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Between Normativity and Social Benefit: A Socio-Legal Analysis of Gold-Based Fidyah Ritual in Jambi

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Abstract

The practice of gold-based *fidyah* rituals in Jambi Malay society creates legal ambiguity due to invalid contractual mechanisms and a shift in beneficiaries from the poor to religious elites. This study aims to analyze the dynamics of gold-based *fidyah* from the perspectives of Islamic jurisprudence, *ḥīlah shar'iyyah*, and socio-legal utility. Employing a socio-legal research methodology, data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and literature reviews. The study reveals that doctrinally, the symbolic grant stratagem renders the *fidyah* legally invalid under Islamic law. However, socio-legally, the practice persists as an adaptive mechanism to alleviate financial burdens while reinforcing communal solidarity and custom-sharia integration. The novelty of this research lies in highlighting the tension between Islamic legal formalisms and local cultural benefits. This study asserts the necessity of reforming *fidyah* practices to realign with sharia norms and social empowerment.

Keywords: *Fidyah*; Jambi Malay Society; Legal Stratagem; Socio-Legal Studies.

Abstrak

Praktik ritual fidyah berbasis emas (*daur*) pada masyarakat Melayu Jambi memicu ambiguitas hukum akibat ketidakjelasan status akad dan pergeseran sasaran penerima dari fakir miskin ke tokoh agama. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis dinamika fidyah emas dari perspektif norma fikih, *ḥīlah shar'iyyah*, dan kemanfaatan sosio-legal. Menggunakan metode penelitian sosio-legal (*socio-legal research*), data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan studi dokumentasi. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa secara doktrinal, rekayasa akad hibah yang bersifat simbolis menyebabkan ketidakabsahan fidyah secara syar'i. Namun secara sosio-legal, praktik ini tetap dipertahankan sebagai mekanisme adaptif untuk meringankan beban finansial keluarga duka sekaligus merekatkan solidaritas sosial dan integrasi adat-syara'. Kebaruan kajian ini terletak pada pendedahan dilema antara formalisme hukum Islam dan maslahat kultural lokal. Studi ini menegaskan perlunya re-orientasi fidyah agar selaras dengan norma syariat dan pemberdayaan sosial.

Kata Kunci: *Fidyah*; Masyarakat Melayu Jambi; Hilah Syari'ah; Sosio-Legal.

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Introduction

Although fidyah is fundamentally rooted in Islamic jurisprudence as an expiatory worship to compensate for unfulfilled religious obligations, its empirical practice has evolved into diverse regional rituals tailored by local custom. The same practice is also carried out by the Suka Datang Bengkulu community, known as Fidiah Semyang (Shesa et al., 2022), Aceh is called Tulak Breuh (Hakim & Long, 2021), In West Sumatra, it is known as Maayun Bareh (Ilhanifah, 2022), in Indramayu Central Java, it is known as Geong (Mansoer et al., 2018). In addition, the Banjar Pahuluan community South Kalimantan, also carries out the same religious ritual with the term Bahilah (Hayati & Khitam, 2018; (Hafidzi et al., 2020) while in the Sasak community of West Nusa Tenggara it is known as Patuq (Rahman, 2019).

According to Azra'i al-Basyari (personal communication, 2025), the practice of *fidyah* through gold weighing has become an entrenched tradition within the Jambi community, even though it continues to generate debate among Indonesian scholars, a socio-religious dynamic that is also reflected in classical jurisprudence literature, such as the works of al-Dimyaṭī (1997) and al-Saqqāf (2018). Despite these theological debates, local adherents remain enthusiastic about practicing it, believing the tradition to be an integral part of Islamic teachings (al Basyari, personal communication, 2025). Echoing this perspective, Sirojuddin Abbas (personal communication, 2025) noted that the ritual is viewed as a spiritual solution to expiate the sins of the deceased. While sharing fundamental similarities with other Islamic communities across Indonesia, this tradition exhibits a distinct uniqueness in its execution: the payment method departs from standard instructions in fiqh textbooks and hadiths, utilizing gold equivalent in weight to the deceased's age minus their pre-pubescent years, which ultimately leads to the local designation of this practice as *"timbang emas"* (gold weighing).

Academic scholarship on *fidyah* practices across various Muslim societies generally falls into two distinct analytical paradigms. The first approach focuses primarily on normative and doctrinal evaluations, examining how local adaptations either adhere to or diverge from standard classical jurisprudence (*fiqh*). Studies in this vein often highlight the tension between legal orthodoxy and local custom, questioning the validity of symbolic mechanisms, such as rotation techniques (*bahilah*) or alternative medium substitutions, used to fulfill religious obligations (Hakim & Long, 2021; Hayati & Khitam, 2018). While these studies offer valuable insights into the textual elasticity of *fiqh* and the boundaries of legal reasoning, they frequently treat local practice merely as a deviation from normative ideals, thereby overshadowing the internal logic, socio-spiritual motivations, and cultural

meanings embedded within the rituals themselves (Ilhanifah, 2022; Mansoer et al., 2018).

Conversely, a growing body of socio-legal and empirical literature approaches ritual adaptation through the lens of functionalism and social utility. Scholars in this tradition argue that local variants of *fidyah* serve vital communal functions beyond personal expiation, including economic redistribution, social cohesion, and the reinforcement of local Islamic identity (Hafidzi et al., 2020; Rahman, 2019; Shesa et al., 2022). However, much of this literature tends to examine customary rituals in isolation or reduce them to simple cultural heritage, without fully probing how monetary or high-value commodities, such as gold, reconfigure both the legal rationale and the socio-economic dynamics of ritual exchange. By bridging this analytical divide, this study situates the gold-based *fidyah* ritual (*timbang emas*) in Jambi at the intersection of normative jurisprudence and empirical social benefit, analyzing how the community negotiates theological validity alongside tangible social utility.

Despite the extensive literature on regional *fidyah* variations, existing studies have predominantly examined rituals centered on basic foodstuffs or standard currency, leaving a critical knowledge gap regarding the use of high-value precious metals like gold as a medium of ritual expiation. The reliance on gold introduces unique legal queries regarding valuation, ownership transfer, and economic impact that traditional grain-based models do not address. To fill this gap, this study investigates the *timbang emas* ritual in Jambi through a socio-legal framework. The primary objective of this research is twofold: to examine how local religious actors negotiate the theological legitimacy of gold-based *fidyah* against classical *fiqh* benchmarks, and to analyze how this ritual generates distinct social and economic benefits for the community. The novelty of this research lies in its conceptualization of gold not merely as a currency substitute, but as a dynamic socio-legal instrument that harmonizes strict legal normativity with practical social utility, thereby offering a fresh perspective on the evolving flexibility of Islamic law in contemporary Indonesia.

Method

This study employs a qualitative socio-legal approach to examine the legal phenomena of gold-based *fidyah* (*timbang emas*) within its living social and cultural context. Fieldwork was conducted in Jambi Province, Indonesia, specifically targeting communities where the *timbang emas* tradition remains actively practiced. By combining normative legal analysis with empirical field observation, this design allows the study to analyze how statutory and

classical Islamic jurisprudence intersect with local customary practices in daily life.

Primary data were gathered through in-depth interviews with key informants, including traditional leaders (*tokoh adat*), local Islamic scholars (*ulama*), community figures, and families who have performed the ritual in Jambi. To complement the interview data, direct field observations were carried out during ritual executions to capture the procedural nuances and physical interactions involved. Field notes were systematically organized into observational, methodological, theoretical, and personal logs to maintain analytical rigor. Once collected, all empirical and textual data were processed and analyzed using interactive qualitative analysis, encompassing data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification (Miles et al., 2014; Sugiyono, 2013).

Result and Discussion

The Doctrinal Debates on Praying and Fasting Fidyah

The practice of substituting missed religious obligations, particularly prayer (*shalat*) and fasting (*sawm*), for the deceased occupies a contested space within Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*). The majority (*jumhur*) of classical scholars, including prominent figures in the Shāfiʿī school such as Imam al-Shibramallisī, assert that primary bodily acts of worship (*ʿibādah*) cannot be replaced or compensated through monetary or material means (*fidyah*). This stance is rooted in the principle that personal devotional duties require individual bodily execution and cannot be delegated (*niyābah*) (Al-Qurṭubī, 2006; Rushd, 2003). Unlike the pilgrimage (*hajj*), which combines financial and physical capabilities and thus permits proxy performance under specific impediments (Al-Asqalani, 1986), obligatory prayers left unperformed during one's lifetime are strictly regarded as non-transferable obligations.

Conversely, an alternative jurisprudential tradition offers a more flexible legal mechanism, advocating for the payment of *fidyah* as a compassionate measure to alleviate the spiritual liabilities of the deceased. Scholars such as Ibn Abī ʿAṣrūn, Ibn Daqīq al-ʿĪd, Imam al-Subkī, and Ibn Burhān—drawing upon the *qawl qadīm* (earlier opinion) of Imam al-Shāfiʿī—contend that unperformed prayers may be expiated by delivering one *mudd* (approximately 675 grams) of staple food per missed prayer time to the poor (Al-Dimyathi, 1997). This opinion draws a legal analogy (*qiyās*) between unfulfilled prayers and unfulfilled Ramadan fasting, the latter being explicitly sanctioned in Qur'an (2:184) and supported by prophetic traditions (Nasa'i, 1991). In the Ḥanafī school, Imam Abū Ḥanīfah allowed *fidyah* for missed prayers under specific conditions, namely that it should be executed based on the final

bequest (*waṣiyyah*) of the deceased, calculated at half a *ṣāʿ* (approx. 1.9 kg) per prayer time including the *witr* prayer, and distributed without engaging in deceptive circular rotation schemes (Al-Zuhaily, 1985; Thohari, 2013).

While classical *fiqh* manuals frame *fidyah* primarily in terms of staple foodstuffs like wheat or rice (Masyhuri, 2004), the empirical practice among Muslim communities in Jambi has undergone a significant transformation through the ritual known as *timbang emas* (gold weighing). In this tradition, the quantitative formula of classical *fiqh*—calculating five daily prayers over a lifetime (1,800 missed prayers per year)—is retained in spirit, but the medium of exchange is substituted with precious metals. Rather than measuring and distributing hundreds of kilograms of rice, the family weighs gold equivalent to the duration of the deceased's adult life (calculated as total age minus the pre-pubescent years, or *bāligh*).

This ritual adaptation represents a pragmatic resolution to the logistical challenges of bulk food distribution in contemporary society. Local religious scholars (*ulama*) and customary leaders in Jambi justify this substitution by utilizing the Ḥanafī paradigm, which permits the valuation (*qīmah*) of *fidyah* in monetary or high-value commodities rather than strictly in raw foodstuffs (Zuhaylī, 1985). By utilizing gold, the community elevates the symbolic gravity of the expiatory act while compressing the physical volume of the ritual transaction. The practices documented in classical treatises such as *Nihāyat al-Zayn* by Nawawī al-Bantanī (1898), *Iʿānat al-Ṭālibīn* by al-Dimyaṭī (1997), and *Tarshīḥ al-Mustafīdīn* by Alwī (1900) are thus reinterpreted through local custom (*ʿurf*), bridging formal textual normativity with living local realities.

Beyond its theological underpinnings, the *timbang emas* ritual operates as a dynamic socio-legal instrument that generates tangible social utility (*maṣlaḥah*) within Jambi society. From a legal perspective, the ritual serves as a formal communal mechanism to resolve the spiritual and moral debts of the deceased, offering emotional solace to the grieving family through the collective belief in divine forgiveness. The high value associated with gold underscores the family's solemn commitment to honoring the deceased's religious legacy, transforming what could be a abstract doctrinal requirement into a clear, visible act of devotion.

Socio-economically, *timbang emas* reshapes traditional mechanisms of wealth redistribution. In practice, the gold utilized during the weighing process is either converted into cash funds or distributed to local religious functionaries, poor relatives, and underprivileged community members who assist in funeral and prayer services. This prevents the fragmentation of small agricultural yields and provides recipients with substantial economic assistance rather than perishable food items. Consequently, the ritual

negotiates a balance between strict legal normativity and social benefit: it respects classical jurisprudential parameters while ensuring that the practice directly contributes to communal solidarity and economic welfare.

Harmonization of Islamic and Customary Law in the Fidyah Procession

Indonesian society accepted Islam peacefully, allowing its legal framework to be shaped by existing customary systems. In several regions, such as Jambi and Aceh, the influence of Islamic law became so profound that it gradually replaced former customary provisions. As a universal legal system, Islamic law accommodates local legal traditions, granting space for customary law (*adat*) to function provided it does not conflict with core Islamic values (Abdurrahman, 2015). This synthesis is reinforced by Taufiki (2021), who notes that Islamic law accepts customary law just as customs absorb Islamic principles in a mutual effort to harmonize local tradition with Islamic teachings.

In theory, the Islamization of Indonesia and the broader Malay world accommodated prevailing societal customs (Nasir et al., 2018). Metaphorically, much like a house, Islam accepts local forms as long as they do not violate the core doctrine of monotheism (*tawḥīd*). Where contradictions existed, religious scholars (*ulama*) gradually transformed local practices by infusing them with Islamic values while preserving their external forms. This process gave rise to foundational aphorisms across the region, such as *"Adat bersendi syara', syara' bersendi Kitabullah"* in the Malay Peninsula (Hooker, 1974), *"Adat ngon hukom lagee jasa ngon sifeuet"* (the relationship between custom and law is like that between substance and attribute) in Aceh, and *"Panggaderreng"*—a socio-legal system linking *adeq* (custom) and *saraq* (sharia)—among the Bugis. Similar expressions aligning custom with the Qur'an and Sunnah were likewise established among the Minangkabau (Tono et al., 2019), the Malays of Perlis (Hooker, 1974), and the Jambi Malay community (Rachman & Rahman, 2017; Idrus et al., 2024).

According to Samsuddin Ali (personal communication, 2023), since the arrival of Islam in Jambi, the local Malay community has agreed to adopt Islam as their primary guide to life, as reflected in the philosophy *"Adat bersendi syara', syara' bersendi Kitabullah; syara' mengato, adat memakai"* (sharia governs, custom implements). Although Islamic law is not fully applied in all domains, most notably in inheritance matters, Fathuddin Abdi (personal communication, 2023) notes that the Jambi Malay community remains acutely aware that sharia constitutes core religious doctrine, whereas custom represents inherited ancestral tradition. By blending and complementing

these two traditions, the community maintains both religious ideals and cultural preservation in functional harmony.

Despite the pressures of modernization and globalization that have degraded many local traditions across Indonesia, the cultural heritage of the Jambi Malay community continues to endure. One religious tradition that remains firmly preserved is *fidyah*, which is intrinsically tied to funeral rites (*mortuary rituals*). The primary purpose of this ritual is to pay expiation (*fidyah*) for the deceased's unfulfilled prayers and fasts as an act of atonement (A. Albasari, personal communication, 2023). Applied strictly to those who had reached adulthood (*bāligh*), this practice has been handed down through generations and remains widely accepted as an integral component of local religious belief.

While the exact historical origins of the ritual remain unclear, Datuk Azra'i (personal communication, 2023) notes that the practice as executed today is traced to ancestral scholars who studied in Thailand and Malaysia. Supported by strong community conviction and respect for ancestral legacy, the ritual has been carefully preserved. Historically, early religious proselytizers (*da'i*) responded wisely to pre-existing local customs by infusing them with Islamic principles, ensuring that the procedural execution of the ritual contains no elements that deviate from Islamic orthodoxy.

At its core, performing *fidyah* signifies a plea for liberation and an acknowledgment of human shortcoming before God. Through this tradition, the living seek forgiveness on behalf of the deceased for sins and missed devotional duties, including major obligations such as unperformed prayers. Ultimately, the *fidyah* practice among the Jambi community reflects a deep commitment to fulfilling divine commands by redeeming the spiritual liabilities of deceased relatives. It functions as an act of precautionary devotion (*iḥtiyāṭ*) to perfect past worship, fulfill sharia obligations, and express filial piety (*birr al-wālidayn*) toward departed ancestors.

The Process of Implementing Fidyah and Hilah Syari'íyah

Variations in the payment of *fidyah* across Muslim societies stem from diverse factors, including regional subcultures and varying legal interpretations (Hayati & Khitam, 2018). While the majority of communities fulfill this obligation by distributing staple foods or rice, as observed in Indramayu (Sofwan, 2020b; Mansoer et al., 2018) and other areas, the Ḥanafī school permits substituting physical produce with monetary equivalent or precious metals, such as gold. To prevent excessive financial hardship for grieving families, scholars like Sayyid ʿAlwī proposed a circulating legal mechanism (*daur*), utilizing a standard calculation of half a *ṣāʿ* per missed

prayer time. This practice of rotational *fidyah*, calculated over the deceased's adult life post-puberty, is similarly observed in regional contexts like Indramayu and Aceh (Ataillah, 2021).

In the Jambi Malay community, the *fidyah* ritual relies explicitly on gold rather than staple grains, adopting the flexible valuation paradigm of the Ḥanafī school. Local adherents avoid distributing bulk rice because it poses severe logistical and financial burdens on the deceased's family. Replacing rice with gold offers a pragmatic solution supported by classical jurisprudence, adhering to the principle that Islamic law seeks to ease hardship rather than impose undue burdens. To facilitate this practice, families who lack sufficient physical gold are permitted to borrow the required amount from fellow villagers.

According to local religious figures, paying *fidyah* represents an essential moral and spiritual obligation to redeem the unfulfilled prayer and fasting debts of the deceased. As noted by Al-Jufri al-Hafiz (personal communication, 2023), if the deceased was impoverished, the heirs, such as children or grandchildren, are encouraged to assume the duty on their behalf. Sirojuddin (personal communication, 2023) further emphasizes that *fidyah* serves as a practical spiritual remedy; if the family faces immediate financial incapacity, the execution of the obligation may be temporarily postponed until sufficient resources are available.

In general practice, the *fidyah* ritual takes place immediately after the funeral prayer (*ṣalāt al-janāzah*) at the mosque, prior to the burial procession. This timing reflects the communal belief that the deceased should enter the grave freed from lingering earthly spiritual debts. The process involves inviting around twenty pious individuals or community members who understand the procedural requirements of the ritual. The execution unfolds across three distinct sequential phases: preparation, ritual exchange, and post-ritual reconciliation.

The preparation phase begins with a family consultation (*musyawarah*) involving the primary heirs—such as the surviving spouse, children, or parents—to calculate the deceased's unperformed obligations based on their total age minus their pre-pubescent years, as well as to determine the time, location, and gold required (M. Nuh, personal communication, 2023). Families with adequate means directly supply their own gold. Conversely, those lacking sufficient gold opt to borrow the required amount from fellow villagers. Under this second option, although the agreement is framed symbolically as a gift or voluntary grant (*hibah*), it functions in practice as a temporary loan that the family returns immediately after the ritual concludes.

During the execution phase, the presiding religious leader first confirms the deceased's personal details, calculating the precise duration of adulthood and the corresponding weight of gold. For instance, for a person who died at age 50 with puberty estimated at 15, the liability spans 35 years (equivalent to 12,600 days of prayers and fasts). The ritual proceeds through a formal offer and acceptance (*ījāb wa qabūl*), where the family representative declares the transfer of gold to redeem the deceased's spiritual debts, and the recipient accepts before transferring it back. This exchange is rotated rapidly through the assembled group of twenty participants until the full calculated obligation is symbolically satisfied.

In the post-implementation phase, the host family expresses gratitude by providing small cash gifts (*sedekah*) to the participants according to their financial capacity, and the borrowed gold is promptly returned to its rightful owner. A socio-legal comparison reveals key similarities and divergences between standard Ḥanafī/Shāfiʿī principles and the local Jambi practice. While both frameworks share the fundamental intent of redeeming spiritual debts and accept gold under Ḥanafī valuation principles, they diverge on ownership transfer. In classical jurisprudence, property transferred as *fidyah* becomes the absolute property of the recipient. In Jambi, however, the gold is temporarily borrowed and rotated, rendering the contract a symbolic rather than a true transfer of ownership.

This procedural gap creates a legal tension: because the symbolic grant (*hibah*) during the ritual lacks permanent transfer of possession, it does not fully satisfy the classical conditions of a valid gift contract. Nonetheless, as Marhamah and Mahsun (2021) observe, such legal adaptations are intended to shift an otherwise unmanageable burden toward a more feasible symbolic compliance. However, practical concerns remain when gold-based *fidyah* is distributed exclusively to prominent figures or religious leaders rather than underprivileged community members, potentially diverting the practice from its primary legal objective of aiding the poor (Shesa et al., 2022).

Ultimately, the *fidyah* ritual functions as a profound expression of familial responsibility, encapsulating duties owed both to God and to the deceased relative. Neglecting the ritual is often perceived as an abandonment of ancestral tradition and a failure of filial duty (*birr al-wālidayn*). Beyond its individual spiritual dimensions, the gathering fosters communal solidarity. By bringing community members together to pray, assist the grieving family, and offer mutual support, the ritual strengthens social bonds and maintains harmony within Jambi society.

Fidyah Between Norms and Benefits

Applying a *maqāṣid al-sharīʿah* framework helps clarify whether the local execution of the *fidyah* tradition aligns with the core objectives of Islamic law, particularly in serving public interest while preventing potential harm (*dar'u al-mafāsid*). To ensure long-term sustainability, the Jambi community must balance procedural compliance with broader socio-religious outcomes so that the tradition does not create unintended social or economic strain.

From the perspective of preserving religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*), the *fidyah* ritual functions as a mechanism for maintaining living Islamic devotion within the community. Rather than viewing local adaptations as problematic deviations, legal policy (*siyāsah sharʿiyyah*) can recognize them as pragmatic vehicles that uphold core religious duties while generating tangible benefits for society.

Furthermore, applying the legal maxim *dar'u al-mafāsid muqaddam ʿalā jalb al-maṣāliḥ* (averting harm takes precedence over procuring benefits) requires proactive guidance from religious and customary leaders. Leaders must evaluate the long-term socio-moral implications of *fidyah* rather than viewing it merely as a short-term ritual fix for individual families (Taymiyyah, 1998). Grounding local practice in this principle ensures that rituals remain not only formally compliant with Islamic jurisprudence, but also aligned with the ultimate end of sharia: protecting community welfare in a sustainable manner (Qudamah, 1997)

At the socio-cultural level, religion and custom continuously shape one another through shared symbols and values (Prandi, 2008). While religion provides sacred symbols of obedience to God, local culture offers practical expressions that enable communities to thrive within their local environment (Saihu, 2019). In the Bungo region of Jambi, the practice of *fidyah* represents an inherited cultural legacy infused with historical and spiritual significance. Similar practices exist across Java and Kalimantan, where local rituals mediate between religious obligations and social customs to lighten the perceived spiritual burdens of the deceased.

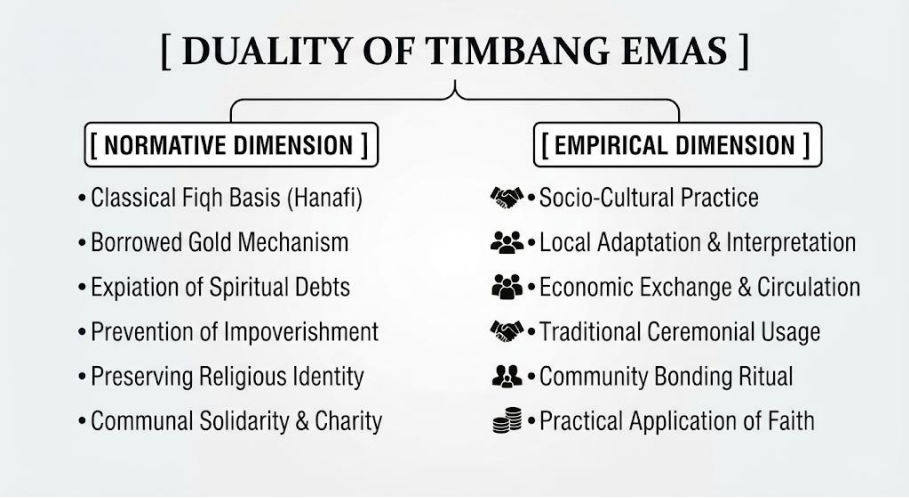
From a normative standpoint, local scholars and community members preserve the *fidyah* tradition because they perceive it as inherently good and free from idolatrous elements (*shirk*). The practice carries deep spiritual value, engaging both rational reflection and religious conscience. At its core, the ritual fosters mutual assistance (*taʿāwun*), driven by the family's sincere affection (*birr al-wālidayn*) and their desire to settle the spiritual accounts of departed relatives before God (Sahrul, 2018).

Crucially, this ritual reveals a structural ambiguity, a core tension between strict Islamic normativity (*normativity*) and practical community utility (*social benefit*). On one hand, from a formal legal perspective, substituting real property transfer with symbolic, rotated gold loans creates a

legal fiction that stretches classical *fiqh* requirements. On the other hand, from a socio-cultural perspective, this ambiguity allows the community to reconcile strict religious duties with economic reality: it provides spiritual reassurance to grieving families, avoids impoverishing them through actual wealth transfer, and reinforces social cohesion through collective prayer and shared meals (Aufa, 2014). By navigating this duality, the *fidyah* ritual in Jambi transforms potential normative friction into a harmonious blend of religious devotion and communal solidarity.

Socio-Legal Synthesis

The empirical findings of this study highlight a sophisticated mechanism of legal adaptation wherein the Jambi Malay community successfully reconciles the apparent friction between rigid text-based normativity (*textual fiqh*) and living social needs (*empirical utility*).(Ruslan Abdul Gani, Rahmi Hidayati, 2026). Rather than viewing the *timbang emas* ritual as a mere compromise or a deviation from Islamic orthodoxy, a socio-legal analysis reveals it as a dynamic legal negotiation.(Rahman, 2020) The community leverages the internal diversity of classical jurisprudence(Fawwaz, 2024), specifically the flexibility of the Ḥanafī school regarding economic valuation (*qīmah*), to legitimize a practice that would otherwise be rejected under strict Shāfiʿī doctrines. By doing so, local actors maintain their commitment to religious orthodoxy while adapting the execution to fit their contemporary socio-economic reality.



This synthesis demonstrates two central analytical insights. First, Pragmatic legal fiction (*hīlah sharʿiyyah*) as social protection. The practice of borrowing gold and executing a rotational, symbolic grant (*hibah*) functions as

an intentional legal mechanism (*hīlah*). While it appears structurally ambiguous from a strict contractual standpoint, its sociological utility is paramount: it shields grieving families from catastrophic financial strain or debt that would result from actual wealth transfer or bulk produce distribution, thereby directly fulfilling the *maqāṣid* principle of protecting wealth (*ḥifẓ al-māl*).

Second, reconceptualization of gold as a cultural-religious instrument. In the Jambi context, gold is transformed from a mere economic commodity into a sacred socio-legal symbol.(Rahman, 2020). It encapsulates the dignity of the deceased, the filial piety (*birr al-wālidayn*) of the heirs, and the collective solidarity of the village. The ritualized weighing process communicates deep spiritual respect while allowing the actual economic benefit to be redistributed to community participants through accessible cash gifts (*sedekah*).

Ultimately, the *timbang emas* tradition proves that living Islamic law in Indonesia does not exist in a static binary between text and custom. Instead, it operates as a continuous dialogue where legal normativity is continually reinterpreted through the lens of community welfare (*maṣlaḥah*), establishing a harmonious equilibrium between doctrinal piety and practical social survival.(Fawwaz, 2024) (Sasmitha & Utama, 2021)

Simpulan

This study concludes that the gold-based *fidyah* ritual (*timbang emas*) in Jambi is not an arbitrary deviation from Islamic orthodoxy, but a sophisticated manifestation of "Adaptive Normative Elasticity", a theoretical framework wherein local communities actively negotiate textual jurisprudence with empirical social utility. By strategically adopting Ḥanafī valuation principles (*qīmah*) and deploying symbolic gold loans as a functional legal fiction (*hīlah sharʿiyyah*), local actors preserve the sacred gravity of spiritual expiation while safeguarding grieving families from catastrophic financial strain (*ḥifẓ al-māl*). Ultimately, this research offers a novel theoretical insight for socio-legal studies by demonstrating that Islamic legal normativity and communal benefit (*maṣlaḥah*) do not operate as mutually exclusive binaries; rather, they exist in a dynamic equilibrium where internal textual diversity is mobilized to harmonize doctrinal piety with living socio-economic welfare.

Building upon these findings, future research should expand this theoretical framework by conducting comparative socio-legal analyses of precious-metal-based *fidyah* practices across different Islamic micro-cultures in Southeast Asia to test the boundary conditions of "Adaptive Normative Elasticity." Theoretically, scholars are encouraged to further investigate how legal fictions (*ḥīlah sharʿiyyah*) are ethically evaluated and legitimized by contemporary rural versus urban

religious authorities when balancing textual orthodoxy against economic realities. Methodologically, subsequent studies should adopt multi-sited ethnographic approaches combined with quantitative socio-economic profiling to measure the precise redistributive impact of rotational *fidyah* rituals on household poverty and communal welfare, thereby offering a more nuanced, empirical assessment of how ritualized social benefits manifest in practice.

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