

## ANALYSIS OF MASLAHAH MURSALAH ON THE CHOICE OF TABATTUL LIFESTYLE

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**Abstrak:** Fenomena tabattul atau hidup membujang tanpa keinginan menikah semakin banyak ditemukan di Desa Sei Bambi, Kecamatan Batang Serangan, Kabupaten Langkat. Berdasarkan hasil observasi, terdapat sekitar dua puluh orang berusia di atas empat puluh tahun yang memilih tidak menikah karena faktor ekonomi dan kekhawatiran tidak mampu menafkahi pasangan. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis fenomena tersebut dalam perspektif masalah mursalah. Pendekatan yang digunakan adalah kualitatif deskriptif melalui teknik observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa praktik tabattul tidak sejalan dengan prinsip ajaran Islam dan tidak memenuhi kriteria kemaslahatan. Menurut majelis ulama Indonesia Kecamatan Batang Serangan, Islam menganjurkan pernikahan sebagai sunnah Nabi Muhammad serta sarana menjaga keturunan, kehormatan, dan stabilitas sosial. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa keputusan hidup membujang tanpa alasan syar'i berpotensi menimbulkan mafsadah sosial seperti keterasingan dan melemahnya nilai keluarga. Implikasi penelitian ini menegaskan perlunya strategi dakwah yang kontekstual serta program pemberdayaan ekonomi agar masyarakat memahami kembali makna kemaslahatan pernikahan dalam kehidupan Islam.

**Kata Kunci:** Tabattul, Masalah Mursalah, Pernikahan Islam

**Abstract:** The phenomenon of tabattul, or living a bachelor life without the desire to marry, is increasingly found in Sei Bambi Village, Batang Serangan District, Langkat Regency. Based on observations, there are about twenty people over the age of forty who choose not to marry due to economic factors and concerns about not being able to provide for a spouse. This study aims to analyze this phenomenon from the perspective of masalah mursalah. The approach used is descriptive qualitative through observation, interviews, and documentation techniques. The results of the study show that the practice of tabattul is not in line with the principles of Islamic teachings and does not meet the criteria of maslahah. According to the Indonesian Ulema Council of Batang Serangan Subdistrict, Islam encourages marriage as the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad and a means of preserving lineage, honor, and social stability. This study concludes that the decision to remain single without a shar'i reason has the potential to cause social mafsadah, such as alienation and the weakening of family values. The implications of this study emphasize the need for contextual da'wah strategies and economic empowerment programs so that the community can re-understand the meaning of the maslahah of marriage in Islamic life.

**Keywords:** Tabattul, Masalah Mursalah, Islamic Marriage

## INTRODUCTION

Marriage is human nature and a social institution that has a very important position in Islamic teachings. Through marriage, humans not only fulfill biological needs, but also form families as the smallest unit of society, which is the basis for moral guidance, succession, and social welfare (Putra, 2013). In Islam, marriage is not only viewed as a social contract, but also as a form of worship that has sacred value, because it involves moral and spiritual responsibilities to create a household that is pleasing to Allah (R. H. Hasibuan, 2025; Masruchi, 2023).

The Qur'an emphasizes the sacred value and purpose of marriage, namely:

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

*And among His signs is that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that you may find tranquility in them, and He placed between you affection and mercy. Indeed in that are signs for a people who reflect (Ar-Rum: 21).*

This verse describes that marriage is a means to obtain tranquility (*sakinah*), affection (*mawaddah*), and mercy (*rahmah*). Thus, the purpose of marriage in Islam is not only oriented towards worldly aspects, but also as a path to perfection in worshiping Allah. Prophet Muhammad also emphasized that marriage is part of his sunnah, and forbade his followers from living alone without marrying (*tabattul*). In a hadith, the Messenger of Allah rebuked a companion who wanted to live as a bachelor: "Prophet Muhammad forbade Uthman bin

*Mazh'un from living tabattul. If tabattul were permissible, we would certainly practice castration (Hadith Bukhari).*

However, developments in modern society show signs that are contrary to these values. The phenomenon of an increasing number of people choosing to live as bachelors (*tabattul*) has become a separate concern in socio-religious studies (Ripardo, 2025; Tarmizi, 2020). In a global context, the emergence of individualistic lifestyles, economic pressures, and changing views on the meaning of happiness and family are the main contributing factors. In Indonesia, similar trends are beginning to appear in various regions, both urban and rural.

One interesting example can be found in Sei Bamban Village, Batang Serangan District, Langkat Regency, where field observations show that there are around 20 people over the age of 40 who have chosen to remain single for various reasons. Some admit to having difficulty finding a suitable partner, others face economic obstacles, and still others feel that they are not yet mentally ready to take on the responsibilities of a family. This phenomenon is interesting to study because it contradicts Islam's recommendation that its followers marry when they are able to do so.

From an Islamic legal perspective, remaining single without a strong religious reason can cause normative problems. The Prophet Muhammad warned strongly against those who reject his sunnah in matters of marriage.

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا الْأَعْمَشُ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ الْأَقْمَةِ، قَالَ: دَخَلَ نَفَرٌ عَلَى أَزْوَاجِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ يَسْأَلُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَةِ

النَّبِيِّ ﷺ، فَلَمَّا أُخْبِرُوا كَانَتْهُمْ تَقَالُوبًا، فَقَالُوا: وَأَيْنَ نَحْنُ مِنَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ وَقَدْ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَمَا تَأَخَّرَ؟ قَالَ أَحَدُهُمْ: أَمَّا أَنَا فَإِنِّي أَصَلِّي اللَّيْلَ أَبَدًا، وَقَالَ آخَرُ: أَنَا أَصُومُ الدَّهْرَ وَلَا أَفْطِرُ، وَقَالَ آخَرُ: أَنَا أَعْتَزِلُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَا أَتَزَوَّجُ أَبَدًا، فَجَاءَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَ: أَنْتُمْ الَّذِينَ قُلْتُمْ كَذًا وَكَذَا؟ أَمَّا وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأَحْسَأُكُمْ لِلَّهِ، وَأَتَقَاكُمْ لَهُ، لَكِنِّي أَصُومُ وَأُفْطِرُ، وَأُصَلِّي وَأَرْقُدُ، وَأَتَزَوَّجُ النِّسَاءَ، فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَنْ سُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي رواه البخاري.

*Narrated from Anas bin Malik, he said: "Three men came to the Prophet's wives to ask about the Prophet's worship. After they were informed (about his worship), they felt that it was still not enough. They said, 'Where do we stand compared to the Prophet, when he has been forgiven for his past and future sins?' Then one of them said, 'I will pray night after night and never sleep.' Another said, 'I will fast every day and never break my fast.' And the third said, 'I will avoid women and never marry.' Then the Messenger of Allah came and said, 'Are you the ones who said that? By Allah, I am the one who fears Allah the most and is the most pious toward Him, but I fast and break my fast, I pray and sleep, and I marry women. Whoever hates my Sunnah is not of my community. (Hadith of Bukhari and Muslim).*

This hadith shows that remaining celibate for the sake of worship or avoiding the world is not an Islamic teaching. The Prophet rejected extremism in religion and emphasized the importance of balance between worldly life and the hereafter. In another hadith, he said:

لَا رَهْبَانِيَّةَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ

*There is no monasticism (withdrawing from the world and not marrying) in Islam. (Hadith Ahmad).*

This hadith explicitly rejects the concept of monasticism as in the Christian

tradition, where a person renounces marriage for the sake of worship. Islam views true worship as being realized through a balance between social and spiritual responsibilities.

However, in Islamic history, there is a term known as *tabattul*, which refers to the act of abstaining from marriage for certain reasons. Some classical scholars note that some worshipers in the early days of Islam chose *tabattul* in order to focus on worship. However, the Prophet Muhammad rejected this practice because it contradicted the principle of balance (*tawazun*) in Islamic teachings. In fiqh, the choice not to marry is only permitted under certain conditions, such as severe physical, mental, or economic incapacity.

The phenomenon of celibacy in Sei Bamban Village is interesting to study in depth because it involves a variety of social factors: the trauma of due to failure to find a partner, economic pressure, the desire to live freely, and the feeling of not having found the right partner. However, in practice, it is difficult to distinguish between a conscious choice to remain single and a forced situation due to social and economic limitations. Therefore, more systematic research is needed to examine the motives, impacts, and legitimacy of this choice in the view of Islamic law.

This issue is relevant in the context of *maqasid al-syari'ah*, which are the objectives of Islamic law in protecting human welfare. One approach that can be used is *maslahah mursalah* analysis, which is welfare that is not explicitly mentioned in *the text*, but is in line with the basic values of Islamic law. Through this approach, the study attempts to

answer whether the choice to remain single can be justified in terms of sharia for reasons of benefit—for example, to avoid economic hardship—or whether it violates the basic principles of Islamic teachings that encourage a balanced family life.

In addition, this research is also important for understanding the social and religious impacts of the phenomenon of celibacy in rural communities. In agrarian communities such as Sei Bamban Village, marriage has a very strong social function, namely expanding social networks, strengthening solidarity between families, and maintaining the continuity of descendants. With the decline in interest in marriage, the social structure of society can change and potentially cause imbalances in the kinship system.

Therefore, this research is significant to conduct. This study is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of tabattul from two perspectives: normative-theological and empirical-sociological. Normatively, this study examines the position of tabattul in Islamic law based on the principle of *maslahah mursalah*. Empirically, this study explores the social and economic realities of the community that encourage the choice of celibacy.

With this approach, this study is expected to contribute to the development of Islamic social jurisprudence that is adaptive to the dynamics of modern society, as well as reaffirming the value of balance in Islamic teachings—between spirituality and humanity, between worship and social

responsibility, between the idealism of teachings and the reality of life.

## METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with field research. This approach was chosen because it aims to deeply understand the social and religious phenomena related to the choice of tabattul (celibacy) in Muslim communities. The qualitative approach allows researchers to explore the meaning, motivation, and views of the community regarding the practice of celibacy in the context of social, cultural, and Islamic law.

The research was conducted in Sei Bamban Village, Batang Serangan District, Langkat Regency, North Sumatra Province, because in this area there are a number of people over the age of 40 who choose not to marry for various reasons, mainly economic and concerns about not being able to provide for a family. The research was conducted over four months, starting from initial observation, data collection, to analysis and writing of the research results.

The data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through in-depth interviews and direct observation of individuals who chose to remain single, religious leaders, community leaders, and village officials. The number of informants was determined by purposive sampling, namely those who were considered to have the best understanding of this social phenomenon. Secondary data was obtained from classical and contemporary fiqh books, Islamic law books, as well as scientific journals and previous studies

relevant to the concept of *maslahah mursalah* and the social phenomenon of marriage.

Data collection techniques included (1) participatory observation to directly observe the social conditions of the community, (2) in-depth interviews to explore the views and reasons behind the decision to remain single, and (3) documentation in the form of village demographic, economic, and social data. To ensure data validity, source and method triangulation techniques were used, as well as member checks with key informants to ensure the accuracy of the information.

The data was analyzed descriptively and qualitatively following the Miles and Huberman model, namely: (1) data reduction for ing relevant data with the research focus; (2) presentation of data in the form of narrative descriptions; and (3) drawing conclusions and verification based on the interpretation of social meanings and Islamic legal values.

The Islamic law analysis approach uses the *Maslahah Mursalah* theory, namely benefits that are not explicitly mentioned in the text but are in line with *maqasid al-syari'ah*. This analysis is used to assess the extent to which the choice to remain single can be considered beneficial or detrimental according to the perspective of Islamic law.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### *Tabatthul* in Islam

The word *tabatthul* (التبتل) comes from the Arabic root word بَتَلَ - يَبْتَلِي - تَبْتِيلًا, which means to break or separate oneself. Linguistically, *tabatthul* means *al-inqitā'* 'an *al-nās wa al-takhalluṣ min al-'alāqāt al-*

*dunyāwiyyah*, which is severing ties with people and detaching oneself from worldly affairs (Manzhūr, 2005). In the Qur'an, this term is used in Surah al-Muzzammil Verse 8:

وَأَذْكُرْ اسْمَ رَبِّكَ وَتَبَتَّلْ إِلَيْهِ تَبْتِيلًا

*Mention the name of your Lord, and worship Him with full devotion.*

This verse forms the spiritual basis of the concept of *tabatthul*, although in the context of interpretation, its meaning is not absolute celibacy, but rather focusing oneself entirely on Allah in worship without being bound by worldly affairs (Ar-Razi, 2000).

The *fuqaha* (scholars of fiqh) define *tabatthul* in two contexts: (a) the context of worship and spirituality, and (b) the social context related to the attitude of abandoning marriage. In the context of worship according to the *fuqaha*, *tabatthul* means total devotion to Allah by cutting oneself off from all forms of dependence on anything other than Him. Imam al-Qurṭubī explains, "*At-tabattul huwa al-inqitā' 'ani al-khalqi wa al-ikhhlāṣ fi al-'ibādah lillāh ta'ālā.*" *Tabatthul* is cutting oneself off from creatures and purifying worship solely for Allah Ta'ala

In a social context, as described in classical fiqh literature, the term *tabatthul* is also used to refer to someone who chooses not to marry throughout their life because they want to worship continuously. Imam Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani wrote, "*At-tabattul huwa tark al-nikāh ta'abbudan lillāh ta'ālā*, which means abandoning marriage for the purpose of worshipping Allah (Al-Asqalânî, 2009). A similar opinion was expressed by al-Nawawî in *Syarh Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*: "Man

*taraka an-nikāh li ghayri 'udhrin fahuwa makrūh, wa in kāna li 'ibādah fa lā yajibu wa lā yustahabb.* Whoever abandons marriage without a valid reason is makruh; and if it is for the sake of worship, then it is neither obligatory nor recommended (Nawawi, 2001).

Hanafi scholars view *tabatthul* as a makruh act, as it contradicts the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. According to al-Kasani in *Bada'i' al-Ṣana'i'*, marriage is a social act of worship and a means of preserving lineage; therefore, abandoning it without reason is considered a departure from the benefits of sharia (Al-Kāsānī, 1986). Malikiyyah scholars tolerate *tabatthul* if there is a shar'ī excuse such as physical weakness or fear of not being able to provide for a wife. However, if it is done because one wants to "imitate monasticism" as Christians do, then it is haram (Al-Mālikī, 1992). According to the Shafi'i school of thought, *tabatthul* is permissible to a limited extent if a person is confident that they can protect themselves from adultery and wants to focus on worship or seeking knowledge. However, if one leaves marriage on the assumption that marriage hinders spiritual purity, then this is contrary to the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (Al-Syīrāzī, 1995). Hanbali scholars argue that abandoning marriage for the sake of worship is not recommended, because the Prophet Muhammad rejected *tabatthul* that led to extreme asceticism. Ibn Qudamah in *al-Mughnī* emphasized that the most perfect worship is a balance between one's relationship with Allah and one's responsibilities towards other people (Qudāmah, 1997). The majority of fiqh

scholars (*jumhūr al-fuqahā'*) agree that marriage is a highly recommended sunnah (*sunnah mu'akkadah*), while celibacy without a shar'ī reason is not prescribed. According to them, Islam encourages its followers to marry as a form of worship, preservation of honor, and preservation of offspring (Al-Nawawī, 1996).

Imam al-Nawawī in *al-Majmū'* states that *tabatthul*, which is abandoning marriage in order to focus on worship, is a makruh act because it contradicts the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. In fact, in certain circumstances, such as fear of falling into adultery, marriage can become obligatory, while celibacy becomes haram. Similarly, Imam Ibn Qudāmah al-Maqdisī in *al-Mughnī* emphasizes that marriage is preferable to celibacy, because marriage protects one from sin and fulfills the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalānī also adds that the Prophet Muhammad forbade his companions who wanted to abandon marriage for the sake of worship, indicating that such an act is not permissible according to Sharia law (Al-Asqalānī, 2009).

The evidence from the Qur'an regarding the encouragement to marry and the prohibition of celibacy is found in verses and Hadith, such as the Qur'an, Surah an-Nur, verse 32:

وَأَنْكِحُوا الْأَيْمَىٰ مِنْكُمْ وَالصَّالِحِينَ مِنْ عِبَادِكُمْ  
وَأِمَائِكُمْ ۚ إِنْ يَكُونُوا فُقَرَاءَ يُغْنِهِمُ اللَّهُ مِنْ فَضْلِهِ ۗ  
وَاللَّهُ وَاسِعٌ عَلِيمٌ

*And marry those among you who are single, and those who are suitable (for marriage) from among your male servants and female servants. If they are poor, Allah will enrich*

them with His bounty. And Allah is All-Encompassing (in His provision) and All-Knowing.

This verse indicates the command to marry those who are not yet married. According to Imam al-Qurtubī, this command indicates a strong recommendation for Muslims to marry, because it contains benefits for individuals and society.

Another argument is found in the Qur'an, Surah ar-Ra'd verse 38, which states

أَرْسَلْنَاوَلَقَدْ رُسُلًا مِّن قَبْلِكَ وَجَعَلْنَا لَهُمْ أَزْوَاجًا  
وَذُرِّيَّةً وَمَا كَانَ لِرَسُولٍ أَنْ يَأْتِيَ بِآيَةٍ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ  
لِكُلِّ أَجَلٍ كِتَابٌ

*And indeed, We have sent messengers before you, and We gave them wives and offspring. And no messenger has the right to bring any sign except by Allah's permission. For every period there is a book (specified).*

This verse affirms that even prophets marry, indicating that marriage is a natural human practice and part of the perfection of worship. Thus, celibacy is not a sign of greater piety or obedience.

As for the evidence for celibacy, the hadith about the prohibition of celibacy and the virtue of marriage is the hadith about the three companions narrated from Anas bin Malik:

حَدَّثَنَا عَلِيُّ بْنُ عَبْدِ اللَّهِ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا سُفْيَانُ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا الْأَعْمَشُ، قَالَ: سَمِعْتُ إِبْرَاهِيمَ، عَنْ الْأَقْمَةِ، قَالَ: دَخَلَ نَقَرٌ عَلَى أَزْوَاجِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ يَسْأَلُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَةِ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ، فَلَمَّا أُخْبِرُوا كَانَتْهُمْ تَقَالُوهَا، فَقَالُوا: وَأَيْنَ نَحْنُ مِنَ النَّبِيِّ ﷺ وَقَدْ غُفِرَ لَهُ مَا تَقَدَّمَ مِنْ ذَنْبِهِ وَمَا

تَأَخَّرَ؟ قَالَ أَحَدُهُمْ: أَمَّا أَنَا فَإِنِّي أَصَلِّي اللَّيْلَ أَبَدًا، وَقَالَ آخَرُ: أَنَا أَصُومُ الدَّهْرَ وَلَا أَفْطِرُ، وَقَالَ آخَرُ: أَنَا أَعْتَرِلُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَا أَتَزَوَّجُ أَبَدًا، فَجَاءَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَ: أَنْتُمْ الَّذِينَ قُلْتُمْ كَذَا وَكَذَا؟ أَمَّا وَاللَّهِ إِنِّي لَأُحْشَاكُمُ لِلَّهِ، وَأَتَّفَاكُمُ لَهُ، لَكِنِّي أَصُومُ وَأُفْطِرُ، وَأُصَلِّي وَأَرْفُدُ، وَأَتَزَوَّجُ النِّسَاءَ، فَمَنْ رَغِبَ عَنْ سُنَّتِي فَلَيْسَ مِنِّي). رواه البخاري

*Narrated from Anas bin Malik, may Allah be pleased with him, he said: "Three men came to the wives of the Prophet Muhammad to ask about the Prophet's worship. After they were informed (about his worship), they felt that it was still not enough. They said, 'Where do we stand compared to the Prophet, when he has been forgiven for his past and future sins?' Then one of them said, 'I will pray all night and not sleep.' Another said, 'I will fast every day and not break my fast.' And the third said, 'I will stay away from women and never marry.'" Then the Prophet Muhammad came and said, "Are you the ones who said that? By Allah, I am the one who fears Allah the most and is the most pious toward Him, but I fast and break my fast, I pray and sleep, and I marry women. Whoever hates my Sunnah is not of my community.*

This hadith serves as the primary evidence that remaining celibate for religious reasons is a reprehensible act, as it contradicts the Sunnah of Prophet Muhammad. There is another hadith related to this, which states:

لَا رَهْبَانِيَّةَ فِي الْإِسْلَامِ

*There is no monasticism (withdrawing from the world and not marrying) in Islam (Hadith Ahmad).*

This hadith rejects the concept of monasticism in Christian tradition, where a person renounces marriage for the sake of

worship. Islam emphasizes a balance between worship and worldly life.

Furthermore, the Prophet Muhammad said:

حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ مُنِيرٍ، قَالَ: حَدَّثَنَا عَبْدُ اللَّهِ بْنُ عُمَرَ،  
عَنْ نَافِعٍ، عَنْ سَعِيدِ بْنِ الْمُسَيَّبِ، قَالَ: نَهَى رَسُولُ اللَّهِ  
صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ عَنِ التَّبَتُّلِ، وَقَالَ: «مَنْ كَانَ  
مِنْكُمْ ذَا طَوْلٍ فَلْيَتَزَوَّجْ، فَإِنَّهُ أَعْضٌ لِلْبَصْرِ، وَأَخْصَنُ  
لِلْفَرْجِ

*Prophet Muhammad forbade (his followers) from practicing tabattul (celibacy), and he said: "Whoever among you has the means (financially), let him marry. For indeed (marriage) is more effective in lowering the gaze and guarding the private parts .*

Ibn Hajar al-'Asqalani emphasized that *celibacy* in the sense of permanently abandoning marriage in order to worship more is contrary to the *sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad, who married and continued to worship perfectly (Al-Asqalani, 2009). Therefore, according to the majority of scholars, celibacy with such intentions is not a form of obedience, but rather a deviation in understanding *zuhud*.

### **The Phenomenon of Tabattul in the Sei Bamban Village Community, Batang Serangan Subdistrict, Langkat Regency**

The phenomenon of *tabattul* or celibacy in the community of Sei Bamban Village is an interesting social reality, especially because it occurs in a religious rural community that still strongly upholds family values. Generally, rural communities view marriage as an important part of social life and worship, but in recent years there has been a change in the mindset of some

individuals who prefer to live alone without marrying until old age.

Based on observations and interviews, it is known that there are around 20 residents of Sei Bamban Village who are over 40 years old and still live as bachelors. They consist of men and women from lower-middle-class economic backgrounds. Most of them work as farm laborers, small traders, and freelance workers. This phenomenon raises social and religious questions: why do they choose not to marry, even though religion and culture consider marriage to be the fulfillment of a Muslim's life?

#### **1. First case: Economic Factors and Concerns about Providing for a Family**

One illustration that can describe this phenomenon is the case of Mr. S (45 years old), a farm worker who lives in Dusun II, Sei Bamban Village. Since he was young, he has worked helping his parents in the fields and continues to live a simple life. When interviewed, he said that he did want to get married, but was constrained by economic limitations. According to him, marriage requires financial readiness, while his income is uncertain. He is afraid that after marriage he will not be able to provide adequately for his wife. Therefore, he chooses to live alone and focus on helping his family. "I'm afraid that I will neglect my wife if I can't feed her. Now it's hard enough just to work, let alone take responsibility for someone else," he said with resignation. Statements like this are quite common among the people of Sei Bamban Village, showing that economic factors are the main reason for the decision to remain single. The uncertainty of

income causes many men to hesitate to take the step of marriage, while women also tend to wait for a long time until they eventually do not marry.

## 2. Case Two: Psychological and Social Factors

Another case is experienced by Mrs. N (43 years old), a woman who has worked as a small trader in the market since she was young. She admitted that she had been in a relationship with a man, but failed to get married because the man's family did not approve. After that incident, she decided not to have a relationship with anyone else and chose to live alone. According to her, living alone makes her feel calmer and freer from emotional pressure. "I almost got married once, but it fell through. After that, I thought, maybe this is my destiny. Besides, living alone is more peaceful, I don't have to worry about household problems," she said. This story illustrates that psychological aspects and past experiences are also important factors in the phenomenon of *tabattul*. Failure in relationships, emotional trauma, and negative experiences with others' marriages can shape negative perceptions of married life.

## 3. Case Three: Social Factors and Cultural Value Shifts

In addition to economic and psychological factors, the phenomenon of *tabattul* is also influenced by changes in social and cultural values. Some residents, especially those in their late 30s, have begun to adopt new perspectives on marriage ( ). For them, living alone is no longer considered taboo or shameful. For example, Mr. A (38

years old), a workshop worker, stated that marriage is no longer a top priority because he prefers to focus on his work and personal freedom. "Times have changed. If you're not ready, why get married? You can be happy living alone," he said. This statement shows a shift in social values in society, where individuals begin to assess happiness personally, not based on social pressure or traditional norms. This phenomenon shows the influence of modernization and the media, which shape the view that individual freedom is a legitimate form of self-actualization. The phenomenon of *tabattul* in Sei Bamban Village is a social adaptation to economic realities and cultural changes. Although marriage is encouraged in Islam, the community interprets marriage as a form of worship that requires economic, emotional, and social readiness. The decision not to marry is considered a precaution to avoid harm. However, from an Islamic legal perspective, *tabattul* without a valid reason is not recommended, as it contradicts the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad. *Tabattul* in this village is more influenced by socio-economic conditions, so a wise and educational approach is needed to educate the community about marriage as an act of worship that brings benefits.

## Factors Behind *Tabattul* in the Community of Sei Bamban Village, Batang Serangan District, Langkat Regency

The phenomenon of *tabattul* or the choice to remain single in Sei Bamban

Village is a social phenomenon that is interesting to study, especially because it occurs in a rural area that generally still upholds traditional values and Islamic teachings that encourage marriage. Based on observations and interviews with the local community, there are several factors behind the decision of some people not to marry until old age. These factors can be classified into four main categories, namely economic, socio-cultural, psychological, and religious-normative factors.

#### 1. Economic Factors

Economic factors are the most dominant cause of the decision of the people of Sei Bamban Village to remain single. The economic conditions of the community, most of whom work as farm laborers, day laborers, and fishermen, result in relatively low and unstable income levels. This economic inability causes concern among some men and women about getting married because they feel unable to bear the financial burden of a household, such as the cost of marriage, daily needs, and responsibilities towards their spouse and children (Bungin, 2017). This situation aligns with Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, which places economic needs as one of the primary needs before an individual can fulfill their social and spiritual needs. In the context of rural communities, marriage is often viewed not only as an emotional bond but also as a significant economic responsibility. Therefore, economic constraints are the primary reason why some individuals choose to remain unmarried.

#### 2. Social and Cultural Factors

In addition to economic factors, social and cultural influences also play an important role. In rural communities, social pressure regarding marital status still exists, but on the other hand, there are also new views that are more tolerant of individual life choices. Several informants admitted that they feel comfortable living alone and no longer feel pressured by the views of the community (Soekanto & Soemarjan, 1969). On the other hand, changes in social values due to modernization and the influence of the media have also shaped new views on the meaning of happiness. Living without a partner is no longer considered a disgrace, but rather a realistic life choice. Traditional cultural values that once required people to marry at a young age are now beginning to shift, especially among the adult generation who feel they have the freedom to determine their own path in life.

#### 3. Psychological Factors and Personal Experience

Psychological factors also play a role in the decision to *remain single*. Some people who choose to remain single have had traumatic experiences, whether due to previous relationship failures, parental separation, or bitter experiences in other people's households that they have witnessed. Fear of family conflict, domestic violence, and emotional instability in a partner are often personal reasons for not getting married. In social psychology theory, this decision can be

explained through the concept of *avoidance behavior*, which is behavior that avoids situations that are considered to cause discomfort or emotional distress (Zakiah Daradjat, 2000). Thus, the choice not to marry is not solely because of a rejection of religious teachings, but as a form of self-protection from experiences or situations that are considered psychologically risky.

#### 4. Religious Factors and Religious Views

Although Islam encourages its followers to marry, a small portion of society understands *tabattul* as a form of simplicity in life and focus on worship. This understanding arises from the perception that living alone can be more peaceful and free from the burdens of household responsibilities. However, some of these views are not entirely based on a correct understanding of sharia, but rather on personal interpretations of religious values. In Islamic history, the practice of *tabattul*, which means refraining from marriage for the sake of worship, was once practiced by some of the Prophet's companions, but was later prohibited by the Prophet Muhammad because it contradicted his *sunnah*, which emphasized a balance between worldly and spiritual matters. Prophet Muhammad said: Marriage is part of my *sunnah*. Whoever hates my *sunnah* is not one of my followers (Majah, 2015). Therefore, the decision to remain single in the context of the Sei Bamban village community cannot be fully justified from

a sharia perspective if it is not based on strong reasons of public interest.

#### 5. Structural and Educational Factors

In addition to individual factors, structural aspects such as limited education and employment opportunities also influence the choice to remain single. Low levels of education make it difficult for some people to find decent work, which in turn affects their economic capacity. On the other hand, a poor understanding of Islamic law and the value of marriage also leads to the perception that remaining single is not a big problem in religious life (Azra, 2012).

The phenomenon of *tabattul* in Sei Bamban Village is not an issue that can be viewed one-sidedly. Instead, this phenomenon is the result of the interaction between various factors that influence each other, such as economic, social, psychological, and religious factors. In this context, the decision of some individuals not to marry is influenced more by difficult socio-economic conditions than by deliberate ideological or religious choices. Many individuals choose to remain single for pragmatic reasons, such as financial inability or uncertainty in obtaining a decent livelihood, which makes marriage seem like an unbearable burden.

Social and psychological factors also play an important role in this phenomenon. Personal experiences, emotional trauma, or fear of failure in previous relationships can influence a person's perception of marriage. In addition, changes in social values due to

modernization also contribute, with some people viewing personal freedom and independence as more important than marriage. This shows a shift in values in society, where marriage is no longer considered an absolute obligation, but rather a choice that requires careful consideration.

However, in Islam, marriage is considered a highly recommended form of worship. The Prophet Muhammad stated that marriage is his sunnah and part of human nature. Therefore, a humanistic and educational religious approach is needed so that people understand that marriage is not just an economic burden, but a means to achieve benefits for individuals and society. This understanding can help society realize that marriage has many benefits, in spiritual, social, and economic aspects, and that choosing to remain single without a strong reason is contrary to the basic principles of Islamic teachings.

### **The Indonesian Ulema Council's View on the Choice of *Tabattul***

In this study, the researcher conducted an interview with one of the administrators of the Indonesian Ulema Council of Batang Serangan Subdistrict to obtain an Islamic perspective on the phenomenon of *tabattul* (deliberately remaining single without the desire to marry) that has begun to develop among the people of Sei Bamban Village. According to the Indonesian Ulema Council official, the phenomenon of *tabattul* is not in line with Islamic teachings. He explained, "Tabattul is not part of Islamic teachings. Islam never teaches its followers to avoid marriage without a reason that is justified by

sharia law. The Prophet Muhammad himself emphasized that marriage is his sunnah, and whoever hates his sunnah is not part of his followers.

Furthermore, he added that Islam views marriage as a means to preserve offspring (*hifz al-nasl*), honor (*hifz al-'ird*), and build a spiritually and socially balanced society. Therefore, someone who deliberately chooses to remain single without a valid reason is considered to have abandoned one of the natural tendencies ( ) of humanity. In the view of the Indonesian Ulema Council, this phenomenon has the potential to damage the social order. According to the council, "If more and more people choose not to marry, the social order could be damaged. There will be slander, negative accusations, promiscuity, and an imbalance in social roles between men and women.

The Indonesian Ulema Council of Batang Serangan Subdistrict emphasized that *tabattul* cannot be justified in Islamic law. According to them, marriage is a form of worship in accordance with the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad and has the noble purpose of ensuring the continuity of the human race. The Indonesian Ulema Council also expressed concern about the social impact, such as the inability of individuals to channel their sexual desires in a lawful manner, which risks leading them to deviant behavior such as promiscuity or even prostitution. In addition, this phenomenon can cause feelings of discomfort or misery, especially for individuals who feel isolated because they are not yet married while their friends are already married.

In an effort to address this phenomenon, the Indonesian Ulema Council,

together with the Office of Religious Affairs and religious counselors, has taken several strategic steps. These include conducting regular religious studies that emphasize the importance of marriage in Islam, engaging in open dialogue with community groups that are suspected of supporting the *tabattul* ideology, and taking a persuasive approach to individuals who choose to remain single ( ). The Indonesian Ulema Council also involves community leaders to help raise awareness among the public about the importance of marriage as part of Islamic teachings.

The School-Age Youth Guidance Program, implemented by the Indonesian Ulema Council together with the Batang Serangan Office of Religious Affairs, is also a preventive measure to shape a correct understanding of marriage in Islam. This program targets students in Batang Serangan and its surroundings. The material in the school-age youth guidance program covers the urgency of marriage in Islam, the roles of husbands and wives in building a harmonious family, and the dangers of deviant beliefs such as *tabattul*. By strengthening Islamic education based on gentleness and a humanistic approach, the Indonesian Ulema Council hopes that the phenomenon of *tabattul* can be prevented from spreading widely and causing unrest in society.

### **Tabattul as a Choice to Remain Single in a Social Context**

*Tabattul*, which in this context refers to the decision to remain single without a clear reason, is not an attitude that is encouraged in Islam. Although Islam encourages its followers to marry, there are certain individual

circumstances that cause a person to delay or choose not to marry, such as economic limitations, family responsibilities, or health conditions. In this context, celibacy is not considered a sin as long as it is not accompanied by the belief that marriage is despicable. However, it is important to distinguish *tabattul* as a lifestyle choice from an anti-marriage attitude that is deliberately aimed at avoiding marriage for purely spiritual reasons (Al-Nawawiyah, 1982).

Islam teaches that marriage is not only about biological needs, but also a social institution with deep spiritual and moral dimensions. Imam al-Qurṭubī interprets the verse "*wa tabattal ilaihi tabtīlā*" as an exhortation to worship Allah wholeheartedly, not as a command to abandon lawful worldly pleasures, such as marriage. Therefore, the choice to remain single without a clear sharʿi reason contradicts maqāṣid al-syarīʿah, which emphasizes a balance between worldly and afterlife matters and the importance of preserving offspring (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*) (Al-Ṭabarī, 2001).

In Islamic law, *tabattul* cannot be considered a recommended form of worship, except in certain rational and personal circumstances. The majority of fuqahāʾ agree that *tabattul* should not be understood as a spiritual virtue, but rather as a lifestyle choice that is acceptable only if based on valid sharia reasons. Islam rejects all forms of extremism in worship, including in matters of marriage, and teaches a balance between this world and the hereafter. Therefore, true celibacy is to detach the heart from worldly dependencies in order to focus

on Allah, not to detach oneself from social life and society.

*Tabattul*, which aims to worship fully without considering the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad regarding marriage, is not a recommended choice in Islam. In fact, according to Imam al-Nawawī, remaining single with the intention of worshipping more is prohibited, as it has the potential to reject Allah's command, which encourages people to marry. Furthermore, according to the hadith of the Prophet Muhammad, marriage is more effective in lowering the gaze and guarding the private parts, and for those who are not yet able to marry, fasting is a better alternative. This hadith shows that marriage has more value than just personal worship, but also as a means of maintaining honor and social order.

Marriage in Islam also serves as a foundation for maintaining the morals and honor of society. Remaining single for a long period of time, without a valid reason, can lead to demographic and social imbalances, as well as an increase in moral deviations such as adultery, prostitution, and sexual harassment. In this context, Imam al-Ghazālī mentions that marriage is a "shield of honor" (*ḥiṣn al-‘iffah*), while celibacy is a "gateway to lust" that risks leading individuals into sin.

Islam places marriage as a means of preserving offspring (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*), which is one of the main *maqāṣid al-syarī‘ah*. Marriage is a *shar‘i* mechanism for preserving the regeneration of humanity, and rejecting marriage means hindering the continuity of the *ummah* and weakening the social structure of Islam. The Qur'an in Surah al-Naḥl verse 72 affirms that Allah has

made life partners part of the continuity of human life, indicating that marriage is part of the Divine plan.

In addition, marriage also preserves honor and morals (*ḥifẓ al-‘ird*). Islam teaches that marriage is a means to prevent individuals from immoral behavior and preserve purity. Without marriage, a person is at risk of falling into deviant behavior. Marriage also has a deep emotional and spiritual dimension, which in Surah al-Rūm verse 21 of the Qur'an is described as a means to achieve inner peace, compassion, and balance of the soul.

In addition to the individual aspect, marriage also functions in a social context. Ibn Qudāmah mentions that marriage is a form of mutual assistance in goodness (*ta‘āwun ‘alā al-birr wa al-taqwā*), which strengthens social bonds in society. Without marriage, individuals close off opportunities to carry out the social and moral roles that should be embraced in the family. Societies that neglect marriage risk facing various social problems, such as declining birth rates, increased deviant sexual behavior, and the weakening of moral education within the family.

*Fuqahā'* consider that the prohibition of celibacy (*tabattul*) is *maslahah ‘āmmah*, or public interest. If someone chooses not to marry without a clear reason, it can damage the social order and lead to moral deviance. The principle of *maslahah mursalah* supports this prohibition, because celibacy without a *shar‘i* reason can cause greater *mafsadah* (harm) to individuals and society.

Overall, celibacy in the Islamic context is not a recommended lifestyle

choice, except in certain conditions that are valid according to sharia. Islam emphasizes a balance between worldly and spiritual life, and considers marriage a means of preserving human nature, lineage, honor, and public morals. Therefore, a deliberate and unjustified bachelorhood contradicts the main objectives of Islamic law (*maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*), which encourages the ummah to build a strong society through families (Auda, 2008).

### Review of Maslahah Mursalah on the Prohibition of Tabattul (celibacy)

Maslahah mursalah in uṣūl al-fiqh refers to benefits that are not explicitly mentioned in the text, but are in line with the general objectives of sharia. According to al-Ghazālī, maslahah is valid if it contains real, general, and certain benefits, and does not

contradict religious texts. This principle allows for flexibility in Islamic law to accommodate the needs of society without neglecting the basic principles of Sharia, such as the protection of religion, life, reason, lineage, and property. In the context of tabattul, Islamic law can evaluate the choice of celibacy based on social and individual benefits, assessing its impact on society without sacrificing the greater objectives of Sharia.

The prohibition of celibacy (*tabattul*) in Islam is not only based on the text of the hadith, but also has a very strong rationality of benefit (*maslahah mursalah*), because it touches on the social, moral, and existential dimensions of human beings. From the perspective of *maslahah mursalah*, marriage is an important instrument in achieving the five main objectives (*maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*):

**Table 1.** The Objectives of Marriage According to Maslahah Mursalah

| No | Maqāṣid al-Syarī'ah                       | The Role of Marriage in Achieving Maslahah                                         |
|----|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | <i>Ḥifẓ al-Dīn</i> (preserving religion)  | Marriage fosters peace of mind and encourages obedience to Allah.                  |
| 2  | <i>Ḥifẓ al-Nafs</i> (preserving the soul) | Through marriage, humans channel their instincts in a lawful and honorable manner. |
| 3  | <i>Ḥifẓ al-'Aql</i> (preserving the mind) | The family creates emotional and moral stability that supports clarity of thought. |
| 4  | <i>Ḥifẓ al-Nasl</i> (preserving lineage)  | Marriage is a means of producing the next generation and preserving lineage.       |
| 5  | <i>Ḥifẓ al-Māl</i> (preserving wealth)    | Family life fosters responsibility in the ethical management of wealth.            |

From the table above, it appears that tabattul—which means permanently refusing marriage—directly negates the benefits that are the objectives of Sharia law, especially in the aspects of *ḥifẓ al-nasl* (preserving offspring) and *ḥifẓ al-'ird* (preserving honor). The prohibition of tabattul can be analyzed from the tori Maslahah Mursalah as follows:

- a. Individual and Social Maslahah. Individually, the prohibition of *tabattul* protects humans from the dangers of natural deviations, such as sexual frustration, social depression, and emotional imbalance. Socially, this prohibition maintains the stability of society through the existence of the family as the smallest unit of

civilization. Ibn Khaldūn emphasized that humans are social beings (*madanī bi al-ṭabʿ*), so the existence of the family is the basis for the formation of social solidarity (*ʿaṣabiyyah*) (Al-Shāṭibī, 1996). Thus, extreme celibacy not only negates personal benefit, but also destroys social harmony, which is a pillar of *maqāṣid syarīʿah*.

- b. *Moral and Psychological Maslahah*. Marriage is not merely a biological relationship, but also a means of *tazkiyah al-naḥs* (purification of the soul) and *tahqīq al-sukūn* (achieving tranquility). In Surah al-Rūm verse 21 of the Qur'an, Allah emphasizes that the purpose of creating couples is to achieve tranquility (*sakinah*), love ( ), affection (*mawaddah*), and mercy (*rahmah*). By rejecting marriage, a person ignores these inner benefits, which can lead to psychological disorders, such as loneliness and spiritual imbalance (
- c. *Generational Maslahah* (preservation of lineage). One of the main *maqāṣid* of sharia is to preserve lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasl*). Marriage is a divine mechanism for maintaining the existence of humanity. Therefore, *tabattul* threatens the continuity of generations and rejects the universal *maslahah* of humanity. Imam al-Shāṭibī explains that anything that prevents the achievement of *maqāṣid* is a form of *mafsadah*, not *maslahah*. Thus, *tabattul* is an act that contradicts *maslahah mursalah* because it hinders the objectives of Sharia.

- d. *Maslahah in the Perspective of Dynamic Maqāṣid* According to Jasser Auda, *maqāṣid* must be understood systematically and dynamically (*systems approach*). The prohibition of *tabattul* is not merely to preserve one *maqāṣid* (progeny), but to support the integration of various other *maqāṣid*, such as honor, social stability, and the collective welfare of the people. Thus, from the perspective of *maslahah mursalah*, marriage has a multidimensional function that cannot be replaced by celibacy (Auda, 2008).

In *uṣūl al-fiqh*, an action that causes more harm than good is deemed haram. *Tabattul* falls into this category because it hinders the achievement of sharia objectives, contradicts the *sunnah* of the Prophet, and neglects social and moral interests (Andriyani & Ulya, 2024). Therefore, scholars argue that the prohibition of celibacy is based on a strong *maslahah mursalah*, which aims to protect individuals and society from greater harm. From the perspective of *maslahah mursalah*, the prohibition of *tabattul* is not only based on religious texts, but is also the result of rationalization of broader interests, maintaining the balance of human life, both in the spiritual, social, and worldly dimensions (M. O. Hasibuan, 2021; Lubis, 2019).

## CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of research in Sei Bamban Village, Batang Serangan District, Langkat Regency, it can be concluded that the phenomenon of *tabattul* or the choice to remain single without the desire to marry is the result of a combination of

various social, economic, psychological, and religious factors. Most individuals over the age of 40 choose to remain single due to economic limitations, concerns about being unable to provide for a family, as well as experiences of failed relationships or social influences that are not supportive of marriage. From an Islamic legal perspective, particularly with the *maslahah mursalah* approach, *tabattul* cannot be justified because it does not provide clear benefits for individuals or society. On the contrary, this phenomenon has the potential to cause *mafsadah*, such as weakening social resilience and hindering the regeneration of offspring. Within the framework of *maqāṣid al-syarī'ah*, *tabattul* contradicts the objectives of sharia in preserving offspring, honor, and social balance. The view of the Indonesian Ulema Council of Batang Serangan Subdistrict emphasizes that *tabattul* is not part of Islamic teachings. Islam encourages marriage as a *sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad, which aims to preserve honor and build a balanced society. Therefore, this phenomenon needs to be addressed by all parties, including religious institutions, village governments, and community leaders. The implication of these findings is the need for joint efforts to educate the public about the importance of marriage in Islam, as well as strengthening the economy and religious education to reduce socio-economic barriers that can prevent someone from getting married.

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