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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Islamic Khitbah (A Comparison of Madzhab in Islam)

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Abstract: The importance of family in Islam is widely recognized, as it serves as the foundation for the construction of strong, resilient, harmonious, and happy societies. The establishment of a peaceful and cohesive society is intricately linked to the well-being of each family unit, as families are regarded as the epitome of a nation. To foster harmonious families, the adherence to appropriate processes and procedures in line with Islamic law and local customs is crucial. The dynamics and evolution of social traditions and customs in the context of premarital life exhibit diverse styles. For instance, the engagement traditions observed in various communities such as Sesorahan in Java, Peningset or Ngemblok in Sunda, Merisik in Riau, Marhusip in Batak, Maminang in Minangkabau, Mapettuada in Bugis, and many others, exemplify the distinct premarital proposal customs prevalent in society. Khitbah refers to the formal request made by a man to a woman, or vice versa, expressing the intention to marry. It can be done directly or through intermediaries, in accordance with the provisions of Sharia. The Quranic evidence for Khitbah can be found in Surah Al-Baqarah (Chapter 2), Verse 235. Additionally, various hadiths discuss Khitbah, with one narrated by Abu Daud emphasizing the importance of motivating factors when proposing marriage.

Keywords: Khitbah, Islamic engagement, marriage, Sharia, cultural customs

1. Introduction

Family matters are considered important in Islam, and the family is the starting point for efforts to build strong, resilient, harmonious and happy societies. A harmonious and peaceful society is reflected in the life of every family. Because the family is the epitome of the nation. Achieving a harmonious family begins with appropriate processes and procedures in accordance with Islamic law and local customs.

Either way, marriage is the union of two people with radically different cultural, religious and ethical views. Moreover, marriage can unite and honor two of the couple's family who may have previously been misunderstood due to being too far apart or due to ethnic or national differences. Therefore, this engagement or this Khitbah is important to the common people.

Khitbah introduces two future male and female partners before marriage, not just matchmaking, and introduces them from Kafaahs side. In addition, the engagement or khitbah is also a form that introduces two candidates and respects the traditions or customs of each candidate's community beginning with this proposal. Both seek to understand directly the development of these traditions. The khitbah tradition is shown to be an example of a prenuptial procession in Islam, but this is not the same as the culture of engagement in both Muslim and non-Muslim societies.



The dynamics and development of social traditions and forms in this premarital life show different styles. For example, in the tradition of engagement developed in the community called Seseheran, in Java there are Peningset or Ngemblok, Sunda Neundeun Omong First, Riau Merisik, Batak Marhusip, Minangkabau Maminang, Mapettuada Bugis, etc. All of these show the differences in premarital proposal customs in society (Daud & Hambali, 2022).

Knowing and understanding Khitbah is important so you can later distinguish Sharia from tradition. Therefore, this article will discuss the Islamic Khitbah.

2. Research Method

The methods used in this research include a literature review to gain in-depth understanding, document analysis to examine relevant regulations and legal decisions, and qualitative data analysis to identify patterns and meanings derived from the collected data. These methods were employed to explore a comprehensive understanding of Islamic Khitbah from various mentioned perspectives. (Sugiyono, 2017).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Verses and Hadiths about Khitbah

The legislation of engagement in Islam is extracted from the Qur'an, as-Sunnah, and Ijmak. In the Qur'an, Allah SWT affirms:

لَا يَنْوَدُ سَدُّكُمْ وَتَهُنَّ أَنْكُمْ اللَّهُ عِلْمٌ أَنْفُسِكُمْ فِي أَكُنْتُمْ أَوْ النِّسَاءِ خِطْبَةٍ مِنْ بَيْتٍ عَرَضْتُمْ فِيهَا عَلَيْكُمْ جُنَاحٌ وَلَا مَا يَعْلَمُ اللَّهُ أَنْ وَأَعْلَمُوا أَجَلَهُ الْكِتَابُ يَبْلُغُ حَتَّى النِّكَاحِ عُقْدَةً تَعْرَمُوا وَلَا مَعْرُوفًا قَوْلًا تَقُولُوا أَنْ إِلَّا سِرًّا تُوَاعِدُوهُمْ حَلِيمٌ غَفُورٌ اللَّهُ أَنْ وَأَعْلَمُوا فَاحْذَرُوا أَنْفُسَكُمْ فِي

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. (QS Al-Baqarah: 235).

The meaning of a subtle expression is an insinuating sentence, for example, you are a beautiful woman, you are a pious woman, you are a generous woman, and so on (Ash-Shabuni, 1983). by saying in front of the woman who is still serving her 'iddah period: "I wish to marry" or "how I wish that Allah would make it easy for me to find a pious wife" or "may Allah grant you favor"; it is also permissible to give her a gift (Basri, 2019).

Zamakhshari said "secret" in the above verse is a kinayah of nikah, which means intercourse. And that is what is kept secret (in marriage). As al-A'sha said:

تَأْبِئًا أَوْ فَانِكِحَنَّ حَرَامٌ عَلَيْكَ * سِرَّهَا أَنْ جَارَةٍ مِنْ تَقْرِبِينَ وَلَا

“Do not approach a girl, indeed her secret is forbidden to you, marry her or stay away.”

Then this word is used to mean "marriage" which means "aqd", because the contract is the cause of marriage. (Thabari).

The mention of the word "azam" in the verse above is a very strong prohibition of marriage during 'iddah, because the 'azam for such an act is the beginning of it. If 'azam alone is forbidden, then doing it is even more forbidden (Ash-Shabuni, 1983).

In the hadith, Rasulullah said:

فَلْيَفْعَلْ نِكَاحًا إِذَا يَدْعُوهُ مَا لَيْ يَنْظُرُ أَنْ سَدُّ طَاعِ فِي بِنِ الْمَرْأَةِ أَحَدَكُمْ خَطْبَ إِذَا

“If you are proposing to a woman, if you can see something that will motivate you to marry her, then do so.”

(HR Abu Dawud)

عَلَيْهِ اللهُ صَلَّى اللهُ رَسُوْلًا اِنْ يَدِي قَوْلَ الْمَذْبُوْرِ عَامِرٍ عَلٰى بِنْتِ عَقْبَةَ سَمِعَ اَنْهُ شَمَاسَةَ بِنِ الرَّحْمَنِ عَدُوًّا
يَدْرُ حَتَّى اَذِي بِهِ خُطْبَةً عَلٰى يَخْطُبُ وَلَا اَذِي بِهِ بِيْعٍ عَلٰى يَبِيْعُ اِنْ لِلْمُؤْمِنِ يَحِلُّ فَاِخْوَالُ الْمُؤْمِنِ الْمُؤْمِنُ قَالِ وَسَلَّم
(مسلم رواه)

"Abdurrahman ibn Shimasah reported that he heard 'Uqbah ibn 'Aamir say at Minbar that the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him) said: "A mukmin is a brother to another mukmin, so it is not lawful for him to buy what his brother buys, and do not propose to his brother's proposal until he leaves her"." HR. Muslim.

3.2. *Philosophical Foundations and Wisdom Tashri' on Khitbah*

Fiancésip or khitbah, which is expressing a desire to marry a certain woman by informing the woman in question or her family (her guardian), which is carried out before the marriage contract, and this has become a culture in Indonesian society, while the process depends on the culture of each region. The difference between "khitbah" and "zawwaj" (marriage) is that zawwaj is a contract that will bind various things, within certain limits, conditions, and rights.

Whereas khitbah, only expresses the desire to marry a prospective wife. This can be seen from the different definitions of the two words in various dictionaries. In today's society, engagement has become a culture that is accompanied by certain rituals such as salvation, ring exchange and so on.

A man's proposal to a woman is not certain to become her mahram until the marriage contract is carried out, therefore it does not guarantee that it will continue to the level of marriage, so both parties should maintain social boundaries.

The period after the khitbah is carried out is the time when the prospective husband is committed to marriage, therefore the effort to get to know the future wife should be done before the khitbah, where the confidence to choose is already owned, besides that the family has approved the proposed wife, the hope is that the chances of canceling the marriage are small, even though Allah's destiny requires something else.

Khalid Abdurrahman argues, the first step of marriage is to ask for "consent" permission from the prospective wife, if giving permission (and directing) to the guardian, then the intention of marriage is allowed to be implemented, and if forced the prospective wife accepts outside of "consent" will risk ending in divorce, so Islam prohibits the element of coercion in marriage the Prophet PBUH. said: Ibn Abbas reported that the Prophet said: "A widow has more rights over herself than her guardian, while a girl must be asked for permission from her, "and her permission is her silence"? He replied; "Yes." (HR Muslim)

It was narrated by Ahmad, Ibn Majah and al-Nasa'i from Ibn Buraidah that a woman came to the Prophet and said: 'O Messenger of Allah, my father has given me in marriage to my cousin in order to improve his position, but I do not like him'. So the Prophet gave her the choice between accepting or rejecting it, the girl said: 'I am forced to accept my father's treatment, but I want to tell all women that the guardian has no right to force his girl to marry a man she does not like'.

Khitbah has many uses and wisdoms, some of which will be explained below: First, it gives the bride and groom the opportunity to get to know each other. That way, later both parties can determine the best choice, either continuing to the level of marriage or canceling it. This is because marriage is a sacred bond and has a huge influence. Therefore, marriage must be built on the foundation of love and willingness. This, among other things, can be obtained through khitbah. At that time, men and women are allowed to look at each other in the context of ta'aruf.

Getting to know your partner before marriage is very important. This is because when the bond of marriage has occurred, there are things that we cannot change easily. Moreover, marriage is not only related to the bride and groom, but also to their extended families. In addition, divorce is not something that can be easily decided and done, especially when you

already have children. For this reason, in the hadith narrated by Imam Tirmidzi, the Prophet emphasized getting to know potential partners so that the relationship can be lasting and happy.

Second, in relation to marriage, a woman cannot decide alone, it must involve her guardians. The Shari'a of marriage gives the female guardians the opportunity to assess the quality of their prospective son-in-law. A guardian has the responsibility to choose the best candidate for his child, especially in the religious aspect.

Thirdly, in general, after marriage a woman will follow and live with her husband. This is something that is very difficult and not easily done by all women, or even suddenly. Therefore, with the existence of the marriage proposal sharia, women have enough time to prepare themselves, both physically and mentally.

Khitbah in Islam is mandated before the bond of husband and wife, in addition to minimizing the possibility of disappointment and mistakes in choosing prospective companions, it is also expected that each prospective husband and wife can get to know and understand each other's character and personality. By knowing and understanding each other's character and personality, the effort to realize the purpose of marriage to form a family that is *sakinah, mawaddah, wa rahmah* will be more guaranteed (Bastri, 2019).

3.3. Position and Function of Khitbah in the Structure of Marriage

The Islamic Shari'ah is eager for the permanence of marriage by sticking to good choices and strong principles, so as to realize clarity, peace, happiness and tranquility in the household, for the realization of a *sakinah, mawaddah wa rahmah* family. Therefore, rushing in determining a life partner without researching first, is a problem that will lead to disaster.

(Al-Zuhayli, 2010), states that *khitbah* is a statement of desire from a man to marry a certain woman, then the woman informs her guardian of this. This statement can be conveyed directly or through the man's family. If the woman being *khitbah* or her family agrees, then the engagement is declared legal.

(Sabiq, 2008) defines *khitbah* as an attempt to get married in ways that are generally accepted in society. *Khitbah* is a prelude to marriage and Allah has prescribed for couples who will marry to get to know each other.

It can be concluded that the position and function of *khitbah* / engagement is a process carried out before heading to marriage so that marriage can be carried out by each party with full awareness. So that it makes it easier for them to be able to adjust their characters and tolerate each other when they are already in a marriage bond, so that the purpose of marriage to form a family that is *sakinah, mawaddah wa rahmah* can be achieved.

3.4. Rulings, Methods, and Ethics in Khitbah

Furthermore, regarding the ruling on engagement, *fuqaha* differ in opinion. According to the Maliki Mazhab, the ruling on engagement is Sunnah (highly recommended). According to some Shafi'i scholars, the ruling on engagement is (al-Nawawi, 2003). According to the third opinion, the ruling on engagement follows the ruling on marriage. In other words, if the marriage is obligatory, then the engagement is obligatory; if the marriage is Sunnah, the engagement is also Sunnah; and so on (Al-Bujairimi, 1996).

Of the three opinions above, according to Nayib Mahmud al-Rajub (2008), the stronger opinion is the one that says that the ruling on engagement is Sunnah. First, because the Prophet himself did it and it was preserved by the righteous generations of the *salaf* who always carried out an engagement before entering into marriage. Secondly, because it contains many uses and wisdom.

However, (Rusyd et al., 2007) quoted Daud adz-Dzahiri's opinion that it is obligatory based on the Prophet's actions and traditions of engagement. The majority of scholars state that it is not obligatory. However, in the customary practice of the community, an engagement is a

prelude that must be carried out because it contains moral messages and manners to initiate plans to build a household.

There are two methods in *khitbah*, namely by *sharih* expression, which is a straightforward expression, and by *kinayah* expression, which is an expression of insinuation.

Both of the above methods can be used against women who have never been married and are not in the *iddah* period if they have been married. If in a state of *iddah* then there is a classification. If she is in the *iddah* of death (her husband died), then the first method of engagement is not permissible and the second method is permissible. If she is in the *iddah* of divorce, then if it is a *raj'i* divorce (one or two divorces), it is not permissible to propose to her at all, either by expressing it or by sending it. However, if it is a *ba'in* divorce (divorce three), according to the majority of scholars, it is permissible to propose to her, either openly or in private.

According to Imam Shafi'i, it is forbidden to openly propose to a woman who is in *'iddah* (waiting period) after the death of her husband. The evidence for this prohibition is "and there is no sin on you to propose to a woman (whose husband has died) by means of insinuation". This indicates *mafhum mukhalafah* (Ash-Shabuni, 1983).

In sharia, women who may be *khitbah* have several requirements, including:

- a) Not a woman who is forbidden to marry, divided into two categories, namely:
 - a. Women who are forbidden forever, this is divided into three, namely the relationship of *nasab* (descent), *breastfeeding* and *mushaharah* (family relations arising from marriage)
 - b. Women who are forbidden within a time limit, including: two brothers are forbidden to marry. Women who are forbidden within a time limit, including: two brothers are forbidden to be married by a man at the same time, meaning that they are forbidden to be married at the same time (*al-Nisa* / 4: 23); women who are still in *iddah*; women who are divorced until they marry another man; women who are in *ihram*; forbidden for disbelieving men until they become Muslims; disbelieving women until they embrace Islam; other men's wives; adulterers/prostitutes are forbidden until they repent and complete their *iddah* period.
- b) Not a woman who is in *'iddah* (waiting period).
 - a. *Iddah* (waiting period) caused by the death of the husband.
 - b. The *iddah* period caused by divorce *ba'in*, the scholars agree that it is not permissible to propose to a woman during the *iddah* period of divorce *ba'in qubra* (3 times divorce), divorce *ba'in qubra* makes the husband and wife break the relationship, there is no hope of returning before being married by another man, this is different from divorce *ba'in sugrah*, where the divorced woman (2 times) is still *halal* for the husband to reconcile with a new marriage contract and dowry.
 - c. *Iddah* period caused by divorce *raj'i* (husband may return to his wife because the divorce is not yet 3 times) where the divorced wife is still a wife, the husband may return to *ruju'* without a marriage contract and dowry.
 - d. *Iddah* period caused by *khulu* (divorce). *Iddah* period caused by *khulu* or *fasakh*, women who are in *iddah* due to *khulu*, or due to *fasakh* because the husband does not provide maintenance or disappears/never returns home.
- c) Not a woman who has been betrothed by another man. *Abi Hurairah* reported that the Prophet said: "It is not permissible for a man to propose to his brother's proposal." *Al-Khattabi* is of the opinion that the prohibition is not for the purpose of prohibition, although the majority of scholars consider it a form of prohibition, but rather as *alta'dib* (educating, *adab* and manners), and on the other hand also understands it from the perspective of *Sufism*, which teaches not to harm others.
However, *Al-Jazari* in *al-Nihayah*, quoted by *al-Mubarafuri*, that the prohibition of circumcising a woman who is circumcised occurs where the two parties have previously agreed on the dowry, mutual consent and only the marriage contract process remains.

Khitbah is the right of every person, as long as there is no provision restricting it, in the case of engagement, which is initially the right of every person, it becomes a privilege when he is

proposed to by another person, but also, in the *khiyar* period, the proposal is not a certainty to proceed to the next level. In the Hadith on the proposal of another man, the Prophet was asked about a man who proposed to a woman and accepted to proceed to marriage, but another man turned out to be more attractive to him than the first man, so he canceled his first proposal.

As for the story of Fatimah, the context is different, where Fatimah bint Qais came to the Prophet Muhammad PBUH saying that she was proposed to by Mu'awiyah and Abu Jahm. The Prophet knew that Fatimah herself did not like and had not accepted the two proposals, therefore Fatimah came to the Prophet to consider and ask for advice, then the Prophet gave a solution by proposing Usamah. This illustrates that the first hadith differs from the second, in that the first hadith is from a situation where a woman with the consent of her guardian has accepted a proposal, so she cannot accept another man's proposal, while in the second hadith, in a situation where a man has merely proposed a proposal, there is no certainty that he will accept or reject it, so in such a situation a woman can reject a proposal.

In short, the prohibition of proposing to another man's proposal is permissible if there are the following three aspects: first, the woman or her guardian rejects the proposal of the first man; second, the man does not know that the woman has already been proposed to by another man; third, the first suitor allows the second suitor to propose to the woman with various considerations (Basri, 2019).

The conditions of an engagement are divided into two types, namely:

1) Mustahsinah Conditions

Which are conditions that are recommended to the man who wants to propose to examine the woman he wants to propose to before carrying out the proposal. Mustahsinah conditions are not obligatory to fulfill, only advisory and good to implement. So that without this condition, the law of engagement is still valid. These conditions include:

- a. The woman being proposed to should be of the same level as the man who is proposing. For example, the same level of knowledge, social status, and wealth.
- b. To propose marriage to a woman who is affectionate and childbearing.
- c. Inviting a woman who is distantly related to the man who is proposing. In this regard, Sayyidina 'Umar ibn Khattab said that marriage between a man and a woman who is closely related by blood will weaken the physical and spiritual well-being of the offspring.
- d. Knowing the physical, moral and other circumstances of the woman to be proposed to.

2) Lazimah Condition

The lazimah conditions are conditions that must be fulfilled before an engagement is made. Whether an engagement is valid or not depends on the existence of the lazimah conditions. These conditions are:

- a. Not under the proposal of another man. The woman is not bound by the *khitbah* of another man, which has been proposed and accepted both by the woman and her family. Because proposing to a woman who has previously been tied to the proposal of another man is haram (Al-Habsyi, 1999). This is also explained in the Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) in Article 12 that: (3) It is also prohibited to propose to a woman who is being proposed to by another man, as long as the man's proposal has not been broken or there has been no rejection from the woman. (4) The breakup of the proposal on the part of the man, because there is a statement about the breakup of the proposal relationship or secretly the man who proposes has stayed away and left the proposed woman.

If the first man's proposal is accepted, but the woman accepts the proposal of the second man and marries him, then she is sinning, but her marriage is valid, because what is prohibited is proposing to her, and proposing to her is not a condition of marriage being valid. Therefore it is not permissible to annul the marriage even if the proposal is a transgression.

If the first khithbah/invitation has not been completed because it is still being discussed with relatives, or the woman is undecided, then in this case according to the majority of scholars it is not forbidden to make a second khithbah for another man who comes later. As in the story of Fatimah bint Qais, in the hadith it is explained that Fatimah bint Qais after being divorced by her husband Abu Amr bin Hafs bin Mughirah and after her iddah period was over, was betrothed by three men at the same time, they were: Muawiyah, Abu Jahm bin Hudzafah and Usamah bin Zaid. This indicates that it is permissible to propose to more than one person, if the woman has not accepted the offer.

Another view of the Hanafis is that it is makrooh to make a second khithbah, because of the general meaning of the traditions that prohibit the khithbah of a woman who is being khithbah by someone else.

- b. At the time of the proposal there is no shar'i barrier that prohibits marriage. Shari'i barriers are women who are forbidden to marry. Such as women who are related (sisters, aunts, uncles, nephews) and women who are breastfed. The same applies to temporal prohibitions, such as: the wife's sister, and nephews and aunts.
- c. The woman is not in the iddah period. Women who are still in the iddah period are included in the category of women who are temporally forbidden to dikhitbah. Because there is still a bond with her former husband, and her husband still has the right to refer back to her at any time. If the woman is in iddah because of divorce ba'in then she is forbidden to be openly proposed to because her former husband still has the right to marry her with a new contract. If a woman is in 'iddah (waiting period) because of the death of her husband, then it is permissible to propose to her in an insinuating manner during her 'iddah, because the relationship between husband and wife has been severed and the husband's rights over his wife have been completely lost (Ghazaly, 2019).

The majority of fuqaha, such as Imam Malik, As-Shafi'i and Ahmad, are of the opinion that the only parts of a bride's body that may be seen are the face and palms. The face is where all beauty is gathered and reveals many psychological values, health, and morals. Meanwhile, the palms of the hands are an indicator of fertility, fatness and thinness. The evidence for this is found in Q.s An-Nur 24: 31. "And do not show jewelry (aurat), except what can be seen from it" (Azzam & Hawwas, 2011).

However, Imam Abu Hanifah allowed to see the two soles of the feet in addition to the face and the two palms of the woman to be circumcised. While the Hambali scholars allow seeing visible limbs when women are active. There are six limbs, namely: face, neck, hands, feet and calves. This opinion is based on the absoluteness of the Prophet's hadith. "look at the woman" and the actions of Umar and Jabir (Al-Zuhayli, 2010). Imam al-Auza'I said: "It is permissible to look at the limbs where the flesh grows." Dawud al-Dzahiri said, "It is permissible to look at all the limbs, because of the absoluteness of the hadith."

Regarding the consequences of canceling the khithbah, because the khithbah is only the first step towards marriage, canceling the khithbah / proposal does not have any effect as long as no contract has been made. The Compilation of Islamic Law (KHI) Article 13 explains that: (1) The proposal has not yet caused legal consequences and the parties are free to break the engagement relationship. (2) The freedom to break the engagement relationship is carried out in a good manner in accordance with the demands of religion and local customs so that harmony and mutual respect are fostered.

Sometimes the engagement relationship is accompanied by the giving of gifts as a symbol of the continuation of the relationship between the two candidates to the aisle. However, sometimes in the middle of the journey, for some reason the engagement is canceled. There are several fuqaha opinions regarding returning khithbah gifts (Al-Zuhayli, 2010, pp. 26–27)

- a) Abu Hanifah argued that a gift given in a proposal is the same as a grant. The suitor can take it back unless the item has been damaged or lost.

- b) The Maalikis are of the view that it is not permissible for the breaker to ask for the gift back, whether the item is still available or no longer available. The one who has the right to ask for the item is the one who did not break off the proposal. He is entitled to receive the item if it is still available, or to receive the price if the item is no longer available.
- c) The Shaafi'is stated that the man may take back the gift that he gave her, because he only gave her in marriage. If the gift is still available, he may ask for it back. However, if the gift has been damaged then he may ask for a replacement.
- d) Ibn Taymiyyah states that if the gift is given to the woman. If the woman cancels the khitbah, then the gift or its value, if lost, must be returned. Because it is not fair that the man should suffer because his proposal was broken off and he should also bear the loss of wealth. If the man cancels the khitbah, then he has no right to ask for the gift back. Because it is not fair for the woman to suffer the pain of a failed engagement and the pain of having to ask for the gift back.

This latter view is more likely to be just, because it is not appropriate for the woman who did not leave to have two burdens, namely the burden of being left behind and the burden of returning the gift, and it is not appropriate for the man who did not leave to have two disadvantages, namely being left behind by a woman and giving away money for nothing. Based on that, if there are no conditions or traditions to the contrary, the latter view may be adopted (Basri, 2019).

4. Conclusion

Khitbah is a formal request for marriage between a man and a woman, either initiated individually or with the involvement of intermediaries, in accordance with Islamic guidelines. The Quranic evidence for khitbah can be found in Surah Al-Baqarah: 235. A hadith narrated by Abu Daud also sheds light on the concept, stating that if one finds qualities in a person that inspire them to marry, they should proceed with the proposal. The underlying philosophy of khitbah lies in the process of acquainting potential partners, including their families, personalities, and shared visions for life. This serves to minimize future disputes and foster a harmonious and loving family. In contemporary society, khitbah serves as a moral and courteous gesture, marking the beginning of building a household.

Regarding the legal status of khitbah, there are varying opinions among Islamic jurists. According to the Maliki Mazhab, khitbah is recommended (sunnah). Some Shaf'iyah scholars consider it permissible, while a third opinion suggests that its ruling aligns with that of marriage. Ibn Rushd, citing Daud adz-Dzahiri, asserts that khitbah is obligatory based on the actions and traditions of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). There are two methods of proposing, namely sharih (explicit) and kinayah (implicit). The majority opinion restricts the visibility during khitbah to the face and palms, while the Hanafis allow the face, palms, and feet. The Hanbalis additionally include the head, shoulders, and calves, while the Dzahiriyah permit the entire body to be seen. Certain women are prohibited from being betrothed, including those who are perpetually mahram (forbidden to marry), already engaged to someone else, or in the iddah period after divorce or widowhood.

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