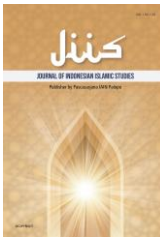
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The Tradition of Setiakh in Saibatin Traditional Marriage: A Conceptual Analysis from the Perspective of Islamic Family Law

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Abstract

Setiakh is a welcoming rite in Lampung Saibatin customary weddings practiced by the Keratuan Darah Putih community in Kuripan Village, South Lampung. The ritual involves prayed-over water and limes and is locally associated with protection from misfortune. However, the classification of this customary practice under Islamic law depends on the beliefs underlying its performance, an issue that requires analysis beyond the ritual's outward form. This study examines the implementation of setiakh and its status under the Islamic legal concept of al-'urf. It employs normative-empirical legal research, using a socio-legal approach to examine the relationship between customary practice, religious understanding, and community behavior, and a conceptual approach to assess the tradition through al-'urf. Data were collected through observation, documentation, and interviews with five informants: a religious figure, a representative of the customary leader, and three brides. The findings indicate that the interviewed informants understand the supplications accompanying setiakh as directed to Allah SWT, while family tradition and established community custom contribute to the practice's continuation. Analytically, setiakh may be classified as 'urf shahih when it functions as a cultural practice accompanied by supplication to Allah SWT, without attributing independent protective power to the water or other ritual elements. Conversely, beliefs that these elements independently provide protection or avert misfortune conflict with the principle of tawhid and undermine its classification as 'urf shahih. This study contributes to Islamic family law scholarship by demonstrating that the legal assessment of customary wedding practices must distinguish cultural continuity from the theological beliefs attached to ritual elements. The findings are limited to the five informants and the context of Kuripan Village and do not represent the entire Lampung Saibatin community.

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Introduction

Customs and culture are integral to social life, shaping patterns of social relations, behavioural norms, and the ways in which communities understand values transmitted across generations (Haar, 2024). In Muslim communities, customary practices are closely intertwined with religious observance, including the conduct of marriage ceremonies (Ilyas dkk., 2023). Marriage is not merely a matter of fulfilling religious requirements and establishing a legal relationship between husband and wife; it also takes place within a social environment governed by particular rules, symbols, and customary practices (Irsyada, 2023). Traditions associated with marriage may serve to strengthen family ties, preserve communal identity, and express expectations concerning married life (Mursalin, 2023). The relationship between custom and religion raises legal questions when a socially accepted practice also embodies particular religious meanings or beliefs. Social acceptance of a tradition does not, in itself, establish its conformity with Islamic law, just as the use of customary symbols does not automatically render a practice contrary to Islamic law. Its assessment requires an understanding of how the practice is performed, its intended purpose, and the beliefs underlying it.

This context is particularly relevant to the Indigenous communities of Lampung, which exhibit diverse ways of life and customary marriage systems. Lampung society is generally divided into two customary groups, Saibatin and Pepadun, which differ in their leadership structures, kinship systems, and customary practices. Among the Saibatin, customary lineage is singular and hereditary, with traditional authority concentrated among the nobility within a patrilineal kinship system. By contrast, the Pepadun system is relatively more open, as customary titles may be attained through deliberation and contributions to the community (Firlina dkk., 2023). For the *Saibatin*, customary marriage represents not merely a union between two individuals but also the joining of two extended families that share social and moral responsibilities (Sopyan dkk., 2020). Its various stages, including the marriage proposal, customary wedding celebration, and family deliberations, continue to be observed despite not being codified in written rules, as they have become part of the *living law* within the community (Hamida, 2022).

One significant tradition in Saibatin customary marriage is setiakh, a customary ritual originating from the Keratuan Darah Putih community in South Lampung. As part of the customary marriage proceedings, the ritual involves a bowl containing water, slices of lime, and a small broom known as *(sapu mi)* (Y. Pratama, komunikasi pribadi, Juni 2026). The water is sprinkled on guests and around the ceremonial venue as a symbolic expression of the hope that the marriage will proceed smoothly and remain protected from harm (Chaidir dkk., 2026). These ritual implements indicate that *setiakh* is distinctive not only in its mode of performance but also in the questions it raises concerning the relationship between cultural symbolism and spiritual meaning (Ramadhani dkk., 2023). he meanings that community members attribute to the water, lime, and *sapu mi* are essential to understanding the place of this tradition in their social life (Ramadhan dkk., 2026). Accordingly, an examination of *setiakh* should extend beyond an inventory of its ritual implements and the sequence of its ceremonial stages to investigate how community members understand the ritual's purpose and the beliefs associated with its performance.

The central problem underlying this study concerns the limits of the acceptability of the setiakh tradition from the perspective of Islamic law. The aspirations for safety and

protection embodied in a ritual may be understood as prayers to Allah SWT expressed through cultural symbols. However, its legal assessment may differ if safety or protection is believed to derive from the inherent power of the objects used or the ritual acts themselves. This distinction cannot be determined solely by examining the outward form of the ceremony, since similar practices may carry different meanings for the communities that perform them. The questions that therefore require examination are how to distinguish the symbolic function of customary implements from beliefs that attribute particular powers to those objects, and how these differences in interpretation affect the assessment of the setiakh tradition under the principles of Islamic law. These questions are important because the assessment of customary practices requires careful consideration to avoid either generalising cultural practices as inherently incompatible with religion or accepting them without examining the substance of the beliefs underpinning them.

Several previous studies have examined local traditions involving the use of water, purification rituals, and religious values in community life. For instance, (Membara & Purnomo, 2024) examined the *Rebo Kasan* tradition and found that water constitutes an essential element of the ritual, symbolising purification and representing the community's prayers and hopes for safety and protection. (Anggraini & Rosyidi, 2025) subsequently investigated the *bepapai* tradition performed for prospective brides and grooms in the Banjar community of Kuala Tungkal. Their study identified customary bathing as a ritual associated with hopes for safety and the warding off of misfortune, a related aspect also discussed by (Apal & Wahidi, 2023). Furthermore, (Sari, 2023) examined the *siraman* tradition involving water collected from seven springs (*Air Tujuh Sumber* or *Tirta Perwitosari*) and identified connections between the purification practices performed in the ritual and cultural, religious, and philosophical values. In contrast to studies focusing on community rituals, (Hellman, 2022) ighlighted the role of water in cultural practices that blur the boundaries between life and death, as well as between humans and supernatural beings. In the context of Lampung society, (Imron & Pratama, 2020) examined changes in marriage patterns among the Lampung *Saibatin* community, particularly the development of its marriage system and its adaptation to changing community needs. At the conceptual level, (Mahfudzin dkk., 2023) discussed the position of local traditions from the perspective of Islamic law and demonstrated that customary practices may be accepted provided that they satisfy the requirements established by Islamic legal principles.

Based on these previous studies, three aspects have received considerable attention: the symbolic meanings of local rituals, the social and spiritual functions of marriage traditions, and the role of customary practices as a consideration in Islamic law. However, these studies have not adequately explained how the setiakh practice, in particular, can be assessed by examining the relationship between ritual procedures, symbolic meanings, community beliefs, and the criteria of 'urf shahih and 'urf fasid. This research gap does not merely arise from differences in the objects of study; rather, it reflects the need to connect empirical descriptions of a particular tradition with a conceptual analysis of Islamic law that clarifies the grounds for accepting or rejecting that tradition.

To address this gap, this study employs the concept of *al-'urf* as an analytical framework for assessing the status of the *setiakh* tradition in *Saibatin* customary marriage. Within this framework, *'urf shahih* refers to customary practices that are acceptable because they do not contravene the provisions and principles of Islamic law, whereas *'urf*

fasid refers to practices containing elements that cannot be justified under Islamic law (Siregar dkk., 2025). Customary law likewise cannot be applied when it contradicts the fundamental teachings of Islam (Rasyid dkk., 2024). Accordingly, traditions deeply embedded in community life must be examined not only in cultural terms but also in terms of their conformity with Islamic legal principles (Layyinah & Ma'mun, 2026). his approach is particularly important for analysing *setiakh*, which involves symbols, ritual procedures, and interpretations associated with safety and protection (Nadiya Ihda Millah, 2023).

The use of these two categories is not intended to determine the legal status of a tradition solely on the basis of its ritual form. Rather, it seeks to examine the substance of the practice and the beliefs underlying it. The analysis distinguishes between customary implements used as cultural symbols or as reminders of prayers and hopes, on the one hand, and beliefs that regard objects themselves as sources of protective power, on the other. This distinction enables a more systematic assessment of the *setiakh* tradition while avoiding premature conclusions before its meanings and practices have been adequately understood.

Kuripan Village, Penengahan Subdistrict, South Lampung Regency, provides the local context for examining the performance and interpretation of the *setiakh* tradition within the community that continues to preserve it. Selecting this local setting enables the analysis to take account of practices as they occur within the community, rather than relying solely on an abstract assessment of ritual symbols (Kesuma dkk., 2022). Understanding the accounts provided by customary leaders and participating community members is necessary to explain the purposes, meanings, and beliefs associated with the ritual proceedings. These findings are then analysed through the concept of *al-'urf* to clarify the status of the tradition from the perspective of Islamic family law. This approach treats legal assessment as a process grounded in an understanding of the practice and its meanings, followed by an examination of their relationship with the relevant normative criteria.

Based on this discussion, the study addresses two research questions. First, how is the *setiakh* tradition performed and interpreted in *Saibatin* customary marriage in Kuripan Village, Penengahan Subdistrict, South Lampung Regency? Second, what is the status of the *setiakh* tradition from the perspective of Islamic family law under the concept of *al-'urf*, particularly in determining the criteria for accepting a customary practice as *'urf shahih* or classifying it as *'urf fasid*? This study is expected to contribute conceptually to the development of Islamic family law, particularly by formulating an approach to assessing local marriage traditions that distinguishes between cultural symbols, hopes expressed through prayer, and beliefs that have implications for their legal assessment.

Method

This study employs a normative-empirical legal research design to examine law in the context of its implementation and community behaviour, treating the experiences, practices, and understandings of research participants as sources of data for explaining how law operates in social life (Nasution, 2023). The study adopts a socio-legal approach to identify the relationships between customary practices, religious understandings, and community behaviour, alongside a conceptual approach to assess these practices through the concept of *al-'urf* in Islamic law. The socio-legal approach is operationalised by examining accounts provided by a religious leader, a spokesperson for the customary

leadership, and couples who have undergone marriage ceremonies concerning the purposes, procedures, and beliefs associated with the *setiakh* tradition. The conceptual approach connects these empirical data to the criteria of *'urf shahih* and *'urf fasid*, ensuring that the analysis extends beyond a description of the tradition to explain the relevance of its interpretations to Islamic legal principles (Arfa & Marpaung, 2016). This analytical framework brings together *das sein*, referring to the actual practices and interpretations of the tradition as described through field data, and *das sollen*, referring to the normative principles used to assess the acceptability of customary practices under Islamic law (Fauzan, 2026).

The research was conducted in June 2026 in Kuripan Village, Penengahan Subdistrict, South Lampung Regency. The location was selected because the *setiakh* tradition is practised within the *Saibatin* customary marriage context examined in this study. Data collection focused on three aspects: the performance of the tradition, the meanings attributed to the implements used, and informants' views on the relationship between the tradition and Islamic teachings. Observation was used to document directly observable aspects of the practice, including the sequence of ritual proceedings, the use of a bowl containing water, lime slices, and *sapu mi*, as well as the context in which the tradition is performed during wedding ceremonies. Interviews were conducted to obtain information that could not be established through observation alone, particularly the reasons for performing the tradition, its symbolic meanings, and the beliefs underlying the use of its ritual implements. Documentation was used to record supporting evidence relevant to the research subject and to assess the consistency between informants' accounts and the available documentary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with five informants: Ustad Sarmidi, a religious leader; Aden Yoga, a spokesperson for the Kuripan customary chief; and three individuals who had undergone marriage ceremonies in Kuripan (Suprayitno dkk., 2024).

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, namely, deliberate selection based on their knowledge, experience, and involvement with the research subject. Ustad Sarmidi was selected to provide insights into religious understandings associated with the *setiakh* tradition. Aden Yoga was selected to explain the procedures, status, and interpretation of the tradition within the customary community. The three individuals who had undergone marriage ceremonies were selected to provide accounts based on their experiences of marriages involving the tradition. The differences in informants' roles were used to compare explanations concerning customary practices, religious understandings, and practical experiences, rather than to assume that any single informant represented the entire community. Data adequacy was assessed according to the relevance of the information obtained to the research questions and its capacity to explain the principal aspects of the tradition under investigation. The five informants define the empirical scope of this study; consequently, the findings are not intended to generalise the views of all residents, wedding guests, or *Saibatin* communities beyond the context examined. Secondary data were obtained from books, scholarly journals, and documents relevant to the *setiakh* tradition, the concept of *al-'urf*, and Islamic family law. The researcher also compiled a register of marriages in Kuripan Village covering January 2025 to January 2026 to provide supplementary information on the local marriage context. This register was used

as contextual data and was not treated as direct evidence of the views or experiences of all couples listed therein.

Data trustworthiness was assessed through methodological and source triangulation. Methodological triangulation involved comparing interview information with observational findings and documentary evidence, while source triangulation involved examining both the convergence and divergence of accounts provided by the religious leader, the spokesperson for the customary leadership, and the three individuals who had undergone marriage ceremonies. Data collection techniques comprised observation, in-depth interviews, and photographic documentation of the ritual implements and sequence of ceremonial proceedings.

Data were analysed qualitatively and descriptively through data organisation, thematic categorisation, presentation of findings, and conclusion drawing. Interview, observation, and documentary data were initially grouped into four themes: the procedures for performing *setiakh*; the meanings of its ritual implements; the purposes and beliefs associated with its performance; and informants' views on its conformity with Islamic teachings. Information from each source was then compared to identify areas of agreement, differences, and aspects that had not been adequately explained. The empirical findings were subsequently analysed using the conceptual approach and the criteria of *al-'urf*, particularly the distinction between *'urf shahih* and *'urf fasid*. The assessment focused on the substance of the practice, the interpretations of its symbols, the underlying beliefs described by informants, and their conformity with Islamic legal principles. The tradition was not assessed solely on the basis of its ritual form or continued practice; rather, the assessment drew on the available empirical evidence and relevant normative standards. The legal provisions governing *walimatul 'ursy* (the marriage feast) were used as a supplementary analytical framework insofar as they directly related to issues identified in the performance of customary marriage ceremonies. The data processing and interpretation followed the principles of qualitative descriptive analysis in legal research (Efendi & Rijadi, 2022). The analysis focused on the conformity of local practices with the theory of *al-'urf* and the provisions governing *walimatul 'ursy* under Islamic family law. To protect the privacy and dignity of research participants in accordance with the principles of anonymity and confidentiality, the names of couples recorded in the marriage register were anonymised by using initials.

Results

An Overview of Saibatin Customary Practices in Kuripan Village

Kuripan Village is part of the Keratuan Darah Putih customary territory and holds historical significance in Lampung as the birthplace of Raden Intan II (Rohmatillah dkk., 2024). The spokesperson for the customary chief explained that Kuripan has only one customary chief, namely Raden Imba. When he is unable to perform his duties, they are assumed by the Buay Aji, the direct descendants of Keratuan Darah Putih. The informant emphasised that setiakh is practised exclusively within the Saibatin customary tradition associated with Keratuan Darah Putih and continues to be preserved in Kuripan to this day (Y. Pratama, komunikasi pribadi, Juni 2026).

Between January 2025 and January 2026, a total of 21 couples were recorded as having married in Kuripan (Table 1). According to the informant, every marriage

solemnisation held in Kuripan incorporates *setiakh*, including ceremonies hosted by families at wedding venues outside their homes.

Table 1. List of Marriages in Kuripan Village, January 2025-January 2026

No	Date of the wedding	Groom	Bride	Description
1	January 11, 2025	N	S	
2	January 20, 2025	K	S	
3	January 27, 2025	MM	N	
4	January 30, 2025	EN	NA	
5	February 21, 2025	MFDP	CMS	
6	February 25, 2025	DW	DMHF	
7	April 21, 2025	KVS	TW	
8	June 12, 2025	R	DE	
9	June 15, 2025	RS	T	Interview
10	August 9, 2025	SAA	RS	
11	August 21, 2025	TJ	SO	
12	August 23, 2025	SK	FM	
13	August 29, 2025	RN	LA	
14	September 17, 2025	A	NY	
15	October 6, 2025	DP	AY	
16	October 9, 2025	FS	FA	Interview
17	October 14, 2025	MA	M	
18	October 24, 2025	AT	PM	Interview
19	October 29, 2025	IR	SA	
20	November 3, 2025	AW	YI	
21	January 12, 2026	T	DD	

Source: Data from the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA) of Penengahan Subdistrict, 2026.

The Origins of the Setiakh Tradition

According to the spokesperson for the customary chief, the setiakh tradition is believed to have developed during the spread of Islam to Lampung. The informant associated the emergence of this tradition with the role of the Wali Songo (the Nine Saints) and explained that setiakh originally involved seeking prayers from customary elders who were believed to be capable of warding off misfortune and protecting ceremonial events from danger. The informant also stated that the prayers used in the tradition were recited in Arabic (Y. Pratama, komunikasi pribadi, Juni 2026). This is an oral account of the tradition's origins; the study did not independently verify its historical connection with the Wali Songo.

According to the informant, villages surrounding Mount Rajabasa, including Negeri Pandan and Canti, also practised *setiakh* in the past. However, the water and other materials used in the ritual were obtained from Kuripan because it served as the centre of Keratuan Darah Putih. The informant then recounted the experience of a family originally from Kuripan that had settled in Teluk Betung. During a wedding ceremony held there, an incident of spirit possession reportedly occurred, and the possessing entity expressed resentment because the descendants of Keratuan Darah Putih had not been shown due respect. After the family requested *setiakh* water, similar incidents reportedly ceased. From that time onwards, weddings in the surrounding area were said to have consistently requested

setiakh water. This account represents a narrative of local beliefs conveyed by the informant and was not independently verified in this study. The informant further explained that humans and *jinn* inhabit the earth together; consequently, *setiakh* water is sprinkled in places where people pass to prevent them from being disturbed by other beings (Y. Pratama, komunikasi pribadi, Juni 2026).

Equipment and Implementation Procedures

The equipment used in the *setiakh* ritual consists of three limes, a white bowl, clean water, and a *sapu mi* (Figure 1). According to the informant, the water does not have to originate from a particular source but must be clean; therefore, bottled water and water obtained from flowing sources may both be used (Y. Pratama, komunikasi pribadi, Juni 2026). The white bowl is interpreted as a symbol of purity, while the lime is associated with a fresh aroma that serves as an identifying marker for people or places that have been sprinkled with *setiakh* water. These explanations concerning the symbolic meanings and functions of the ritual implements are based on information provided by the informant and are therefore not presented as meanings uniformly shared by all members of the *Saibatin* customary community. Meanwhile, the photographic documentation in Figure 1 depicts the objects used in the performance of the tradition as recorded by the researcher.

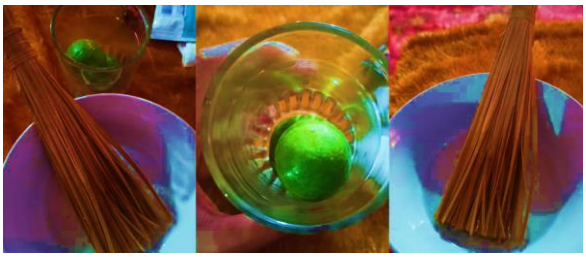


Figure 1. Setiakh ritual implements: sapu mi in a bowl containing water, limes in a glass, and the complete set of ritual implements (researcher's documentation).

1. *The saibul hajat* (the host of the ceremonial event) or a person entrusted by the host visits the lamban balak (customary chief's residence) approximately three days to one week before the event, bringing limes and clean water. The visitor requests permission and asks for setiakh water so that the wedding ceremony will proceed smoothly. No specific requirements apply, such as presenting gifts to the customary elders.
2. The customary chief first performs a voluntary prayer (*shalat sunnah*) and then offers prayers over the water. The prayers are recited in Arabic and comprise *tawasul* (a devotional invocation seeking closeness to Allah through an accepted means of intercession), the genealogical lineage of religious saints and ancestors, blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad (*shalawat*), and prayers for the *saibul hajat*. The customary chief's role is limited to praying over the water; he does not sprinkle it.
3. The water is left overnight before the event, specifically from the day before the ceremony, because the customary chief may be unable to attend on the day of the event. If he is unavailable, the prayers may be led by a member of the *Buay Aji*, the descendants of the *Darah Putih* lineage.
4. After the prayers have been recited over the water, the halved limes are placed into it. This mixing takes place after the group arrives at the event venue.

5. On the day of the ceremony, a person appointed by the *saibul hajat* sprinkles the water (*ketekh*) using a *sapu mi* over crowded areas and along routes used by people, including the wedding procession and the *pejunjongan* (the kitchen area for the ceremonial feast). The sprinkling is accompanied by the expression of courtesy, *"Tabik pai pun jama sai khamik."*
6. The person performing the sprinkling is generally a woman who has reached a sufficient age and is considered ritually pure, meaning that she is not menstruating. The informant explained that a person in poor physical condition might become exhausted or fall ill, a possibility associated with the fact that she is handling water over which prayers have been recited.
7. Guests are sprinkled as a gesture of respectful greeting. They may request that the water be sprinkled on their heads. If the water is nearly depleted, ordinary water may be added. The water is intended exclusively for the ceremony on that particular day, namely, during the *walimatul 'ursy* (marriage feast).

These seven stages have been compiled from the informant's account of the sequence of procedures involved in the *setiakh* tradition.

In practice, the designated person sprinkles setiakh water using a sapu mi around the wedding venue, along the routes traversed by the bridal couple and the wedding procession, and in the cooking area (pejunjongan), while uttering the expression of courtesy, "Tabik pai pun jama sai khamik." The water is also sprinkled around the bridal couple, the accompanying procession, and the invited guests as a symbol of respect, a supplication for safety, and an act intended to ward off misfortune (Figure 2).



Figure 2. The atmosphere of the ceremony at the bridal dais during a Saibatin customary wedding in Kuripan (researcher's documentation)

Meaning and Function for Society

According to the spokesperson for the customary chief, the primary functions of setiakh are to ensure the smooth conduct of ceremonial events, ward off misfortune, and protect those in attendance. This protection is intended for people rather than for preventing rain or other natural occurrences. The water is also believed to create a calming atmosphere during ngakhak, a procession in which the bridal couple is accompanied around the village. In addition, guests may request to be sprinkled individually according to their respective hopes: muli (unmarried young women) and mekhanai (unmarried young men) hope to find suitable life partners soon, while parents hope that their children will grow up to be intelligent (Y. Pratama, komunikasi pribadi, Juni 2026).

The spokesperson for the customary chief considers such requests unproblematic because community members know the origin of the water and who has prayed over it;

accordingly, what they seek is blessing. Regarding community acceptance, the spokesperson stated that he was unaware of any residents who had objected to the performance of *setiakh*. He also described the tradition as part of the customary law applicable in Kuripan. These accounts indicate that, from the perspective of the customary leader interviewed, *setiakh* enjoys social legitimacy and occupies an important position in the conduct of local ceremonial events (Y. Pratama, komunikasi pribadi, Juni 2026).

Ustad Sarmidi also provided information concerning religious practices accompanying ceremonial events, particularly the recitation of *shalawat* during the wedding procession. According to him, no guests had raised objections to this practice. His account offers an additional perspective on the acceptance of religious elements within wedding celebrations, but it is insufficient to establish that all guests accept every aspect of the *setiakh* tradition. The recitation of *shalawat* during the procession must also be distinguished from the sprinkling of *setiakh* water, as these constitute separate elements even when they occur within the same sequence of events (Sarmidi, komunikasi pribadi, Juni 2026).

Taken together, the findings indicate that the informants understand *setiakh* as a tradition that serves protective functions, carries spiritual significance, and holds social importance in *Saibatin* customary marriage ceremonies in Kuripan. Although the accounts provided by the customary and religious leaders offer insights into the acceptance of the tradition, variations in perceptions among residents, wedding guests, younger generations, and groups holding different religious views require further investigation. Social acceptance of *setiakh* should therefore be understood as a finding based on the accounts of the informants interviewed, rather than as an unequivocal representation of the entire community.

The Ceremony and the Bridal Couple's Reasons

Interviews with three individuals who had undergone marriage ceremonies indicate that *setiakh* is practised at weddings in Kuripan Village, particularly by couples of indigenous Lampung background. This finding is consistent with the informant's account that *setiakh* is generally practised whenever a marriage solemnisation takes place in Kuripan. The reasons given by the couples suggest that the use of *setiakh* is primarily grounded in family customs and customary practices transmitted from one generation to the next.

Couple No. 19 performed setiakh in accordance with the customary chief's instructions. The individual did not independently determine the ritual procedures but followed the customary chief's directions, recognising him as the person knowledgeable about and responsible for regulating customary practices in marriage ceremonies. (Pengantin 19, komunikasi pribadi, Juni 2026).

Couple No. 18 stated that the individual followed the parents' wishes because *setiakh* had become an established custom in Kuripan Village. Thus, the decision to perform *setiakh* did not arise solely from the individual's personal preference but was influenced by family practices that had been inherited and maintained within the surrounding community (Pengantin 18, komunikasi pribadi, Juni 2026).

Couple No. 9 similarly explained that the individual followed the parents' wishes and the arrangements made by the organisers of the wedding celebration. This indicates that *setiakh* has become part of the customary procedures incorporated into wedding preparations by families and event organisers. The individual followed the established

sequence of customary practices rather than treating *setiakh* as an independent personal choice (Pengantin 9, komunikasi pribadi, Juni 2026).

Across the three accounts, the reported reasons for performing setiakh concerned the directions of customary leaders, parents' wishes, and arrangements made by wedding organisers. The interviewees described following established family and ceremonial procedures rather than independently determining the ritual.

Religious Understandings and the Status of the Ritual

Based on interviews with customary and religious leaders in Kuripan Village, the *setiakh* tradition is performed as part of the series of events accompanying the *walimatul 'ursy* (wedding feast), rather than as part of the marriage solemnisation ceremony. Its implementation involves supplications to Allah, the recitation of Qur'anic verses, and the recitation of *shalawat* (blessings upon the Prophet Muhammad). The spokesperson for the customary chief explained that requesting *setiakh* water does not entail any obligation to provide a fee or gift to the person leading the prayers. The informant also clarified that the practice is not intended to constitute an obligation determining the validity or invalidity of a marriage. This account of the tradition's status is corroborated by Ustad Sarmidi, who explained that *setiakh* forms part of the community's customary practices in conducting wedding celebrations (Y. Pratama, komunikasi pribadi, Juni 2026; Sarmidi, komunikasi pribadi, Juni 2026).

These field findings indicate that the community regards *setiakh* as a customary practice accompanying wedding celebrations. Supplications and *shalawat* form part of its implementation, while, according to the informants, requesting the water does not require payment to the person leading the prayers. Nevertheless, these findings are limited to the practices and explanations documented during the research in Kuripan Village. Accordingly, the accounts do not automatically establish that every instance of *setiakh* is free from coercion or harm under all circumstances.

Ustad Sarmidi regarded setiakh as beneficial because it includes supplications to Allah for protection, blessings, and His pleasure. He explained that it is a means of offering supplications to Allah rather than an object of worship. In his account, the prayers and the hope for protection remain directed towards Allah (Sarmidi, komunikasi pribadi, Juni 2026).

Regarding hopes of finding a spouse, Ustad Sarmidi emphasised the importance of parental support and the efforts of the children themselves. He stated that performing setiakh would not change the situation in the absence of such support and effort (Sarmidi, komunikasi pribadi, Juni 2026).

Discussion

Customary Continuity and the Interpretation of Oral Accounts

The findings demonstrate that the *setiakh* tradition continues to occupy a place in marriage ceremonies within the community of Kuripan Village. It is preserved not merely as a cultural inheritance but also through the continued involvement of families, customary leaders, and community members in wedding proceedings. The performance of *setiakh* generally follows established practices transmitted from generation to generation, leading couples to observe procedures already maintained within their families and communities.

This situation indicates that *setiakh* remains a living customary practice sustained by the community of Kuripan Village. Its continuity also reflects a process of intergenerational customary transmission through which knowledge of and procedures for performing *setiakh* are passed on to subsequent generations by families and customary leaders (Anggraeni, 2023).

These accounts indicate that the meanings attributed to *setiakh* extend beyond its function as a ritual accompanying marriage ceremonies. They are also associated with beliefs concerning protection, respect for customary authority, and symbolic relationships between humans and an environment believed to possess spiritual significance. This interpretation must be distinguished from a historical reconstruction of the tradition's origins. The interview data primarily explain how the informant understands and transmits the meanings of *setiakh*, whereas establishing the period in which the tradition emerged, the routes through which it spread, and its historical relationship with the spread of Islam requires corroboration from independent sources. Accordingly, this study initially approaches the history of *setiakh* through the narratives of the community that preserves the tradition, while remaining open to alternative historical explanations that may emerge from further research.

The oral account connecting setiakh with the Wali Songo reflects local understandings of its relationship with Islam. Establishing when the tradition emerged and how it spread would require corroboration from local manuscripts, archives, genealogies, or historical studies. The narrative concerning possession in Teluk Betung likewise provides evidence of beliefs conveyed by an informant, rather than independent evidence of a supernatural event.

Principles of Marriage and the Walimah

Under Islamic marriage law, *setiakh* is neither an essential element (*rukun*) nor a condition for the validity of a marriage contract (*akad nikah*). The tradition is performed as part of the *walimatul 'ursy*, which, according to the Shafi'i school of Islamic jurisprudence, is classified as a *sunnah mu'akkadah* (an emphatically recommended practice) for a husband who has reached maturity and possesses sound reason (Marpaung & Firmansyah, 2025). The recommendation to hold a wedding feast is grounded in the Prophet Muhammad's instruction to 'Abd al-Rahman ibn 'Awf (Jahidin, 2023), whereas the obligation to attend a wedding feast may be waived if prohibited conduct occurs during the event (Hidayah & Wanto, 2023). These foundations explain the status of the wedding feast under Islamic law but cannot be applied directly to determine the legal status of *setiakh*. Assessing this tradition requires a separate analysis of its objectives, mode of implementation, and constituent elements.

This perspective is consistent with discussions of the relationship between custom and religion in marriage practices. (Prasetyo & Muhsin, 2023) explain that customs that develop alongside religious values can influence the normative life of a community, while (Al-Mutanaffas & Sunarto, 2026) emphasise the importance of examining the relationship between customary norms and the principles of Islamic law in social life. These references provide a conceptual framework for examining the relationship between custom and religion, but they do not eliminate the need to assess the *setiakh* practice in light of the findings of this study. In this research, the presence of supplications, Qur'anic recitation, and *shalawat* indicates that, according to the informants, religious elements form part of

the tradition's implementation. However, the mere presence of these elements is insufficient to conclude that every aspect of *setiakh* conforms to Islamic law. A normative assessment must also consider the beliefs underlying the practice, the purpose of sprinkling the water, and the community's understanding of the relationship between prayer, water, and the protection sought (Santoso dkk., 2025). Accordingly, *setiakh* is more appropriately understood as a customary practice accompanying wedding celebrations, rather than as an element determining the validity of a marriage contract or a religious obligation inherent in every marriage. Its status from the perspective of Islamic family law can be examined through the *al-'urf* approach, while maintaining a distinction between the tradition's sociocultural functions and the legal assessment of particular beliefs or actions within it. Any conclusion that *setiakh* is an acceptable custom under Islamic law must be based on an examination of its constituent practices, rather than solely on the fact that the tradition has been practised for a long time or is accompanied by Islamic prayers.

Assessment According to the Theory of 'Urf

Al-'urf refers to customary practices recognised in a community that may serve as a basis for legal consideration, provided that they do not conflict with the *nash* (authoritative scriptural texts). The basis for recognising custom in Islamic law can be traced to Qur'an, Surah Al-A'raf [7]: 199:

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَاَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجٰهِلِيْنَ ١٩٩

"Be gracious, enjoin what is right, and turn away from the ignorant" (QS. Al-A'raf [7]: 199)

The phrase wa'mur bil-'urf in this verse is frequently cited as one of the normative foundations for discussions of 'urf, or customs recognised and accepted in community life. In the context of the setiakh tradition, this verse can serve as a starting point for examining the relationship between community customs and the principles of Islamic law, but it does not constitute direct evidence establishing the validity of the tradition. The acceptance of a custom still requires scrutiny of its substance, objectives, and procedures to ensure that it does not conflict with the provisions of Islamic law (Jannah dkk., 2026).

Islamic scholars distinguish between *'urf shahih*, namely, customs that do not contravene authoritative scriptural texts or undermine public welfare, and *'urf fasid*, namely, customs that conflict with the evidence and principles of Islamic law (Irfandi, 2025). On the basis of this distinction, the status of the *setiakh* tradition can be assessed against the following five criteria.

First, the recurrence of the practice (*al-'urf al-'amali*). A custom must demonstrate a recurring pattern of conduct rather than constitute an isolated or occasional event. According to the informants, *setiakh* is performed as part of customary wedding celebrations in Kuripan Village and is transmitted across families and generations. Several of the interviewed couples also stated that they had participated in the tradition. These data support the indication that *setiakh* constitutes a recurring practice within the community examined in this study.

Second, community acceptance. The accounts of the customary spokesperson and religious leader presented in the Results suggest acceptance of setiakh among the

informants interviewed. This supports its recognition as a locally established custom, but the five interviews cannot establish unanimous acceptance by all residents or wedding guests. Social acceptance is therefore relevant to its customary status without being sufficient to establish its legal permissibility.

Third, conformity with authoritative scriptural texts and the principle of tawhid (the oneness of Allah). The acceptance of a custom requires that it not conflict with Islamic legal principles. Ustad Sarmidi's explanation that supplications are directed to Allah supports a distinction between the ritual as an occasion for prayer and its implements as objects believed to possess independent protective power. Legal acceptance remains conditional on this distinction being maintained in practice.

Fourth, the absence of harm. A custom accepted as 'urf shahih must not cause harm or contain elements prohibited by Islamic law. According to the informants, requesting setiakh water does not require payment to the person leading the prayers, nor is the practice intended to determine the validity of a marriage. These findings suggest that, in the practice described by the informants, the tradition does not require payment or recognition as part of the marriage contract. The absence of a required payment or a link to contractual validity does not, by itself, demonstrate the absence of every possible form of coercion or harm.

Fifth, beliefs concerning *setiakh* water and ancestors. This aspect is important because the acceptance of custom under Islamic law concerns not only the outward form of an action but also the beliefs underlying it. According to the informants, the customary chief recites prayers over the *setiakh* water, which is then used in the hope that the wedding celebration will proceed smoothly and that those in attendance will receive protection. The informants also associate the tradition with respect for ancestors and local beliefs concerning disturbances caused by supernatural beings. These accounts reveal a spiritual and symbolic dimension to the *setiakh* practice. However, respect for ancestors must be distinguished from the belief that ancestors possess independent power to determine human safety. Similarly, the use of water over which prayers have been recited must be distinguished from the belief that the water itself possesses absolute power independent of Allah's will.

Taken together, the analysis indicates that the *setiakh* tradition in Kuripan Village is characterised by recurrence, acceptance among the informants interviewed, the inclusion of supplications to Allah, and the absence of any designation as a condition for the validity of marriage or as a practice requiring payment to the person leading the prayers. These findings provide a basis for assessing the form of *setiakh* documented in this study as tending to exhibit the characteristics of *'urf shahih*, provided that the use of water is understood as part of an effort accompanied by supplications to Allah, rather than as an independent source of power, and that respect for ancestors does not involve beliefs contrary to *tawhid* (Wardi dkk., 2024). Accordingly, *setiakh* may be accepted within the framework of *al-'urf* as a supplementary customary practice accompanying wedding celebrations, insofar as the assessment is grounded in the characteristics of the practice documented in this study. Such acceptance does not make the tradition a religious obligation or an element determining the validity of the marriage contract (Andini dkk., 2025).

Aspects Requiring Careful Consideration

Three aspects require particular attention. First, the understanding of protection against disturbances caused by supernatural beings, including the account of possession in Teluk Betung, must remain framed in terms of human endeavour and supplication, with the conviction that Allah alone has the power to ward off misfortune. This distinction is important to ensure that the community understands the water as a medium through which tranquillity and protection attributed to Allah are sought (Dewi dkk., 2026). Meanwhile, the tolak bala ritual performed for prospective brides and grooms in the Banjar community highlights the risk of syncretism when supernatural powers are believed to operate independently (Amaliah dkk., 2026). Second, hopes concerning finding a suitable spouse and the intelligence of one's children are acceptable insofar as they are expressed as supplications. The religious leader's explanation reported in the Results reinforces the distinction between supplication and a guarantee of particular outcomes. Third, tawasul through ancestors or wali (Islamic saints or spiritually revered figures) is a matter on which some scholars hold differing views. Therefore, the wording of the supplications should remain centred on seeking directly from Allah (Y. Pratama, komunikasi pribadi, Juni 2026).

Comparison with Previous Findings

These findings differ from the assumption that the meaning of *setiakh* is incompatible with Islamic teachings. In Kuripan, Islamic elements have become integrated into the ceremony through voluntary prayers before the supplications, prayers in Arabic, Qur'anic recitation, and *shalawat*. This resembles the *Rebo Kasan* tradition, which is understood as an ancestral heritage involving prayers and supplications for safety (Fazrul Sandi Purnomo, 2024). (Ra'd & Yassir, 2026) emphasise that reconciling customary practices with Islamic law is necessary to safeguard social justice, noting that the Prophet Muhammad himself accommodated Arab customs that did not conflict with Islamic law. Customary practices must also remain consistent with the Marriage Law to retain their relevance within the national legal framework (Febrianty, 2024). A summary of the assessment is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of the Assessment of Setiakh under the Theory of 'Urf

Aspects	Field Findings	Assessment
Intention	Supplications for safety, blessings, and Allah's pleasure	Supports acceptance when supplication remains directed to Allah
Ritual implements	Clean water, limes, a white bowl, and sapu mi	Assess their use and attributed meaning; the objects alone do not establish legal status
Prayers and recitations	Qur'anic recitation, shalawat, Arabic prayers, and tawasul	Religious recitations alone do not establish permissibility; examine wording and underlying beliefs
Beliefs and expected outcomes	Protection from misfortune, hopes of finding a spouse, and hopes for children's intelligence	Distinguish supplication from guaranteed outcomes or independent power attributed to ritual elements
Social acceptance	Customary continuity and acceptance reported by the five informants	Supports local customary recognition; does not establish unanimous acceptance or legal validity

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the *setiakh* tradition performed as part of the *walimatul 'ursy* in Kuripan Village constitutes a customary practice transmitted across generations and understood and accepted by the informants interviewed within the Lampung *Saibatin* community. From the perspective of Islamic family law, this tradition falls within the category of *'urf 'amali* because it takes the form of an action repeatedly performed in the conduct of marriage celebrations. Based on the accounts of five informants, whether *setiakh* should be classified as *'urf shahih* or *'urf fasid* depends primarily on the beliefs underlying its implementation, rather than solely on the use of water, limes, or the ritual procedures themselves. *Setiakh* may be categorised as *'urf shahih* when understood as a cultural symbol accompanied by supplications and prayers to Allah SWT for safety and protection. Conversely, the belief that *setiakh* water possesses independent power to ensure safety, ward off danger, or determine whether a wedding proceeds smoothly conflicts with the principle of *tawhid* and points towards its classification as *'urf fasid*. Accordingly, this study contributes to the discussion by demonstrating that the assessment of *setiakh* under Islamic law must distinguish between cultural practices as means of expressing supplication and beliefs that attribute independent power to ritual elements. This conclusion is limited to the accounts of five informants and the context of Kuripan Village; it is therefore not intended to represent the views of the entire Lampung *Saibatin* community or to establish the character of every instance of *setiakh* practised beyond the scope of this study.

These findings indicate that Islamic family law allows room for local traditions, provided that their implementation does not conflict with Islamic law or displace the belief that Allah SWT is the sole source of safety and protection. The implication of this study lies in the importance of assessing marriage traditions not only according to the form of the practices themselves but also in light of the intentions, objectives, understandings, and beliefs of the communities that observe them. This study is limited to the Lampung *Saibatin* community in Kuripan Village and involves a small number of informants. Future research could expand the geographical scope and include a more diverse range of informants, including married couples, individuals responsible for conducting *setiakh*, customary leaders, religious leaders, and members of the wider community. Such an approach would enable a more comprehensive understanding of the status and meaning of the *setiakh* tradition in *Saibatin* customary marriage practices in Lampung.

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