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The Phenomenon of Mass Marriages in *Kampung Matfa*

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Abstract

This article aims to describe Mafta and the phenomenon of mass marriage occurring in Kampung Mafta and to explore the underlying reasons behind this practice. The qualitative method is used with interviews, field observations, and documentation as data collection techniques. This study shows MAFTA Indonesia prioritizes the education and practical application of Islamic teachings, as well as promoting citizenship responsibility. Its core philosophy revolves around "togetherness" and "compassion," fostering equality among its members. Mass weddings in Kampung Matfa serve to strengthen the bonds within the community and dispel negative perceptions. Tuan Imam provides spiritual guidance, emphasizing virtues such as kindness and obedience to Allah and the Prophet. He teaches love for Allah, the Prophet, family, and nature, instilling a sense of unity within the community. The mass weddings in Kampung Matfa teach the values of love, unity, and equality while promoting goodness and citizenship responsibility.

Keywords: *Phenomenon, Mass Marriages, Kampung Matfa*

Abstrak

Artikel ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan tentang MAFTA dan fenomena pernikahan massal yang terjadi di Kampung Mafta serta mengeksplorasi alasan di balik praktik ini. Metode kualitatif digunakan dengan wawancara, observasi lapangan, dan dokumentasi sebagai teknik pengumpulan data. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa MAFTA Indonesia mengutamakan pendidikan dan penerapan praktis ajaran Islam, serta mendorong tanggung jawab kewarganegaraan. Filsafat inti MAFTA berpusat pada "persatuan" dan "kasih sayang," yang menciptakan kesetaraan di antara anggotanya. Pernikahan massal di Kampung Matfa berfungsi untuk memperkuat ikatan di dalam komunitas dan menghilangkan persepsi negatif. Tuan Imam memberikan panduan spiritual, menekankan kebajikan seperti kebaikan dan ketaatan kepada Allah dan Nabi. Beliau mengajarkan cinta kepada Allah, Nabi, keluarga, dan alam, menanamkan rasa persatuan dalam komunitas. Pernikahan massal di Kampung Matfa mengajarkan nilai-nilai cinta, persatuan, dan kesetaraan sambil mendorong kebaikan dan tanggung jawab kewarganegaraan.

Kata Kunci: *Fenomena, Nikah Massal, Kampung Mafta*

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A. Introduction

Marriage plays a crucial role in society, serving as a fundamental and essential bond in organizing household life (Asbar Tantu 2013; Panjaitan and Sundawa 2016). Through marriage, it is hoped that righteous and virtuous offspring will be obtained, who can contribute to the nation and country, especially in upholding religious values and ensuring the continuity of life in this world and the hereafter (Asbar Tantu 2013).

In the perspective of Islam, marriage is considered noble and sacred as it represents an act of worship to Allah, following the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, and being carried out with sincerity, responsibility, and adherence to legal provisions (Hasbi and Apandi 2022; Islamiyati and Setyowati 2019). Living in a family is inherent to human nature as a social being within the community. The Muslim family or household stands as the most vital institution in the lives of Muslims in general. This is due to the significant role of the family in nurturing and shaping the future generation and safeguarding the community as a shield to protect the nation (Iskandar 2018).

Within Islam, the concept of marriage is meticulously considered. Besides being the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad SAW, marriage is viewed as a common good, for without it, people would remain strangers to one another, and the continuity of life would perish (Arifin, Nurhidayat, and Panji 2022; Tanuri 2022). Marriage also serves to preserve harmony, prevent conflicts, deter enmity among individuals, and foster a structured social space (Yousuf and Aziz 2022; Zulaili 2020) (Zulaili, 2020).

The ultimate purpose of marriage is to establish a family that embodies harmony, affection, and compassion (*sakinah, mawaddah, warahmah)* (Nazaruddin 2020). The religious guidance provided to couples intending to marry represents an effort to support their journey in alignment with Islamic teachings. Such guidance serves as motivation for those embarking on marriage to face various challenges with resilience. This guidance can take on both preventive and corrective measures.

Apart from conventional marriage, there is also mass marriage, wherein multiple couples marry simultaneously, typically involving five pairs or even more. It is important to note that in such events, the ceremony is limited to a wedding reception, also known as "walimatul 'ursy," carried out on a mass scale, as the participating couples have already performed the solemnization (ijab qobul) legally at their respective homes before the mass wedding event (Syeikh Muhammad bin Qasim 2000).

Initially, the mass marriage program in Kampung Matfa was designed for young adults who were ready for marriage but did not have suitable partners. The program aims to assist and alleviate the burden of those individuals about to marry, particularly concerning financial aspects, especially for grooms who often bear significant expenses during the wedding. To participate in the mass marriage organized by Kampung Matfa, the cost for the participants is not substantial, as the pesantren (Islamic boarding school) adjusts the expenses according to their capabilities.

Termed "mass marriage," it is hoped that the unions formed through this program will bear blessings and serve as a means of Islamic propagation to conduct marriages in accordance with the teachings and directives of Islam. Additionally, it is hoped that mass marriages can create families that embody tranquility, affection, and compassion for all participants. The selection of individuals to participate in this program is based on observation and specific criteria, including reaching a mature age, displaying independence and maturity for starting a family, and possessing good character traits. The competent authority then offers and assesses whether the individuals are ready to partake in the mass wedding.

Based on the above description, the purpose of this article is to describe about Mafta and the phenomenon of mass marriage occurring in Kampung Mafta and explore the underlying reasons behind this practice.

B. Metode

This article employs the field research method due to the necessity for researchers to directly immerse themselves in the community. The qualitative research method was chosen as it centers on activities such as interviews, field observations, and documentation. Through this approach, the researchers aim to provide a clear overview of the observations obtained in the field and expound upon them in written form.

This study is conducted in the village of Bukit Tua, Kec. Padang Tualang, Kabupaten Langkat, which is also known as Kasih Sayang Village, also known as Perkampungan Majelis Ta'lim Fardhu 'Ain (MAFTA), commonly referred to as Kampung Matfa Indonesia. The primary data for the research is collected through direct interviews with couples who participated in a mass wedding ceremony during a specific period. Despite its field nature, the study incorporates relevant references in the form of journal articles, books, and articles.

C. Result and Discussion

1. Mafta Indonesia

Mafta Indonesia founded by K.H. Ali Mas'ud, commonly known as Yang Mulia Tuan Guru. When he arrived in Buluh Telang in 1972, he noticed that the Islamic teachings were not well-developed in the diverse community. Taking small steps, Yang Mulia Tuan Guru began preaching in a seldom-used mosque, inviting people to pray together and learn about Islam. He continued his mission for 43 years until his passing on November 12, 2011. His successor, Muhammad Imam Hanafi, also known as Tuan Imam, was entrusted to carry on his father's vision (BBC News Indonesia 2020; Harahap et al. 2020).

Under Tuan Imam's guidance, the study of individual religious obligations (farthu 'ain) not only involved learning but also practical application, benefiting everyone regardless of their background. Tuan Imam emphasized unity through compassion, rejecting hierarchical control over others. This approach led MAFTA Indonesia to establish connections with public figures,

social institutions, and government agencies, promoting communication and bonding. Consequently, MAFTA Indonesia became a tightly knit community where members pooled their skills, knowledge, and resources for collective economic development.

In addition to spreading Islamic teachings, Tuan Imam stressed the significance of being responsible citizens. He outlined nine requirements for his followers, focusing on obeying leaders, performing good deeds, and living compassionately towards all individuals and nature. Trust in the leader played a central role in maintaining peace within the MAFTA community. Members believed that the leader's happiness brought joy to the community, while the leader's struggles couldn't ease the followers' distress, fostering unity and support among the members.

The core philosophy of MAFTA lies in togetherness and compassion, promoting equality among members irrespective of their possessions or social status. Members supported one another, sharing resources and wealth with a strong emphasis on the well-being of the community. Profits generated from various businesses were contributed to the community treasury (baitul mal) without a traditional payroll system. The distributed profits met the community's needs and aided in property development. Tuan Imam's teachings emphasized that compassion should be the driving force behind all human actions, leading to contentment and happiness in life. The concept of unity and equality within MAFTA Indonesia allowed its members to flourish, creating a harmonious and supportive community (Saputra, Yunanda, and Kiram 2022).

2. **Mass Marriage in Kampung Matfa: Background and Phenomenon**

According to Tuan Imam, the background for conducting mass weddings in Kampung Matfa is the growing number of mature youths in the village ready to establish families and the village's relatively stable economic conditions that allow for vibrant mass wedding celebrations. These mass weddings serve to strengthen bonds among community members and dispel any negative perceptions of exclusivity, as some outsiders previously viewed the village as

closed-off. By inviting the entire community, officials, and citizens, they aimed to change such perceptions, and the positive outcomes were evident.

Under the leadership of Tuan Imam, mass weddings were introduced, taking place 2-3 times a year, depending on the young adults' readiness in the village. Besides mass weddings, other celebratory events like name-giving ceremonies and mass circumcisions were also organized with grandeur. Mr Daud, one of the participants in the mass wedding, shared his experience. At 31 years old, he hails from Kampung Matfa, and his parents have been residents since Tuan Guru's leadership. His spouse, Yuni Handari, is from Desa Tanjung Beringin. Mr. Daud highlighted the significance of togetherness during mass weddings, where families and not just the bride and groom's sides but the entire Kampung Matfa community participated. Cost-effectiveness and reaching the right age for marriage were additional reasons for his participation, expressing his joy and enthusiasm for these events.

Mr. Daud emphasized that mass weddings were not based on arranged marriages but rather on mutual consent and consideration of compatibility. The ceremonies were well organized, with committees overseeing all wedding proceedings. The wedding reception followed a joint akad conducted at their respective homes two weeks earlier.

The wedding guests were not limited to family members or local residents; distinguished guests, including government officials and Tuan Imam's guests, were also invited. Pak Daud's overall impression of being a participant in a mass wedding was one of happiness and contentment, and he expressed hopes for the tradition's continuation annually. To become a candidate for a mass wedding, Pak Daud shared the requirements for groom candidates, which included memorizing relevant verses and hadiths related to marriage, being capable of becoming an imam, and guiding one's spouse.

Based on interviews with couples who took part in mass weddings in Kampung Matfa, the values of love and togetherness, as well as the affordability of such ceremonies, had an impact on their decision to attend. Participants

embraced rational decision-making, aligning with the primary goal of adhering to Islamic values. Regarding the legal perspective on mass weddings in Kampung Matfa, Tuan Imam asserted that holding a mass wedding without a separate ijab qobul ceremony is permissible (mubah). Since the couples had already completed the ijab qobul privately, the wedding reception itself suffices. From an Islamic legal standpoint, as long as there is no harm to anyone, this practice is permissible. Additionally, Tuan Imam highlighted that attending walimatul ursy celebrations for mass weddings is considered a communal obligation (fardhu 'ain), both for specific and general invitations. This reinforces the community's sense of togetherness and supports the positive and celebratory spirit of mass weddings.

3. Tuan Imam's Spiritual Guidance in Mass Marriages

Based on the interview results with Tuan Imam regarding the legal aspect of mass weddings, Tuan Imam stated that there is no obligation to conduct mass weddings as long as the necessary conditions and requirements are met. Tuan Imam predominantly focuses on providing guidance concerning the spiritual dimension and imparting knowledge about the soul and behavior. The spiritual guidance offered to the congregation of Kampung Matfa is regularly conducted every Saturday night. Tuan Imam and the congregation gather at the Surau, where he delivers sermons while the congregation listens attentively. Furthermore, Tuan Imam also extends his guidance to the congregation in their workplace or imparts spiritual insights and advice. Tuan Imam emphasizes the importance of "addinu" (religious teachings). When members of the congregation encounter conflicts, he calls and reminds them of their responsibilities and entrusted duties. In this way, Tuan Imam continually guides and counsels his congregation on a daily basis.

Tuan Imam asserts that a leader must not only direct but also serve as an exemplar. He emphasizes the distinction between commanding and inviting, likening it to the difference between instructing someone to eat and inviting them to eat. Hence, Tuan Imam's guidance entails not only instructing but also exemplifying righteous conduct for the congregation to emulate.

Effective leadership, Tuan Imam contends, hinges on the leader's patience and the congregation's obedience. A patient leader with a disobedient congregation would not achieve their intended goals. Accordingly, Tuan Imam's guidance centers on fostering the congregation's obedience to Allah and His Messenger. He imparts the principle of amal ma'ruf nahi mungkar, which advocates promoting goodness and discouraging evil.

In the implementation of mass weddings, Tuan Imam instills a positive message across various spheres. The remarkable unity attained within the community is noteworthy. Throughout his tenure as the leader of Kampung Matfa Indonesia, Tuan Imam asserts that no negative comments or news have been received concerning the community he leads.

Tuan Imam imparts knowledge that revolves around love, namely, love for the Prophet and Messenger, love for family, and love for nature. He advises against any form of censure towards nature, urging instead to praise and extol its wonders. Tuan Imam reminds his followers that all aspects of existence emanate from Allah, and both good and bad are determined by Him—a fundamental tenet of faith. Consequently, gratitude is to be expressed in the face of blessings, while patience should be exercised in times of adversity. It is through these virtues that the pleasure of Allah is attained. Tuan Imam further underscores the importance of compassion and togetherness.

According to Tuan Imam, families participating in mass weddings experience minimal conflicts as they wholeheartedly support and care for one another. He emphasizes that should any member feel uncomfortable within their own family unit, they are free to seek alternative leadership. Moreover, should he, as Tuan Imam, make any mistakes, they are encouraged to seek guidance from another teacher. Through Tuan Imam's spiritual guidance and teachings of love, the mass wedding event at Jamaan Matfa Indonesia has engendered a positive message and fostered strong unity within the community."

D. Conclusion

K.H. Ali Mas'ud, also known as Tuan Guru, founded the organization MAFTA Indonesia. Tuan Imam Hanafi, or Tuan Imam, is his successor. MAFTA

Indonesia prioritizes the education and practical application of Islamic teachings, as well as promoting citizenship responsibility. Its core philosophy revolves around "togetherness" and "compassion," fostering equality among its members. Profits generated from business activities are contributed to the community treasury, known as "baitul mal," to support the community's needs and property development. Mass weddings in Kampung Matfa serve to strengthen the bonds within the community and dispel negative perceptions. Government representatives as well as the entire community attend the events. Tuan Imam provides spiritual guidance, emphasizing virtues such as kindness and obedience to Allah and the Prophet. He teaches love for Allah, the Prophet, family, and nature, instilling a sense of unity within the community. The mass weddings in Kampung Matfa teach the values of love, unity, and equality while promoting goodness and citizenship responsibility..

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