

“*Khuruj Fi Sabilillah*” (Traveler in Faith) And Its Implications on Household Harmony of Tabligh Jamaat in North Gorontalo Regency, Indonesia



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ABSTRACT: “*Khuruj fi sabilillah*” (Traveler in faith) by the followers of Tabligh Jamaat requires the husband not to physically and mentally support his wife for a particular time. Whereas conceptually, fulfilling physical and mental maintenance is one of the instruments to maintain household harmony. This research is qualitative and descriptive and uses a sociological approach. Data were obtained through observation, interviews, and documentation. The results showed that the husband's departure to do *khuruj fi sabilillah* did not adversely affect their household harmony. The fulfillment of the physical livelihood of the family members left behind is resolved through the concept of deliberation and good planning, while the fulfillment of inner livelihood is also not a severe problem because the wives have let go of their husbands, who are believed to be preaching jihad for good. The spaciousness of the heart to let go of the husband is a vital asset for the wife so that the unfulfillment of inner sustenance is no longer a problem. This study shows that followers of the Tabligh Jamaat in North Gorontalo marriage age has lasted for a long time is a sociological reason in itself, so inner maintenance is no longer a priority in life.

KEYWORDS: *khuruj fi sabilillah*; household harmony; Tabligh Jamaat; Islam; North Gorontalo.

I. INTRODUCTION

“*Khuruj fi sabilillah*” is a da'wah trip for a certain period of time undertaken by a *karkun* (a term for Jamaah Tabligh members in North Gorontalo) when takaza (after his nisab has reached) for *khuruj fi sabilillah*. The *khuruj fi sabilillah* practiced by the Jamaat Tabligh, a Muslim group (Hasanah 2017; Muhibuddin 2020; Ali and Amin 2020b; Noor 2021). For example, if the nisab requires a follower of Jamaat Tabligh to perform the *khuruj fi sabilillah* for 40 days, he will practically leave his family for 40 days. It means he must ignore one of his obligations towards the family: the fulfillment of physical and mental maintenance, love, respect, protection, and other needs. The priority of da'wah that every *karkun* does when *khuruj fi sabilillah* will simplistically affect the fulfillment of the husband's obligations to his wife, and therefore it is feared that it can damage family resilience and the harmony of their households (Saepuloh 2009; Muhibuddin 2015; Hamdi et al. 2022; Ali and Amin 2020b; Latif and Fatmawati 2020b; Hasanah 2014).

So far, studies on Tabligh Jamaat have tended to look only at the ideological aspects and the da'wah activities they carry out. The innate effects of these proselytizing activities have yet to be given much attention. Two existing trends emphasize the need for more attention to the sociological dimension of domestic life. Ilham Latif, for example, points out that *khuruj fi sabilillah* is the last concept that members of the Tabligh congregation must implement to perfect their membership (Latif and Fatmawati 2020a). Second, studies that pay attention to the ideological and organizational aspects of Jamaah Tabligh. For example, Jan Ali and F Amin show that Jamaah Tabligh is an Islamic revivalist group whose views are in many ways slightly different from those of mainstream Muslims (Ali and Amin 2020a)—according to existing studies, fostering their households when *khuruj fi sabilillah* has received less attention, even though this process contributes positively to the preservation and harmony of the households of members of the Tabligh congregation.

This study complements the shortcomings of existing studies by looking at how family deliberation in the Tabligh Jamaat congregation community plays a positive role when the husband intends to *khuruj fi sabilillah*. Togetherness and strong community ties, accompanied by willingness and enthusiasm for mutual assistance, can strengthen the spirit of brotherhood among wives left behind to preach. It is crucial to know how wives live their lives when their husbands are in *khuruj fi sabilillah*. Specifically, this paper answers how the wives of Tabligh pilgrims live apart from their husbands and how the consequences of not being together are managed. A deep understanding of managing household life when wives are apart from their husbands provides a model for

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problem-solving and lessons learned for preparing action plans for handling household conflicts (Muhibuddin 2015; 2020; Noor 2010; Hasanah 2014).

This research is based on an argument that the activity of *khuruj fi sabilillah* as part of da'wah activities does not have harmful implications for the perpetrators. The essence of da'wah aims to improve and improve the quality of life of the people. Various misconducts that occur in society due to limited knowledge so far can be the basis for prolonged misunderstanding. At the same time, widespread disinformation has caused public education to fail. Good knowledge is defeated by bad knowledge produced and reproduced in social media.

LITERATURE REVIEW

a. The Concept of *khuruj fi sabilillah*

Ideologically, Tabligh believes that practicing religion and calling people to obey Allah is the duty of every Muslim. Da'wah is the duty of the prophets, and the Prophet is the best of the prophets, and Muslims are the best of the people who are also assigned to preach according to the command in QS. Al-Imran (3):110.

Specifically, *khuruj fi sabilillah* is done by spending time devoted to da'wah. It is usually conducted from mosque to mosque and led by an *amir*. When *khuruj fi sabilillah*, a member must focus on da'wah's mission and forget about family and property. *Khuruj* is carried out in groups and looks for a mosque or *mushalla* as a place to stay and become a command center for da'wah. *Khuruj* is done, so the surrounding community wants to revive the mosque and *mushalla*. Usually, *khuruj* consists of three people and a maximum of ten people who are commanded by one of the *amirs* among them. The *amir* usually assures the members that when the preacher leaves home for jihad, 75 angels will be sent to look after his children, wife, and family so that his departure from preaching is not accompanied by the burden of worrying about the family left behind (Muhibuddin 2020; Hasanah 2014).

The provisions for following *khuruj fi sabilillah* for Tabligh Jama'ah members include the following stages:

Two and a half hours of *khuruj fi sabilillah* every day.

One day a week should be spent in *khuruj fi sabilillah*

Every month, at least 3 days of *khuruj fi sabilillah*.

Every year, at least 40 days of *khuruj fi sabilillah*.

Lifetime minimum *khuruj fi sabilillah* 1 year

At the beginning of joining Jamaah Tabligh for the first time, a person must be ready for *khuruj fi sabilillah* by leaving his wife and family. This obligation is believed to be the main and final foundation adopted by Jamaah Tabligh. The other foundations are commonly referred to as *al-Ushulūs sittah* (six basic foundations) or *ash-Shifātūs Sittāh* (six characteristics), namely: (1) realizing the phrase, Lā Ilāha Illallāh Muḥammād Rasūlullāh; (2) praying with solemnity and humility; (3) scholarship supported by dhikr; (4) respecting every Muslim; and (5) correcting the intention (Hasanah 2017; Saepuloh 2009; Muhibuddin 2020).

For new members of the Tabligh congregation and their families not to be surprised, they are initially required to *khuruj* for three days only. After that, it is done continuously for three days every month. Then if it has been long enough, it can be followed by ten days, and continues to 40 days, then four months and a year. However, this activity of going out to preach has several conditions, including (1). Those who are married must consult with their wife and children long before leaving, and those who are not married must ask permission from their parents. (2). For married people, the husband must provide for his wife and children while away.

b. Household harmony

According to religious provisions, the husband is obliged to protect his family. This religious obligation is emphasized in the provisions of Law 34 and the Compilation of Islamic Law (*Kompilasi Hukum Islam* - KHI) article 80, which stipulates that the husband is obliged to protect his wife as well as be the leader of a family.

When entering into marriage, all humans expect continuity and harmony in the household. The characteristics of a harmonious family are the creation of a good relationship between husband and wife, well-channeled lust, educated children, fulfilled needs, a wonderful social life, and increased faith. Some experts add the elements of peace, tranquility, and prosperity from an external perspective and prosperity from an internal perspective as additional indicators.

Understanding and implementing the rights and obligations of husbands and wives in organizing households is the key to family stability. Muhammad Baqir al-Habsyi gave a systematic review of the rights and obligations of husband and wife, namely: First, the mutual obligations between husband and wife; it is permissible for the husband to enjoy physical relations with his wife and vice versa, the emergence of a mahram relationship, the enactment of the law of inheritance, the existence of nasab relations with children, the continuation of good relations between husband and wife, maintaining appearance. Second, the husband's obligations towards his wife are to provide alimony and to treat his wife well. Third, the wife's obligations towards her husband:

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obeying and obeying her husband as long as it is not prohibited in Islam, taking care of herself, and not hurting her husband's heart (Mamun 2019; Hamdi 2015; Ali and Amin 2020b; Noor 2013).

If the family has children, then the child's education must be considered. Family, school, and society are the centers of education. However, it is the family that exerts the first influence; the family is the most influential educational center compared to others because a child enters Islam from the beginning of his life, and it is in the family that the seeds of education are planted. A harmonious family can be judged by the growth of the personality of its children.

If the internal relationship has been well realized, the harmonious family can also build a good relationship between the husband's and wife's extended families. Fostering good relationships with the families of both husband and wife is very important because sometimes the breakdown of marital relations is not only from the husband and wife. However, disapproving family factors are also very influential. For this reason, maintaining good relationships with parents and extended family is one way of maintaining a marriage and good relations with the community. Good relations in the community can be achieved starting from home life.

If we observe the provisions of family law, what is intended in the Qur'an and al-Hadith regarding the rules of husband-and-wife relations does not only regulate the rights and obligations between the two. However, it must also pay attention to the family's relationship with God, namely increasing piety to Him, making it a means of spiritual purification and emotional cleanliness. If the husband knows that pleasing, making happy, and protecting his wife is obedience to Allah, the wife also understands that obeying her husband is the same as obeying Allah, and the husband and wife give understanding to their children that filial piety to parents is also called obeying Allah.

This understanding is essential to teach couples who want to get married so that they realize the real purpose of marriage, that a husband's obligation to his wife and family is not limited to food and clothing, but also to foster his wife and children so that they have correct beliefs and stable faith. Because the family also has a responsibility to Allah Swt., namely, the family and its functions are the implementations of Allah Swt. and the mandate of the khilafah.

II. METHODS

This research focuses on the group of wives left by their husbands during khuruj fi sabilillah. The departure of the husband to preach for an extended time has implications for the harmony of their household. Not fulfilling physical and mental sustenance perfectly, in many cases has become the reason for couples to ask for separation. By studying the group of wives left behind for khuruj, a model of community problem-solving can be built to overcome the increase in divorce cases in various places in the future.

This research is qualitative. It is based on observations throughout 2020. In addition, several wives whose husbands have made khuruj were used as informants to be interviewed in order to obtain data on their attitudes and views on the fulfillment of wives' maintenance when the husband is khuruj fi sabilillah. Specifically, the informant of the research are those followers of the Jamaat Tabligh in North Gorontalo regency, Indonesia. Their names are anonymous as in can be seen in the table 1.

Table 1: Informant

| No | Informant | Anonymous | Marriage Period | Education | Profession |
|----|-----------|-----------|-----------------|-----------|---------------|
| 1 | R1 | RH | 36 Years | Bachelor | Merchant |
| 2 | R2 | MA | 9 Years | S1 | IRT Household |
| 3 | R3 | ZD | 12 | SMK | IRT |
| 4 | R4 | NK | 12 | S1 | GTT |
| 5 | R5 | HN | 25 | SD | IRT |
| 6 | R6 | RK | 17 | SMA | IRT |
| 7 | R7 | EI | 17 | SMP | IRT |
| 8 | R8 | SK | 10 | SMP | IRT |
| 9 | R9 | ZN | 3 | SMK | IRT |
| 10 | R10 | SZ | 18 | S1 | ASN |
| 11 | R11 | NI | 16 | SMA | IRT |
| 12 | R12 | EN | 17 | SMA | IRT |
| 13 | R13 | AI | 6 | D3 | IRT |

Source: Authors, 2020.

Interviews were conducted with 13 informants who were husbands who had been khuruj. Data analysis was conducted through three stages: data reduction, data display, and data verification. Data reduction was done by summarizing data based on research

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questions. Tables and graphs were used as a medium to display the data. Data verification was done by comparing data from one source with other sources. The results of this comparison were interpreted to obtain the meaning contained therein.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Before the husband khuruj fi sabilillah, it turns out that all the preparations related to the birth support of the wife and family who will be left behind have been prepared as well as possible. Therefore, the impression of neglecting the obligation to provide for the family at the time of khuruj is unfounded.

R1 said that her husband has never neglected to provide for the family, even though he prioritizes da'wah, but still carries out his obligations well. Her husband often explains that a person who understands religion will not abort his obligation to provide for the family, mainly because of da'wah (R1, interview, January 4, 2020).

R2 conveyed a similar expression. According to him, before his husband left to preach, his financial condition had been considered so that his wife and children did not feel deprived when he left. (R2, interview, January 5, 2020). R9, in more detail, said that when her husband went out to preach, everything was prepared and discussed openly, even with the children. She even said that when her husband is not on khuruj, he will work optimally to save money and anticipate the fulfillment of the family's livelihood when he is left on khuruj. She even believes that other Tabligh pilgrims' families also manage family finances in this way (R9, interview, January 25, 2020).

R4 convincingly recounted the fulfillment of physical maintenance when her husband was on khuruj. In addition, she said that he also had his own income as a teacher at one of the schools. According to her, because her husband's support for da'wah was so great, she was not too concerned about the adequacy of maintenance because, for her, the important thing was that her husband had shown a very good change in attitude, which was more than just the fulfillment of maintenance. She said that when her husband had not participated in preaching, her husband's activities were not so close to religion (R4, interview, January 18, 2020). Slightly different from the other informants, R5 told honestly that her husband's livelihood was indeed not fulfilled, because her husband's income was not too much. So, when my husband goes out to preach, the income that is already small is automatically divided again, and for me, it is not fulfilled properly. Nevertheless, I let it go because my husband left for da'wah. In addition, I have never lacked anything to eat because if my husband's income is not enough, there is always sustenance from Allah that is unexpectedly felt during this time (R5, interview, January 19, 2020).

Similar to R5, R13 revealed the same thing, that the husband's livelihood was indeed not fulfilled properly when the husband left to preach. However, this is not because of the husband's deliberate intention not to provide alimony, it is just that the husband's income is lacking, plus his profession is only a housewife. Nevertheless, fortunately, there is a program for the wives of other Tabligh Jama'ah members, which assists people like me, whose husbands are left behind for da'wah and are underprivileged. I am also often given assistance from my parents. However, I do not ask as much as possible, because I do not want my husband's da'wah to be less perfect because of that. However, the blessing of patience is just sustenance from other people who assist (R13, interview, August 1, 2020).

R11 also conveyed an airy expression. According to him, the needs of life are never enough. The point is that we must be *qana'ah* to feel enough with what we have. Thus, we are not too concerned about the needs of life. Before the husband leaves khuruj, he is sure to leave maintenance for his family at home, which is the rule. Nevertheless, the nominal amount is adjusted to the family's financial capabilities and agreed upon. The point is as a wife must be *qana'ah* (R11, interview, July 26, 2020).

The confessions of the wives whose husbands left them for khuruj fi sabilillah are more than enough to predict that their households would not be shaken just by their husbands' da'wah activities. Moreover, some of their wives have joined the *mastūrah* program, a term for the wives of *ahbab* or Jama'ah Tabligh. *Mastūrah* also preaches by supporting their husbands in the cause of Allah at certain times as required. The life of the *mastūrah Jama'ah* is described as very peaceful, and far from the hustle and bustle of worldly interests. They act solely for the sake of Allah. There is no discussion of politics in the jihad of the *mastūrah*. Their only duty is to serve Allah, the messenger, and their husbands. In the Tabligh congregation, it is taught that the task of da'wah is not only for men but also the responsibility of women (Noor 2013).

Realizing the importance of da'wah in today's era where there are rarely those who want to call for the implementation of religious law properly, the wives willingly and sincerely provide opportunities for their husbands to carry out *khuruj fi sabilillah* and are willing to be abandoned by their husbands, even though the livelihood given is sometimes insufficient for them. This submission is the keyword that fortifies the harmony of their household. At that stage, habituation has become part of daily life. For Tabligh Jamaat members, *khuruj fi sabilillah* is a habit they have practiced for a long time, and wives are used to being left behind by their husbands for preaching.

The attitude and views of wives who sincerely and willingly let their husbands carry out khuruj activities do not require any interpretation of their actions. Such awareness can also be born as a result of the interaction between the wives of Tabligh Jama'ah members. Thus, inherently, the wives believe that the khuruj activity is part of their lives, and the khuruj tradition has been and will continue to be carried out in the Tabligh Jama'ah family.

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Moreover, the wives also believe that their husbands' *khuruj fi sabilillah* is to increase their faith in Allah. They believe that their husbands, preaching in the way of Allah, are being trained not to think about worldly affairs, be they related to politics, work, material, and family. The fruits of their husbands' training, they believe, will also be felt by their wives.

In addition to increasing faith, *khuruj* is understood by Tabligh followers' *khuruj* as a medium to strengthen the relationship between fellow Muslims and call to goodness. Although da'wah can now be delivered through social media, direct da'wah is believed to be more effective (Saepuloh 2009; Noor 2021; Hasanah 2017; Mamun 2019; Muhibuddin 2020; Latif and Fatmawati 2020b; Muhibuddin 2015; Hasanah 2014; Ali and Amin 2020b). In addition, the aspect of friendship with fellow Muslim brothers and sisters obtained is something that they think is very valuable.

This research shows that the fulfillment of the wife's physical and mental sustenance when the husband is *khuruj*, although not maximally fulfilled, also does not have the potential to disrupt the harmony of their household. Various anticipatory steps have been prepared to overcome the husband's departure for a particular time, *khuruj fi sabilillah*. In addition to careful planning, communicative deliberation is also built to foster the same awareness of the essence of *khuruj fi sabilillah*—the ability of husband and wife to manage *khuruj* preparations well and effectively strengthens their family resilience.

Planning and deliberation are signs of the readiness experienced by married couples about what they face and how they should deal with it and the opportunities for anticipation. Other functions of the Tabligh congregation community also strengthen family resilience when the husband is on *khuruj*. A sense of togetherness, empathy, and mutual assistance are other positive sides that help strengthen the preservation and resilience of the families of members of the Tabligh congregation. Thus, the wife does not feel the departure of the husband for *khuruj fi sabilillah* as a loss and difficulty.

The flexibility of the wife's passion for accepting the absence of the husband, who is *khuruj fi sabilillah* data, is seen as a catalyst and penetration of a condition that is not ideal. Restricted communication as a standard of *khuruj* implementation actually puts wives in an insecure situation. However, the belief in God's protection through the angels they believe in makes the situation not cause excessive anxiety. Ideological factors intertwined with sociological and practical factors have made wives not feel difficult when left by their husbands *khuruj fi sabilillah*.

The maturity of the wife's attitude towards accepting her husband's departure for *khuruj fi sabilillah* is a precondition for strengthening family resilience and the harmony of their household. Various preparations and anticipatory steps that are right on target have minimized the adverse effects of the husband's departure for an extended time. Willingness, patience, and habituation foster the positive effects of being away from their husbands.

This research confirms that the fulfillment of physical and mental sustenance is not the only instrument to maintain household harmony and family resilience. So far, self-readiness can be seen linearly and even as a dynamic process. Commitment to maintaining family resilience, accompanied by a belief in the positive benefits of *khuruj* being undertaken by the husband, makes the wife grow into a resilient person, even able to carry out a dual role as interim head of household when her husband is *khuruj fi sabilillah*. Thus, this paper finds a process of collective awareness of maintaining family resilience and household harmony in the frame of mutual *jihad*.

The husband's departure for *khuruj fi sabilillah* requires an action plan at two levels, preparing provisions and anticipating unexpected conditions. So far, the community has seen prejudice and suspicion about the activities of *khuruj fi sabilillah*. Education, advocacy, socialization, and even mitigation is needed to anticipate the spread of misleading views. Public education needs to be developed as a counter to the production of misleading news and understanding. Learning from how suspicions and misperceptions are produced and reproduced, it is necessary to formulate an action plan to ensure the public gets the correct educational information.

IV. CONCLUSION

This study depicts that the husband's departure for *khuruj fi sabilillah* does not have harmful implications for the household harmony of Tabligh pilgrims. The fulfillment of physical sustenance has been anticipated through careful preparation, while the fulfillment of inner sustenance is no longer felt as an urgent need amidst feelings of comfort and a strong belief that the husband is doing good for himself and the community.

This study also provided a new perspective that fulfilling physical and mental sustenance is not the only factor that can strengthen family resilience and household harmony. Readiness, communication, and spaciousness of heart, actually become positive instruments that can minimize conflict when facing conditions that are not ideal. Thus, this paper emphasizes that the failure to maintain household harmony is not caused by material factors but by intrinsic awareness factors built in a planned, open and measurable manner.

This study has limitations in data sources that only rely on an area, so it cannot be generalized for policy formulation. Policy formulation as lessons learned requires extensive surveys and in-depth informant interviews to serve as the basis for policy formulation. Surveys of several wives, on-site observations, and interviews with other informants on their experiences of being left behind and leaving their families and how they respond to them can provide a solid basis for the goal of improving the quality

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of household life. A follow-up study that accommodates a broader sample and diverse sources of information could provide a source of knowledge for deeper understanding and better social organization.

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