

It is emphasised in the book *Tabyin al-Işlah*, written by KH. Ahmad Rifa'i states that in order to become a guardian in marriage, one must fulfil seven conditions, while in order to become a witness in marriage, one must fulfil sixteen conditions (Rifai, n.d.). Unlike the KHI and Indonesian marriage laws, to be a witness in a marriage, one must meet several requirements, namely: be male, Muslim, fair, of sound mind, and not suffer from memory impairment or deafness (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam*, 2012).

Berkah (blessing)

The term *tabarruk* referred to here is a derivative of the word *barakah*, which has the same meaning as *barakah* (blessing), i.e., to receive blessings or good fortune. In Arabic, *barakah* means blessing, favour, grace, good fortune, happiness, or goodness that continues to grow and develop (Munawwir, 1997). Meanwhile, the word *berkah* in English is translated as blessing, which means God's mercy or blessing.

The term *barakah* here refers to the same meaning as *tabarruk*: to seek, ask for, or obtain blessings, good fortune, or safety. According to M. Quraish Shihab in his tafsir al-Misbah, "*barakah*" means something stable, as well as abundant and varied goodness that is continuous (Shihab, 2004). According to Imam Syamsuddin al-Sakhawi, as quoted by Muhyiddin Abdusshomad, *barakah* refers to the growth and increase of goodness and glory (Abdusshomad, 2005). Blessings are also often defined as a force filled with goodness, originating from Allah SWT,

who bestows abundant blessings in the physical (material) realm and prosperity and happiness in the psychological (spiritual) realm. Blessings, also known as good fortune or salvation, are gifts from God (Azra, 2008).

Barakah in the social order is a kind of mystical power that must be sought or requested and can bring about various kinds of good fortune, strength, safety, and other positive values. *Barakah* is believed to come from God through holy people, saints, or places with special powers or added value, from which blessings can be requested (Asmaran, 2018).

The term "blessing" in Sufism has a special meaning: spiritual influence or spiritual abundance. Therefore, blessing can be understood as a prayer of blessing or positive influence from someone or something believed to have special qualities capable of bringing safety and happiness or the fulfillment of wishes, such as parents, teachers (*mursyid*), scholars, and sacred places. Thus, blessing is understood as the transfer of spiritual influence from a person deemed superior or possessing special qualities (Azra, 2008).

Results and Discussion

Prosesion of *Siḥḥah* Marriage Akad

Before the *siḥḥah* ceremony, the parties involved meet to discuss plans for the marriage, including the appointment of a marriage guardian, marriage witnesses, and the time and venue of the ceremony. Men, such as the father or grandfather, will represent the family. If they are unavailable, the eldest brother will participate in the discussions. The outcome of the meeting between the three parties, namely the families of the bride and groom and religious leaders, will result in an agreement on the entire series of events in the marriage ceremony (Muttaqin, 2021).

Siḥḥah (remarriage akad) in Rowosari Subdistrict is still practised by all members of the Rifa'iyah congregation. As stated by one of the congregation members who performed *siḥḥah* for his child, "setelah akad KUA kami dari keluarga ingin untuk di *siḥḥah*, jika sudah di *siḥḥah* itu hati merasa lebih mantap. Kalau belum, rasanya masih ada yang kurang, seperti orang-orang dulu itu kan di *siḥḥah*" (Trilis, 2021).

The *siḥḥah* ceremony performed by the Rifa'iyah community in Rowosari Subdistrict is carried out either after the marriage akad or before the marriage akad in the presence of the KUA official. The *siḥḥah* can be performed one day before, one day after, or on the same day at a different time. There is no significant time gap between the two ceremonies, with a maximum of one day and a minimum of twenty-four hours. It depends on family members, both near and far, to remain at the bride and groom's residence and witness the marriage ceremony (*Observasi*, 2022). As with the *siḥḥah* performed in April 2024 by a bride and groom in Tanjunganom Village, Rowosari Subdistrict, which was held at 8 p.m., the *siḥḥah* was held at the bride's house, as both the bride and groom are members of the Rifa'iyah congregation. In the morning, on the same day, they had a marriage akad ceremony, held before KUA officials the following day,

The *siḥḥah* ceremony, as performed by the bride and groom, Prasetya and Khasanah, was held with only one day in between. Previously, they had conducted the marriage *akad* in front of a KUA official on 10 November 2021 at 9:00 a.m. Western Indonesian Time, then they conducted the *siḥḥah* at 8:00 p.m. at the groom's residence. The *Siḥḥah* was conducted under a prior agreement among the two families and the Rifa'iyah religious leader, who agreed to hold it at the groom's residence (*Observasi*, 2021).

There are no specific provisions stipulating that the *siḥḥah* must be performed at the bride's residence. As explained earlier, this is in accordance with the agreement between the parties concerned. If the groom is a member of the Rifa'iyah congregation, the *siḥḥah* can be performed at the groom's residence, from the selection of the guardian to the witnesses, which the groom's family will arrange. Conversely, if the bride is a member of the Rifa'iyah community, the *siḥḥah* will be performed at the bride's residence.

The bride and groom, Sarlan and Ainun, whose *ṣiḥḥah* took place on 27 September 2021 at 14:00 WIB, had previously conducted their KUA marriage on 26 September 2021 at 06:00 WIB at the bride's residence (*Observasi*, 2021). The previous agreement was that the *ṣiḥḥah* ceremony would be held at the bride's house. The reason is that the bride's family is a member of the Rifa'iyah congregation, while the groom's family is not, so the bride's family requested that the *ṣiḥḥah* be performed at the bride's residence.

The following are the things that need to be done before the implementation of *ṣiḥḥah* by the parties concerned, including:

Learning Kitab Tabyin al-*Iṣlah*

A person who intends to marry must be knowledgeable about the principles of marriage, so that the prospective bride and groom understand that the act they are about to perform is a form of worship. Therefore, it is essential to provide guidance and knowledge of Islamic law regarding marriage, which is done by studying with a religious teacher during the time of KH. Ahmad Rifa'i, someone who intended to marry, was taught about marriage, because at that time, KH. Ahmad Rifa'i was still alive, so Ahmad Rifa'i received the knowledge of marriage directly from KH. Ahmad Rifa'i (Badruzzaman, 2021). At present, prospective brides and grooms learn from religious leaders from the Rifa'iyah community. Kyai will provide a schedule for religious lessons for those who wish to marry, usually two to three times a week. The lessons are usually held after Isha prayers, when the prospective bride and groom come to the kyai's house. Thus, within a month, those who wish to marry will receive 8 to 12 religious lessons from the kyai (Badruzzaman, 2021).

They will be taught a special lesson on marriage, using the book *Tabyin al-*Iṣlah**. The purpose of studying this book is to learn about marriage, how to avoid domestic conflicts when married, and the meaning of marriage: that it is done only once in a lifetime, first and last, and that divorce should not happen. In addition, it is also important for them to understand the rights and obligations of husbands and wives, what a husband should do and what a wife should do, and the rights and obligations within the household, so that they do not demand their rights while forgetting their obligations, as this is one of the things that can trigger arguments and discord in the household (Badruzzaman, 2021).

The chapters studied by prospective brides and grooms include the obligations of husbands towards their wives, the obligations of wives towards their husbands, and matters that invalidate marriage (divorce, nusyuz, *ila'*, *dhihar*, and *li'an*). The most important points of the lessons are taken, relevant arguments are given, and the kyai provides case studies. *The Ngaji* is to ensure that the prospective bride and groom understand the meaning of marriage, and it is hoped that this will have a positive effect on their marriage (Badruzzaman, 2021).

In Rowosari Subdistrict, when people want to get married, they are asked by the kyai about their knowledge of marriage, including the rights and obligations of husband and wife, the requirements and pillars of marriage, and factors that can cause a household to break down. If they can answer these questions, the kyai do not need to teach or inform the bride and groom about these matters. However, especially for those with limited knowledge of religion, they will be taught about the principles of marriage and study for at least 1 to 2 days (Arifudin, 2022).

Learning Syahadat and al-*fātihah*

Before the marriage akad is carried out, the prospective bride and groom will be asked by the *kyai* to recite two sentences of the *syahada*. If the recitation is correct, the *siḥḥah* can be carried out immediately, but if it is not correct, the kyai will correct the recitation of the two sentences of the shahada, namely the shahada tauhid and the shahada rasul, along with their meanings. In addition to correcting the recitation of the two sentences of the shahada, the bride and groom must also correct the recitation of Surat *al-Fātihah*, which is performed and witnessed in front of religious leaders.

Every human voice can change over time, so to prevent errors in pronunciation, it is necessary to ensure that the two sentences of the *shahada* and the recitation of Surat *al-Fātihah* are pronounced correctly in accordance with tajwid and makhori'ul huruf (Ammar, 2022). Another reason is that the bride or groom may forget the two sentences of the *shahada* and Surat *al-Fātihah*, or they may do things that cause them to lose their faith. In addition, reciting the two sentences of the *shahada* can strengthen their faith in Allah SWT (Arifudin, 2022). Surat *al-Fātihah* is one of the surahs of the Qur'an, and its existence is considered established (Dhulkifli, 2019). This surah is part of the Qur'an and is an integral part of the Qur'an. In addition, a narration states that the Prophet Muhammad referred to *al-Fātihah* by other names, such as *fātihah al-Kitāb*, *umm al-Kitāb*, *umm al-Qur'an*, and others mentioned in the Qur'an (Al-Razi, 1981).

The recitation of the two sentences of the *shahada* and the reading of Surat *al-Fātihah* were performed by two prospective couples in Rowosari Subdistrict, namely Ainun and Sarlan, Candra and Khasanah. Before the akad nikah is performed, they first recite the two testimonies of faith and read Surat *al-Fātihah* in the presence of a religious leader, so that the leader can correct any mistakes in recitation. This recitation can be done before the marriage akad so that by the time the akad is performed, they are already fluent and confident in reciting them.

Kyai Aris conveyed this in an interview:

"Untuk syahadah nek wong kampung yo iyo wes apal, bukan untuk mengislamkan tapi untuk tabarrukan sistemnya, disamping itu, mosok wong tarjumah ora kon syahadah, misal wong jowo syahadah dan maknanya, kadang-kadang nek kon angaweruhi ati ing sun waktune ora nono, ora dadi nikahan malahan, jadi ada dispensasi tersendiri, ketika tidak memungkinkan ya tidak". "Untuk nggo tabarrukan syahadah dengan artinya dengan bahasa yang ia mampu, tadi jika rifaiyah tetap angaweruhi supaya generasi selanjutnya ada perhatian, syahadat kui kudu fasih, wong Rifa'iyah ora apal kui yo wagu" (Aris, 2021).

Appointment of the Wali

It is explained in the book *Tabyin al-Iṣlah* that if there is no specific guardian (*wali khos* خص) (order of guardians/guardians by blood), then the woman may submit to a just person who has the status of a mujtahid as her guardian, and her marriage is considered valid (Amin, 2016). A marriage conducted at home or elsewhere (outside the home) with a fair person who has the status of mujtahid as the guardian-judge is considered valid. Women can do this wali without a guardian (*wali*). However, even if the fair guardian does not have the status of *mujtahid*, it is still valid to marry the woman (al-Abbas, n.d.).

"Orang adil itu yo kyai, yang biasane ngaji di lingkungan masyarakat bareng jama'ah, yo itu disebut wali namanya. Orang-orang sini ketika memilih kyai itu karena ada rasa khawatir ketika ada kefasikan pada diri wali nasab itu, sehingga orang Rifa'iyah ya memilih kyai untuk menjadi wali" (Muttaqin, 2021).

The word "surrender" refers to *tahkim*, in which a woman can surrender herself to a fair person, namely a kyai who acts as her guardian, to arrange her marriage. Apart from the seven conditions for a woman to be allowed to use a guardian judge, another reason is the concern that corruption among guardians could invalidate the marriage. Therefore, it is necessary to perform *ṣiḥḥah* (two marriage akad) (Arifudin, 2022). At the same time, a woman who does not have a guardian may appoint a just person as her guardian representative (Rifai, n.d.).

The Rifa'iyah congregation, when performing *ṣiḥḥah*, uses a fair person, namely a kyai, as the guardian judge in their marriage, that is, a person whom the guardian of the woman authorises to marry the woman under his authority. This guardian is a religious leader (kyai) from the Rifa'iyah congregation. Although there is a guardian in the family who has the right to be a guardian (*akrob* or *ab'ad*), the Rifa'iyah themselves prefer to have a kyai marry the bride and groom, because one of the requirements for a guardian is that he must be a *mursyid* (just). As stated by one of the congregation members: "The person granting authority and the person receiving authority must have the same competence or ability, both must meet the requirements to be a guardian, and neither must possess any immoral characteristics." (Arifudin, 2022).

The reason why the Rifa'iyah congregation prefers a just person or a religious leader to perform the marriage ceremony for women is that they feel concerned and believe that they (the guardians) do not yet meet the criteria of fairness required of a guardian. Therefore, for the marriage to be considered valid and complete under Sharia law, it is appropriate to appoint a just person as a representative (Muttaqin, 2021).

When the arbitration is conducted in the presence of the kyai acting as the representative guardian, it must also be witnessed by two men, who are also witnesses in the *şihħah* marriage akad. Therefore, once the arbitration is completed, the marriage akad should be immediately performed in the presence of several guests from the family and community leaders of the Rifa'iyah Congregation to witness the *şihħah* ceremony.

Selection of Two Wedding Witnesses (*saksi*)

The selection of witnesses for the Rifa'iyah congregation is also essential, apart from the appointment of a guardian, because they determine whether a marriage has taken place and whether it is valid. The Rifa'iyah congregation is quite meticulous in selecting the two witnesses for the marriage akad. The Tradition of *sihḥah* is done for a reason, as witnesses must be *adil* (not committing major sins and not persisting in minor sins) and honourable (maintaining their honour/chastity). Witnesses who have lost their chastity (*marwat*) are not valid witnesses, which needs to be taken into consideration. The word *marwat* comes from the root word *murū'ah*, synonymous with *an-nawah*, which means a sense of honour (Amin, 2016).

One requirement to be a witness is to be able to see that a marriage has taken place. However, being a witness is not only about seeing outwardly that the marriage has been carried out in accordance with religious provisions, but also being able to see inwardly, that is, witnessing the behaviour or character of the bride and groom, their knowledge of *fiqh munakahat* or marriage sciences, and their worship. Thus, with this, it can be said that the bride and groom are ready to build a household (Arifudin, 2022).

In terms of the accuracy of choosing witnesses in marriage, someone who does not commit major sins and perpetuates minor sins, such as when they are in a crowd where men and women are in the same gathering, causing a commotion and taking photos together, then this causes the loss of the *marwah* nature of a witness. This requirement must be maintained for everyone who wants to be a witness (Muttaqin, 2021).

To achieve perfection in marriage, starting from the pillars and requirements to the implementation of the akad, the Rifa'iyah congregation chooses two witnesses from religious leaders or kyais. The requirements for a witness in a marriage are explained in the book *Tabayin al-Iṣlah*, which lists 16 requirements. Therefore, if a marriage akad that has already been performed is found to have a guardian and witnesses who do not meet the requirements, the akad must be repeated, namely *şihħah* (Muttaqin, 2021).

The method of identification when the marriage is not conducted within the Rifa'iyah community is that the religious leader will ask the bride and groom about the previous marriage ceremony, who their guardian and witnesses were. The religious leader will then recommend that the marriage *akad* be repeated with a guardian and witnesses taken from the kyai and religious leaders of the Rifa'iyah congregation. This Tradition is characterized by a cautious attitude among the Rifa'iyah, as there are fair criteria for guardians and witnesses; thus, a kyai is someone who can be assured of possessing these characteristics, namely his behaviour and knowledge of religious matters (Arifudin, 2022).

The consistency of Ahmad Rifa'i's teachings actually shows that doctrine, the path of preaching, and social resistance are still alive in society. The three cannot be separated. The Rifa'iyah congregation must obey religious teachings; therefore, in marriage, they must also observe the requirement that witnesses be fair (Kaprabowo, 2020). The *fiqh* products produced are oriented towards resistance against the colonial government, which is considered infidel. Those who supported the colonial government were labelled as heretics, thus rendering them ineligible to lead prayers or conduct marriages (Muftadin, 2017). The argument shows that KH. Ahmad Rifa'i was

very consistent in his Islamic teachings during the colonial era. Today, the Rifa'iyah congregation lives in an era of independence, but *sihhah* is still practised. In the Rifa'iyah community, the guidelines for attending weddings are obvious. Attending weddings can be *sunnah*, but it can also be *haram*. If there is something wrong, such as alcoholic drinks, then it is *haram* (forbidden). Similarly, if there is an unfair guardian, then it is *haram* for the congregation to attend the wedding (Lova, 2022). However, in this day and age, witnesses are believed to have acted reasonably, so the marriage akad need not be repeated. The fiqh rules in the Rifa'iyah community have become more flexible over time. Therefore, in some areas, it is not necessary to apply the *sihhah* marriage akad (Karyanto, 2001).

Ngalap Berkah (Seeking Blessings)

The *Siḥḥah* performed by the Rifa'iyah community is one of the efforts of someone who wants to get married to seek blessings from the kyai, who is considered to have greater knowledge of religion. The way to obtain blessings is to visit the kyai's house and ask for his prayers and blessings, because they believe that the kyai's prayers and blessings can bring blessings to the marriage (Muftadin, 2021). *Siḥḥah* does not mean that the Rifa'iyah community is exclusive, but rather that it can adapt to social change in general (Dian et al., 2013). They have now changed, becoming inclusive and open to the broader community. They want their lives to be blessed.

Tabaruk (seeking blessings) is asking for blessings from Allah through those close to the Prophet and righteous servants. Therefore, the purpose of *tabarukan* in marriage is to ask Allah to bless the marriage with people who are close to Allah so that their lives will always be happy, prosperous, and peaceful, and protected from sinful deeds (Farih, 2016). The Tradition of *tabaruk* has become deeply ingrained in Indonesian Muslim society. They are aware of their limitations, so they prefer to seek intercession through religious leaders, who are believed to be closer to the Almighty.

Blessings in the social order are a kind of mystical power that must be sought or requested and can bring about various kinds of good fortune, strength, safety, or other positive values (Musthafa, 2020). Blessings are believed to come from God through holy people, saints, or places with special powers or added value, where blessings can be sought (Asmaran, 2018). Therefore, blessings are highly desired by everyone, so the community strives to achieve them, one way being through marriages attended by religious leaders.

In general, blessings are often interpreted as good health and prosperity, because these are essential to everyone. People can engage in any activity comfortably and enjoyably if they are healthy and able to do so (Asmaran, 2018). Therefore, being healthy and prosperous is an extraordinary blessing and everyone's dream. The blessing of health is not only physical but also mental. Physical health enables a person to carry out their daily work effectively, while mental health provides peace of mind and resilience.

People who receive blessings also feel more resilient to stress and are better able to overcome life's challenges. In addition, blessings are often interpreted as a sign of prosperity. They have abundance and sustenance for their daily needs. This abundance includes food, shelter, and other basic human needs that support a decent life and bring prosperity to a person (Asmaran, 2018). Therefore, all human beings need blessings so that their lives are full of sustenance, happiness, and harmony.

Another form of blessing is peace and harmony within the family. Blessings can bring harmony to family relationships. Families that receive blessings live in peace, support each other, and are full of love. The *berakah* contributes to the emotional stability and happiness of each family member. Blessings are also reflected in healthy social relationships and supportive communities. Blessings in the form of good relationships with neighbours, friends, and the community can enrich people's lives through social support, a sense of togetherness, and solidarity (Musthafa, 2020). Maintaining good relationships with family, neighbours, and friends requires blessings to remain in divine favour.

Another significant form of blessing is faith and morals. People who receive these blessings can increase their spiritual and moral awareness. This *berkah* can give life more profound meaning, encouraging individuals to live with integrity, gratitude, and kindness. Awareness of God's blessings can motivate people to do good, help others, and lead more noble lives (Chodijah & Naimah, 2022).

Blessings can provide hope and strength to face life's challenges (Hayjar, 1975). The *berkah* encourages individuals to keep striving, believe in God's plan, and view the future with optimism. Tabarruk is an effort to add spiritual value to the process of servitude of a Muslim, which is believed by the majority of Muslims in the world (Hayjar, 1975). The implementation of the tabarruk process takes various forms and practices, one of which is in the context of marriage. As followers of Jam'iyah Rifa'iyah, they consider themselves *santri* (Islamic students) and believe that life must be blessed. Therefore, marriage must also be blessed by Allah SWT, by means of a marriage witnessed by the *kyai* (religious leaders) of Jam'iyah Rifa'iyah (Hasanah, 2018).

In Indonesia, especially in Java, the Tradition of seeking blessings is manifested in various ways, ranging from kissing the hands of a *kyai* (teacher) when shaking hands or meeting in a *majlis* (Chodijah & Naimah, 2022). The *berkah* is inseparable from the belief that blessings are seen as spiritual potential that can flow through everything and are strongest in humans. Therefore, the more a person is considered holy and knowledgeable, the greater the flow of blessings within them (Chodijah & Naimah, 2022). The background of the marriage akad in the Rifa'iyah community differs from *tajdidun nikah* in other places, which is now becoming a trend. *Tajdidun nikah* emerges because of economic factors, not having children, caution if the word *talak* is uttered, unresolved disputes, and to beautify the marriage, whereas *sihhah* is to obtain blessings from those who are close to Allah (Fauzi, 2018).

Based on the results of observations that have been carried out, it appears that the Rifa'iyah congregation, which is the subject of this study, consists of the fourth and fifth generations, who no longer strictly adhere to the doctrines taught by Mbah Rifa'i in the past. One example of this is that the Rifa'iyah congregation no longer performs *qadha* prayers during *tarawih* in Ramadan; the implementation of *ṣiḥḥah* in marriage akads is carried out only by some members of the congregation; and the meaning of *ṣiḥḥah* has also shifted to mean *tabarruk-an*. However, some members of the congregation also perform *ṣiḥḥah* as a precautionary measure in marriage *akad*.

It is known that nowadays, *ṣiḥḥah* is not practised by all Rifa'iyah congregations. The practice of *sihhah* is influenced by differences in *tempus* (time), even though they are in the same place or location. This difference in time or period has led to a shift in the meaning of *ṣiḥḥah*, which initially referred to a renewal of the marriage akad due to several factors related to its improper implementation in the past. Its meaning has now shifted to *tabarruk-an* to the *kyai*.

The congregation no longer practises *ṣiḥḥah* because they believe the government and legal system in Indonesia are no longer the same as they were during KH's time. Ahmad Rifa'i, when the country was still under Dutch colonial rule. Meanwhile, in the present day, the government and legal system, particularly marriage law, are well-organised and based on Islamic law. Therefore, there is no fundamental reason to continue practising *ṣiḥḥah*.

However, another reason congregations still perform *ṣiḥḥah* is their caution and anticipation when the requirements for marriage have not been fulfilled, especially those for the guardian and witnesses. Therefore, to make marriage a valid bond according to Islamic law. It is necessary to *sihhah* marriage akad, that is, to correct what is not yet correct, as KH. Ahmad Rifa'i did in the past. However, some members of the Rifa'iyah community do not practise *sihhah* as it is practised in Pekalongan. Marriage practices in the Rifa'iyah community are no different from those in the NU community (Nufa et al., 2021). They believe that marriage at the KUA is also in accordance with Islamic law.

According to Muhammad Quthub, religion, morality, and Tradition have no essential value. They are merely reflections of the social and economic conditions that exist in society. Moreover, because these conditions are not

permanent, whenever the means of production change, so do these conditions. At the same time, humans themselves are constantly changing. There is no such thing as human existence. There are no instincts and no natural urges (Quthub, 1984).

Humans are reflections of their environment, not only in their beliefs, faith, or customs, but also in their inner psychological existence. Every part of their soul is constantly changing—their individual, social, and sexual relationships. Property rights, marriage, and family, everything can change. There are no norms or criteria for measuring this except the level of adaptation to their environment. That is why there are no fixed norms whatsoever (Quthub, 1984). They were able to adapt to the changing times. The Rifa'iyah organisation still exists today, conducting religious studies, Islamic boarding schools, and schools (Fadhila & Amaruli, 2020).

Conclusion

The implementation of the *sihḥah* marriage *akad* of the Jam'iyyah Rifa'iyah today differs from that during the time of KH. Ahmad Rifa'i. The reason for this is that the Jam'iyyah Rifa'iyah is more cautious about matters related to Sharia, because these determine how well we, as humans, establish a relationship with Allah, the One God. Over time, the meaning of *sihḥah* has shifted to seek *berkah*, which is to obtain God's blessings through the 'alim (*ulama*). *Siḥḥah*, as one of the cultural concepts of Jam'iyyah Rifa'iyah, is a tradition that has its own value of truth for Jam'iyyah or its group, so that the truth and sustainability of a culture cannot be assessed objectively. The reasons given by the family for the need to perform *sihḥah* are, first, because it has always been a tradition in Rifa'iyah to perform *sihḥah*. Second, so that their hearts are more settled when the marriage is performed, and *sihḥah* is also performed, because as members of the Rifa'iyah community living in a Rifa'iyah environment, when *sihḥah* is not performed, they feel that something is missing.

Therefore, people who are not from the Rifa'iyah sect cannot judge that *sihḥah* marriage *akads* are strange, extreme, and so on. They do this not only to follow the traditions of the Rifa'iyah scholars but also to show obedience and adherence to the teachings of the Sharia as handed down by their ancestors, in the hope of receiving blessings (*ngalab berkah*) for their marriage and for all aspects of life. They believe that Allah gives blessings to those who follow in the footsteps of the scholars. A blessed life can enrich various aspects of human life, physically, socially, and spiritually. Blessings not only provide material well-being but also inner peace and harmonious relationships with others. Similarly, the Rifa'iyah congregation believes that marriages conducted only in the presence of KUA officials do not provide the congregation with peace of mind, even though the *akad* (marriage vows) remain valid.

To study this *sihḥah* marriage *akad* more comprehensively. It is not enough to do so in just one location, because the Rifa'iyah congregation is now spread widely across several districts. Each region has a different background and social context. Therefore, further study of the comprehensive nature of the *sihḥah* marriage *akad* is very much needed.

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