

## THE PHENOMENON OF RING EXCHANGE IN CIKUPA TANGERANG COMMUNITY THROUGH ISLAMIC JURISPRUDENCE PERSPECTIVE

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### **Abstract**

*The ring exchange is a common phenomenon that is commonly practiced before the marriage contract in most Indonesian communities, including the Cikupa community, as a sign of seriousness between two families. It is considered an inseparable part of the khitbah (engagement) process and something that must be done for some people. In the khitbah process, a man puts a ring on a woman and vice versa, or the wearing is represented by their wali, with rings made of gold or other materials. This research aims to find out how the ring exchange in the khitbah is carried out in Cikupa, Tangerang, and the views of Islamic Sharia on this process, as well as to know the law of this phenomenon. This research is field research using an analytical method where the researcher examines and primary sources taken from the turats books related to khitbah, with secondary data collection methods through interviews with the Cikupa community who have carried out the khitbah process. The results of the research and interviews, it can be concluded that some of the implementations of the ring exchange procession in the khitbah that occurred in Cikupa Tangerang were not in accordance with Islamic Sharia, because there were still some Sharia prohibitions in the process, such as finding a man who proposed wearing a gold ring and also encountering mixing and physical contact between the two parties (the man who proposed and the woman who was proposed), even though they were not yet a legally married couple.*

**Keywords:** Ring Exchange, Engagement, Cikupa, Islamic law.

**Abstrak**

Tukar cincin adalah fenomena umum yang lazim dilakukan sebelum akad nikah di sebagian besar masyarakat Indonesia, termasuk masyarakat Cikupa, sebagai tanda keseriusan antara dua keluarga. Dianggap sebagai bagian yang tidak terpisahkan dari proses khitbah dan sesuatu yang harus dilakukan bagi sebagian orang. Dalam proses khitbah, seorang pria memakaikan cincin untuk wanita dan sebaliknya, atau pemakaian diwakilkan oleh wali mereka, dengan cincin yang terbuat dari emas atau bahan lainnya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui cara pelaksanaan tukar cincin dalam khitbah di Cikupa, Tangerang, dan memahami pandangan syariah Islam terhadap proses ini, juga mengetahui hukum dari fenomena ini. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian lapangan dengan menggunakan metode analitis di mana peneliti mengkaji dan memeriksa sumber-sumber primer yang diambil dari kitab-kitab turats yang terkait dengan khitbah, dengan metode pengumpulan data sekunder melalui wawancara dengan masyarakat Cikupa yang telah melakukan proses khitbah. Dari hasil penelitian dan wawancara yang penulis lakukan, dapat disimpulkan bahwa beberapa pelaksanaan prosesi tukar cincin dalam khitbah yang terjadi di Cikupa Tangerang ada yang tidak sesuai dengan syariat Islam, karena masih terdapat beberapa larangan syariah dalam prosesnya, seperti dijumpai pria yang melamar memakai cincin emas dan dijumpai pula pencampuran dan kontak fisik antara kedua belah pihak (laki-laki yang melamar dan perempuan yang dilamar), padahal mereka belum menjadi pasangan suami istri yang sah.

**Kata Kunci:** Tukar Cincin, Lamaran, Cikupa, Hukum Islam.

**INTRODUCTION**

Marriage, in Islamic belief, is a sacred bond that legalizes the relationship between a man and a woman. Through marriage, two people form a family under the auspices of sharia law, with the aim

of bringing peace, love and blessings.<sup>1</sup> Otherwise, any form of relationship outside the bonds of marriage is seen as a major violation of religious teachings, which not only destroys the moral order, but also brings wrath from Allah and His Messenger.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, Islam seriously regulates the course of marriage from the early stages,<sup>3</sup> including an important phase known as *khitbah* or engagement.

*Khitbah* is not just a social formality, but part of the sharia that contains great wisdom. It serves as a bridge between two families, strengthens communication, and provides space - albeit limited - for the bride and groom to get to know each other before entering married life.<sup>4</sup> There is an important psychological and emotional purpose behind it: to build mental readiness, and provide a firmer foundation for the household to be built.<sup>5</sup>

However, with the time and rapid flow of modernization, the practice of *khitbah* has undergone many changes. Local traditions, popular culture, and foreign cultural influences have evolved over time, shaping how people engage with the world. This

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<sup>1</sup> Mohammed bin Ali Al-Arfaj, *An-Nikah Thamaratuhu Wa Fawa'iduhu* (Damaskus: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1997).

<sup>2</sup> Abdul Aziz, “Istrāṭijyyat Murshidī Al-Dīn Fī Man‘ al-Zawāj al-Mubakkir Bisabab al-Ḥaml Khārīj Itār al-Zawāj Fī Jākartā al-Sharqiyyah (Strategies of Religious Counselors in Preventing Early Marriage Resulting from Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy in East Jakarta),” *Al-Zahra: Journal for Islamic and Arabic Studies* 21, no. 2 (2024): 3, <https://doi.org/10.15408/zr.v21i2.41899>.

<sup>3</sup> Yuli Yasin, “Al-Zawāj al-‘Urfī Bayna al-Fiqh al-Islāmī Wa-al-Qānūn al-Indūnisī (Customary Marriage between Islamic Jurisprudence and Indonesian Legal System),” *Al-Zahra: Journal for Islamic and Arabic Studies* 20, no. 1 (April 30, 2023): 2–4, <https://doi.org/10.15408/zr.v20i1.32059>.

<sup>4</sup> Salwa Shofiatul Khulqi, Cut Eva Novita Restu, and Imam Sucipto, “Islamic *Khitbah* (A Comparison of Madzhab in Islam),” *ARRUS Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 3, no. 3 (2023): 22–27, <https://doi.org/10.35877/soshum1863>.

<sup>5</sup> Aliyu Alhaji Rabi, Dahiru Inuwa Ibrahim, and Jaafar Sa’ad, “Islamic Principles on *Khitbah* and Courtship Versus The Effects of Social Media on Muslim Marriages In Northern Nigeria,” *Jurnal Syariah* 27, no. 1 (2019): 2–19, <https://doi.org/10.22452/js.vol27no1.5>.

cultural evolution extends to practices such as engagement (khitbah), which have adapted to contemporary dynamics. As global and local elements intersect, these evolving traditions create hybrid expressions that expand individual and collective identities while transforming cultural practices such as khitbah into new forms of participation and interaction.<sup>6</sup> One practice that is now considered almost mandatory in the engagement procession is the exchange of rings between the bride and groom. Many people think that the moment of putting a ring on the ring finger symbolizes love, commitment, and the union of two hearts. In fact, this tradition has no basis in Islamic teachings.

Furthermore, the practice of exchanging rings raises several sharia issues. Among these are the potential for direct contact between men and women who are not yet halal to each other, as well as the use of ring materials that are often not in accordance with religious requirements - for example, the use of gold rings by men. In fact, the Prophet SAW has clearly stated that gold is permissible for women but forbidden for men.<sup>7</sup>

The dynamic rhythms of daily life, shaped by spatial structures and temporal patterns, gradually influence the formation of social habits within communities. As human activities evolve along with functional shifts in urban and regional spaces, cultural practices also adapt and take on new forms.<sup>8</sup> In areas such as Cikupa, Tangerang, the exchange of rings during the Khitbah procession has become an integral part of engagement practices - considered by

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<sup>6</sup> Bernardo Figueiredo, "Imagining the Global: Transnational Media and Popular Culture beyond East and West," *Consumption Markets & Culture* 21, no. 2 (2018): 14–29, <https://doi.org/10.1080/10253866.2016.1161744>.

<sup>7</sup> Arief Iyustiana et al., "Takhrij and Syarah Hadith about Chemistry: Prohibition of Wearing Gold for Men in Islam," *Gunung Djati Conference Series* 5 (2021): 19–26.

<sup>8</sup> Haoran Wang et al., "A Time-Series-Based Model to Detect Homogeneous Regions of Residents' Dynamic Living Habits," *Geo-Spatial Information Science*, December 2024, 1–11.

many to be essential to the completion of the ritual. This phenomenon illustrates how local traditions—called “urf” in Islamic Sharia—are not static but are constantly shaped by the lived routines of residents, forming a kind of "cultural timetable" that blends inherited customs with contemporary social expectations.<sup>9</sup>

This situation then raises the question, what is the view of Islamic law on the custom of exchanging rings in khitbah carried out by the community? Is this practice in accordance with Islamic values, or does it need to be reviewed from the aspect of sharia law?

Considering this reality, there is a need to examine more closely how the practice of exchanging rings in the khitbah is understood and practiced by the community, and how this practice is consistent with or contradicts the principles of Islamic Sharia. It is also important to explore how this tradition is perceived within the framework of Qur'anic guidance and Prophetic traditions, and how local communities reconcile cultural customs with Islamic teachings.<sup>10</sup>

This research uses a descriptive-analytical approach. Through the descriptive method, the researcher seeks to describe the community's understanding of the ring exchange tradition in khitbah, and explain the Islamic laws related to it. Meanwhile, the analytical approach is used to further examine the practice based on empirical data obtained from the people of Cikupa, Tangerang.

In the data collection process, the researcher combined two main techniques. First, interviews were conducted with a number of

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<sup>9</sup> Christopher Adair-Totef, “The Cambridge Handbook of Social Theory, Volume I: A Contested Canon and Volume II: Contemporary Theories and Issues,” *Contemporary Sociology: A Journal of Reviews* 51, no. 3 (2022): 21–35, <https://doi.org/10.1177/00943061221090769m>.

<sup>10</sup> Abdul Hakim Wahid, “Mu‘āmalat Al-Mujtama‘ al-Muslim al-Indūnīsī Min Qibali al-Qur’ān Wa-al-Ḥadīth (Interaction of the Indonesian Muslim Society According to the Qur’an and Hadith),” *Al-Zahra: Journal for Islamic and Arabic Studies* 19, no. 2 (October 17, 2022): 11–12, <https://doi.org/10.15408/zr.v19i2.28410>.

participants who were Cikupa residents, with the aim of finding out whether they practiced the ring exchange tradition during khitbah, what materials were used for the rings, and whether there was physical contact between the bride and groom when the rings were paired. Secondly, the researcher distributed questionnaires through an online form (Google Form) to people who had undergone khitbah and exchanged rings. The data collected from these two methods became the main material to analyze the extent to which the tradition takes place, as well as how people perceive it in the light of Islamic law.

This research is expected to provide a more complete understanding of the socio-religious dynamics in the engagement procession, especially in the context of the Cikupa, Tangerang community, and contribute to the contemporary fiqh discourse that touches on the daily life of Muslims.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Khitbah in the perspective of Islamic law is an important stage in the process towards marriage, which not only has social meaning but also legal and ethical dimensions. In language, khitbah comes from the word *خطب يخطب خطبة* which means request or proposal<sup>11</sup>, and in fiqh terms it is interpreted as a man's statement to marry the woman he is aiming for.<sup>12</sup> Khitbah and courtship are two such phases, which, according to the prevailing moral fabric of society, are essential preliminary phases in the journey toward marriage. Ideally, these practices are guided by the ethical principles of Shariah, fostering mutual understanding and respectful preparation for marital life. However, in contemporary contexts, such as Northern

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<sup>11</sup> Jamal al-Din Ibn Manzur al-Ansari, *Lisan Al-Arab* (Beirut: Dar al-Sadir, 1993).

<sup>12</sup> Abu Malik Kamal bin al-Sayyid Salim, *Sahih Fiqh Al-Sunnah Wa Adillatuh Wa Tawdhil Madhahib al-A'immah*, vol. 3 (Cairo: Al-Maktabah Al-Tawfiqiyyah, 2003).

Nigeria, the integrity of these stages is increasingly challenged. The unchecked use of social media, the uncritical emulation of certain Western courtship norms, and the trend of prolonged engagements have contributed to a departure from traditional Islamic values. These shifts pose a threat not only to the spiritual and moral underpinnings of marriage but also to the long-term dynamics of family life and the ethical well-being of the broader community.<sup>13</sup>

In Islam, *khitbah* is seen as a preliminary contract or promise that precedes the marriage contract, not part of the contract itself, so it does not have the legal consequences of marriage. However, this process is still surrounded by the manners and provisions of *sharia* that emphasize the need to maintain the honor of both parties and avoid practices that are not in accordance with Islamic values.<sup>14</sup> Islamic scholars agree that *khitbah* is permissible, as reflected in the Qur'an Surah Al-Baqarah verse 235

وَلَا جُنَاحَ عَلَيْكُمْ فِيمَا عَرَّضْتُمْ بِهِ مِنْ خِطْبَةِ النِّسَاءِ أَوْ أَكْنَنْتُمْ فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ عَلِمَ اللَّهُ أَنْكُمْ سَتَدْكُرُونَهُنَّ وَلَكِنْ لَا تُؤَاعِدُوهُنَّ سِرًّا إِلَّا أَنْ تَقُولُوا قَوْلًا مَعْرُوفًا ۚ وَلَا تَعْزِمُوا عُقْدَةَ النِّكَاحِ حَتَّى يَبْلُغَ الْكِتَابُ أَجَلَهُ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ فَاحْذَرُوهُ ۚ وَاعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ حَلِيمٌ.

*"There is no blame on you for subtly showing interest in 'divorced or widowed' women or for hiding 'the intention' in your hearts. Allah knows that you are considering them 'for marriage'. But do not make a secret commitment with them, you can only show interest in them appropriately. Do not commit to the bond of marriage until the waiting period expires. Know that Allah is aware of what is in your hearts, so beware of Him. And know that Allah is All-Forgiving, Most Forbearing."*

<sup>13</sup> Rabi'u, Ibrahim, and Sa'ad, "Islamic Principles on *Khitbah* and Courtship Versus the Effects of Social Media on Muslim Marriages In Northern Nigeria."

<sup>14</sup> Mohammed bin Ahmad al-Saleh, *Fiqh Al-Ushrah 'Inda al-Imam Sheikh al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah Fi al-Zawaj Wa Atharuhu* (Cairo: al-Taufiqiyyah, 1999).

In this verse, Allah allows a man to express his desire to marry a woman who is in the 'iddah period of her husband's death, either openly or sarcastically, if it does not lead to a marriage contract before the iddah period is over. This shows that khitbah has rules that need to be considered so as not to violate the limits of Sharia.<sup>15</sup>

In addition, in a sahih hadith, it is mentioned that the Prophet Muhammad forbade someone to propose to a woman who had already been proposed to by someone else, except with the permission of the previous suitor.<sup>16</sup> This provision aims to maintain ethics and honor in the khitbah process and prevent disputes or hostility among fellow Muslims. In this context, the scholars then explained the conditions for the validity of khitbah, including that the woman being proposed to is not someone's wife, is not a woman who is being legally khitbah by someone else, and there are no other shar'i obstacles to marrying her. So, khitbah is an important first step towards a legal and blessed marriage, which needs to be done with full awareness of the Shari'ah guidance and maintaining noble moral values.

Indonesia is a country with a rich diversity of local traditions and customs, particularly in marriage. These customs, referred to as adat, continue to influence individual behavior and societal expectations, even in the context of rapid socio-economic development. Despite the influence of modernization and the rise of educational attainment, cultural norms surrounding marriage – such as the appropriate age at marriage and the practice of exchanging rings during when the couple is engaged – remain influential. In many Indonesian communities, these customs are not merely ceremonial but serve as significant cultural markers that reinforce

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<sup>15</sup> Muḥammad Sayyid 'Aṭiyyah Aṭ-Ṭanṭāwī, *At-Taḥsīn al-Wasīṭ Li 'l-Qur'ān al-Karīm* (Cairo: Dār Nahḍat Miṣr li ṭ-Tibā'ah wa n-Naṣr wa 't-Tawzī', 1992).

<sup>16</sup> Salim, *Sahih Fiqh Al-Sunnah Wa Adillatuh Wa Tawdhil Madhahib al-A'immaḥ*.

social cohesion and personal commitment.<sup>17</sup> The endurance of these traditions underscores the capacity of local values to adapt and coexist with modern influences, providing a distinctive perspective on the evolving dynamics of Muslim matrimonial practices in Indonesia.

Each region has its own traditions that are influenced by the cultural background, religion and beliefs of the community. As time goes by, cross-cultural and religious marriages are becoming more common, bringing changes in traditions, including engagement processions such as ring exchanges. Although now common, the ring exchange tradition did not originate from Islamic teachings, but from ancient cultures such as Egypt, Greece, and Rome. Historically, rings were used as symbols of wealth, loyalty and social status,<sup>18</sup> until they became part of the wedding rite in the West, especially in the Christian tradition. In Roman times, wedding rings were even made of iron and gold, symbolizing power and luxury respectively.<sup>19</sup> This tradition has since spread and adapted in various cultures, including Muslim societies.

From an Islamic perspective, ring exchanges are not recognized as part of the marriage laws.<sup>20</sup> Some scholars even consider that this practice resembles the customs of the pagans and is therefore not recommended.<sup>21</sup> This refers to the Prophet ﷺ's hadith

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<sup>17</sup> Alison M. Battenheim and Jenna Nobles, "Ethnic Diversity, Traditional Norms, and Marriage Behaviour in Indonesia," *Population Studies* 63, no. 3 (2009): 2-13, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00324720903137224>.

<sup>18</sup> Richard Hawley, "Lords of the Rings: Ring-Wearing, Status, and Identity in the Age of Pliny the Elder," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 50, no. S100 (2007): 1-21, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2041-5370.2007.tb02466.x>.

<sup>19</sup> Julie Renou, "Rings of Power: The Interpretation of Early Medieval Objects of Adornment," in *Everyday Political Objects: From the Middle Ages to the Contemporary World*, 2021, 5-13.

<sup>20</sup> Syamsuddin Muhammad bin Abi Al-'Abbas Ahmad bin Hamzah Syihabuddin Ar-Ramli, *Nihayah Al-Muhtaj Ila Syarh Al-Minhaj* (Beirut: Dar Al-Fikr, 1984).

<sup>21</sup> Abu Muhammad Abdullah bin Ahmad bin Muhammad bin Qudamah Qudamah, *Al-Mughni Li Ibn Qudamah*, 1st ed. (Cairo: Maktabah al-Qahira, 1968).

about the prohibition of imitating other people. However, other scholars see that wearing or exchanging rings does not automatically mean imitating the rites of other religions, as long as it is not accompanied by the intention of imitating their beliefs.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, Muslims themselves have recognized the use of rings since the time of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ as an adornment or status marker, not as part of a particular religious worship or rite.

In local practices, such as in the Cikupa community, Tangerang, the ring exchange tradition is carried out in a series of proposal events that are full of family values. The father of the groom will come to the home of the prospective bride to discuss the engagement plan, bringing gifts as a form of respect and affection. After an agreement between the two families, a ring exchange takes place as a symbol of bonding and commitment. In some families, this practice is adapted to Sharia law, such as avoiding direct contact between the man and woman by delegating the procession to a guardian. Thus, although this tradition is not part of Islamic teachings, it can still be carried out as long as it does not violate the principles of sharia and is not accompanied by elements of imitation of other religious rituals.

The researcher employed two methods to understand the views of the Cikupa, Tangerang community regarding the tradition of exchanging rings during the *khitbah* or engagement process. The first method involved direct interviews with several respondents, and the second was the distribution of a questionnaire via Google Forms, conducted between May 18–23, 2024. The respondents who completed the questionnaire were Cikupa residents who had experienced an engagement process that included a ring exchange.

Through the interview method, the researcher gathered information from twelve respondents who had undergone an

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<sup>22</sup> Ashraf bin Ibrahim bin Ahmad bin Qatqat, *Al-Burhān al-Mubīn Fī at-Taṣaddī Lil-Bida' Wa al-Abāṭīl* (Beirut: Dar Kutub Ilmiyyah, 2006).

engagement. The respondents were divided into two groups: those who permitted men to wear gold rings, and those who substituted the gold ring for men with another type of metal. The following table presents the results of the interviews:

### Group One – Gold Rings Worn by Men

No	Respondent's Name	Engagement Date	Legal View on Ring Exchange	Type of Process
1	Riri Anggraini	April 14, 2024	Good practice and should be done as a tradition	Direct exchange between the man and woman
2	Apriliani Unafah	August 2022	A way to bind with each other before marriage	Direct exchange between the man and woman
3	Nasya Fikriyanti	January 14, 2023	Not obligatory but considered a binding symbol	Direct exchange between the man and woman
4	Heni Diana	July 17, 2023	A sign of the man's seriousness toward the woman	Direct exchange between the man and woman
5	Bintang Anugrah	August 2022	A tradition based on mutual family agreement	Direct exchange between the man and woman
6	Anis Nurul	November 2023	A symbol of a serious relationship	Direct exchange between the

	between partners	man and woman
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### Group Two - No Gold Ring Used for Men

No	Respondent's Name	Engagement Date	Legal on Exchange	View Ring	Type Process	of
1	Elda Sumarni	April 26, 2023	Optional, depending on agreement		Through a representative	
2	Sapitri Yuanita	February 3, 2020	A symbol of a relationship moving toward marriage		Direct exchange between the man and woman	
3	Nurul Agustia	June 24, 2023	Obligatory and already a tradition		Through a representative	
4	Muhammad Willi	May 15, 2021	Proof of a man's commitment to his partner		Through a representative	
5	Dani Purnama	December 10, 2023	A tradition carried out based on family consensus		Direct exchange between the man and woman	
6	Bakti Saputra	October 2022	A followed tradition, but not obligatory, depends on agreement		Through a representative	

From these interviews, it was found that half of the respondents chose not to use gold rings for men, opting instead for alternative metals. The ring-giving process was conducted either

directly or through a representative (*wali*). The second method involved an online survey using Google Forms. The results showed that 33.3% of respondents still practice ring exchanges during engagements, with men wearing gold rings. Interestingly, another 33.3% of respondents admitted they were unaware of the Islamic ruling prohibiting gold for men, and some believed that it was permissible. This indicates a limited understanding of religious teachings among the Cikupa community regarding this issue. In fact, the Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ explicitly forbade men from wearing gold. It was narrated from ‘Ali ibn Abī Ṭālib that the Prophet ﷺ once took a piece of silk in his right hand and a piece of gold in his left, then said: "These two are forbidden for the males of my Ummah" (*ḥarāmūn ‘alā dhukūri ummatī*).<sup>23</sup>

The tradition of exchanging rings during *khitbah* (engagement) has become a common phenomenon among the people of Cikupa. According to Ustadz Agus Tomi, a local religious figure, although engagement is recommended (*sunnah*) in Islam as a form of initial commitment before the marriage contract (*akad nikah*), the practice of exchanging rings is not part of Islamic law (*shari'ah*). He emphasized that there was no such practice in the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and if it is practiced today, it should be symbolic and should not involve men wearing gold rings, as this is prohibited in Islam.<sup>24</sup>

In line with this view, scholars have expressed different opinions regarding the ruling on exchanging rings at the time of engagement. The majority, including followers of the four major madhabs, permit the exchange of gifts such as rings if they are not considered *mahr* (bridal dowry) and are done in a reasonable manner with the intention of strengthening emotional bonds. However, some scholars, such as Shaykh Ibn Uthaymeen, prohibit the practice, considering it an imitation of non-Islamic traditions or

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<sup>23</sup> Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān ibn al-Ash‘ath as-Sijistānī, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd Kitāb Al-Libās, Bāb Fī Ḥarām al-Ḥarīr ‘alā Ar-Rijāl, Ḥadīth No. 4057* (Beirut: Dar Al-Fikr, 1984).

<sup>24</sup> "Interview with One of the Community Leaders in Pasir Jaya Village, Cikupa Subdistrict."

associating it with superstitious beliefs about the symbolic power of rings.<sup>25</sup>

Other scholars, such as Shaykh Ibn Baz, consider this tradition to be disliked (makruh),<sup>26</sup> while others, such as Dr. Muhammad Ismail Al-Muqaddam, consider it a social custom that does not directly contradict Islamic law, provided it does not violate shar'i principles.<sup>27</sup> Regarding the ruling on men wearing gold rings, the majority of scholars agree that it is forbidden (haram). This opinion is based on the Hadith of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), which explicitly prohibits men from wearing gold jewelry because it constitutes tashabbuh (imitation) of non-Muslims and women and may also reflect arrogance or extravagance.<sup>28</sup>

From all these perspectives, it can be concluded that the tradition of exchanging rings at the time of engagement may be socially acceptable if it does not violate the following principles. As according to Islamic law, the exchange of rings upon engagement is not a practice explicitly endorsed by the Qur'an or Sunnah.<sup>29</sup> Nevertheless, some contemporary scholars permit this custom, provided that the ring is not considered a legal gift (mahr), but rather a symbolic gesture of mutual acquaintance and commitment. This view is also supported by several fatwa institutions<sup>30</sup>, such as the Lajnah Da'imah, which allow the practice if it does not contradict any Shari'ah rulings.<sup>31</sup>

This tradition can be viewed from two perspectives from the point of view of maqāṣid al-sharī'ah. On the one side, it can lead to

<sup>25</sup> Muḥammad ibn Ṣāliḥ ibn Muḥammad ibn Sulaymān ibn 'Abd ar-Raḥmān Ibn 'Uthaymīn, *Fatāwā Nūr 'alā Al-Darb* (Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Timiyyah, 2005).

<sup>26</sup> Ar-Ramli, *Nihayah Al-Muhtaj Ila Syarh Al-Minhaj*.

<sup>27</sup> Muhammad bin Ahmad bin 'Arafah Ad-Dasuqi Al-Maliki, *Hasyiyah Ad-Dasuqi 'ala Asy-Syarh Al-Kabir* (Dar Al-Fikr, 1924).

<sup>28</sup> as-Sijistānī, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd Kitāb Al-Libās, Bāb Fi Ḥarām al-Ḥarīr 'alā Ar-Rijāl, Ḥadīth No. 4057*.

<sup>29</sup> Najah Mohammed Yousef Fathi Binjabi, "Noble Morals in the Quran, Sunnah, and Rules of Engagement," *Journal of Research in Curriculum*, vol. 10, 2024.

<sup>30</sup> Komite Tetap untuk Penelitian Ilmiah dan Fatwa, "Fatwa Komite Tetap Untuk Penelitian Ilmiah Dan Fatwa," Dar Al-Mu'ayyad for Publishing and Distribution § (2024).

<sup>31</sup> "Fatwa Lajnah Da'imah (12/243)." (n.d.).

emotional attachments and interactions prior to the marriage contract, which could undermine the principles of preserving lineage and personal dignity emphasized in Islam. On the other side, exchanging rings may serve as a means for both parties to express serious intentions to establish a household, which is in line with the Shari'ah goal of facilitating marriage and establishing stable families.<sup>32</sup>

In many Muslim communities, the exchange of rings has become a social norm rooted in 'urf (local custom), where it is no longer perceived as a formal gift but rather as a symbolic gesture of commitment and mutual intention to marry. This practice often marks the beginning of a serious relationship, serving as a visible sign of emotional and social readiness prior to the marriage contract. Historically, the ring has had multiple meanings, including adornment and status, as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad's own signet ring. While his ring functioned as a seal of authority and representation of divine legitimacy, modern practices have adapted the symbolic value of the ring to signify emotional attachment and the seriousness of a marital promise.<sup>33</sup> Although culturally constructed, the ring's enduring presence over time illustrates how material symbols can carry an evolving but continuous meaning within Islamic social life, blending tradition with contemporary expressions of commitment.

In some communities, however, it is still considered a gift with legal implications. Some Islamic scholars advocate caution by banning the practice altogether, based on the principle of sadd al-dharā'i' (blocking the means of harm) to prevent any possibility of violating Shari'ah boundaries before the marriage contract.<sup>34</sup> Others, however, take a more balanced approach, allowing it with certain restrictions-such as avoiding rings with forbidden engravings or symbols, refraining from the use of gold rings by men, and ensuring that the act is purely symbolic and not emotionally binding.

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<sup>32</sup> Renou, "Rings of Power: The Interpretation of Early Medieval Objects of Adornment."

<sup>33</sup> Hadas Hirsch, "The Prophet Muḥammad's Ring: Raw Materials, Status, and Gender in Early Islam," *Journal of Arabian Studies* 11, no. 2 (2021): 1-28.

<sup>34</sup> Rabi'u, Ibrahim, and Sa'ad, "Islamic Principles on Khitbah and Courtship Versus The Effects of Social Media on Muslim Marriages In Northern Nigeria."

Considering these different perspectives, the researcher takes the position that exchanging rings at the time of engagement can be socially and religiously acceptable if it is done within the limits set by Islamic law. The researcher views the ring not as a legal gift, but as a symbol of good intentions and mutual seriousness. Therefore, the practice is permissible as long as it does not violate any Shari'ah principles - such as men wearing gold, direct ring exchange between the engaged couple, or the presence of gender mixing. Ideally, the rings should be exchanged through the guardians of both parties. In this way, the tradition is not an act of imitating non-Muslim cultures (*tashabbuh*), but rather a meaningful sign of commitment in the preliminary stages of marriage.

## CONCLUSION

The practice of exchanging rings upon engagement has become a customary tradition, particularly among the people of Cikupa, where it is widely accepted and even considered a local norm. Engagement (*Khitbah*) serves several important purposes, such as allowing both parties to get to know each other, confirming mutual commitment, preserving dignity, preventing moral transgressions, and fostering mutual trust. It also functions as a preparatory phase for marriage, during which each party could observe the character, habits, and social background of the other before entering a permanent marital contract.

Based on interviews conducted by the researcher, more than 68% of engaged couples in the Cikupa area are aware that it is religiously forbidden (*haram*) for men to wear gold rings. As a result, they opt for silver or iron rings instead. Meanwhile, more than 32% of the respondents were unaware of the ruling prohibiting men from wearing gold and therefore exchanged gold rings during their engagement.

Islamic law scholars have different views on the permissibility of exchanging rings. While the majority consider it impermissible (*ḥarām*), others allow it due to the lack of an explicit textual prohibition in Islamic sources. The researcher concludes that exchanging rings at the time of engagement is permissible under certain conditions: the man may not wear a gold ring, and the process

should be free of gender mixing or physical contact between the couple.

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