

# Exposing the Religious Characters of the Malays in the 19th Century: A Symbolic Analysis of the Manuscript of *Syair Burung*

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**Abstract:** This article is focused on analysing the religious character of the Malays in the 19th century in the *Syair Burung* manuscripts. It was one of the cultural relics of the Malay community in the past that can provide useful information for the religious life of today's society. This paper was based on library research with a qualitative method approach that leads to content analysis, while the primary source is the text edition of *Syair Burung* manuscript. The results of the analysis found that *Syair Burung* is a symbolic poem that uses various birds for the storyteller. This is because the Malay people were colonised by the British, thus, they did not dare to write the truth. Likewise, regarding the religious life that occurs in society, the author is only able to change the character of the story. This research found the religious character of the Malays in the 19th century was divided into a three-character group. First, a group that understands religious teachings and was obedient in practicing them, was symbolised by 13 species of birds. Second, a group that comprehends religious teachings but does not practice them, which is symbolised by 8 types of birds. Third, the group does not understand religious teachings and also does not practice them, which is symbolised by 9 types of birds.

**Keywords:** Malays; manuscript; religious characters; Syair Burung.

**Abstrak:** Artikel ini difokuskan untuk menganalisis karakter beragama orang Melayu pada abad ke-19 dalam manuskrip Syair Burung. Syair Burung merupakan salah satu peninggalan budaya masyarakat Melayu masa lampau yang dapat memberikan informasi bermanfaat bagi kehidupan beragama masyarakat sekarang. Tulisan ini merupakan hasil penelitian library research dengan pendekatan metode kualitatif yang mengarah kepada analisis isi (content analysis), sedangkan sumber primer adalah edisi teks manuskrip Syair Burung. Hasil analisis ditemukan bahwa Syair Burung merupakan syair simbolik yang menggunakan berbagai burung untuk pelaku ceritanya. Hal tersebut disebabkan karena masyarakat Melayu dalam keadaan terjajah oleh kolonial sehingga tidak berani menuliskan yang sebenarnya. Demikian juga mengenai kehidupan beragama yang terjadi pada masyarakat, pengarang hanya mampu mengganti tokoh ceritanya. Kemudian berdasarkan analisis terhadap kandungan teks, maka ditemukan bahwa karakter beragama orang Melayu pada abad ke-19 terbagi kepada tiga kelompok karakter yakni pertama, kelompok yang berkarakter mengerti ajaran agama dan taat mengamalkannya yang disimbolkan sejumlah 13 jenis burung. Kedua, kelompok yang berkarakter mengerti ajaran agama namun tidak mengamalkannya yang disimbolkan dengan 8 jenis burung; dan yang ketiga kelompok yang berkarakter tidak mengerti ajaran agama dan juga tidak mengamalkannya yang disimbolkan dengan 9 jenis burung.

**Kata Kunci:** Orang Melayu; manuskrip; karakter beragama; Syair Burung.

## 1. Introduction

In the 19th century, Islam took root in the Malay region (Daneshgar, 2022; Jalil & Nor, 2020). Islam as a way of life for Malays has become the norm and spirit for Malays because Islam with all of its teachings has become a guideline for Malays to act and behave (Hambali, Paudzi, & Sallam, 2021). This means Malays have a view of life closely associated with Islam so a Malay statement is identical to Islam. Malay is synonymous with Islam and represents a process of acculturation in which the Malay-Islamic institution occupies a substantial role (Mahali, 2011). Malay empire institutions that apply the constitution and Islamic value system (Chambert-Loir, 2017; Milner, 1981; Wade, 2000) have been able to erode the old Malay tradition system, which is animism and dynamism as well as Hinduism to the system of the Islamic Malay tradition. Hence, there was a change in the inhabitant's way of life seen in culture (1) Islam eroded ancient culture; (2) Islam improved and perfected ancient Malay culture; and (3) Islam creates a new Malay culture (Tamrin, 2010, p. 3).

In living a religious life, the Malays are not static because their understanding of the teachings of Islam is very much influenced by the circumstances in which life is taking place. For example, the understanding and practice of the Malays during the colonial period would not be the same as their understanding and practice during the early days of Islam. Likewise, the religious understanding and practice of the Malays today are very different from the understanding and practice of the past because the situations and conditions that affect life are also not the same. Now, the Malay community is very sensitive and is starting to be eroded by the currents of globalisation which can threaten the unity and integrity of the nation. Various challenges have been felt by the community, namely in the form of a swift current of globalisation with the rise of social media from the city center to remote villages. As a result, various groups have emerged that are disturbing and dividing the community in religious and state life.

In essence, challenges always exist in every era in different forms. Likewise, the religious character of the community is also different. Religious character is not new but has been around for a long time. This is the purpose of this paper, namely to analyse the religious character of the Malay community in the past which can be known through literary works in the form of the manuscript *Syair Burung*. Textual and contextual in-depth exploration of *Syair Burung* is very necessary because the information will be obtained about the religious character of the Malays at that time. This information is very useful for the survival of religious life today which is very vulnerable to networks that mislead the public so that the life of society and the nation is very uncomfortable to be felt. Therefore, through the study of the manuscript *Syair Burung*, people can now learn from the ancient people who lived under the colonialists but they remained united to increase their love for the homeland so that they were freed from the shackles of colonialism. Even though they differ in their understanding of religious teachings and different groups, they remain united in facing challenges so that the value of unity and integrity is maintained and strength is created in the face of the invaders.

Manuscripts began to exist when the Malays recognised the script used to write the Qur'an (Abdullah et al., 2020; bin Adnan, 2021), namely the Arabic script, then the Malays with their creativity used the Arabic script to write their language so there was an assimilation process with the form of the Malay Arabic script. Therefore, the 19th century was the century that the Malays had the advantage in the written tradition. At that time many writers emerged with quality works from various scientific aspects (Roza, 2017, p. 177). However, when viewed at this time the condition of the manuscript is in poor condition because it is neglected so it has suffered a lot of damage. Such conditions are the task of scientists to examine manuscripts because manuscripts are one of the cultural heritage. By conducting a serious study of the content of the manuscript text, its contents can be known and utilized by the public now and in the future.

The study of the manuscript of *Syair Burung* has not been conducted by many researchers. One of the studies related to the manuscript of *Syair Burung* is merely concerned with philological aspects (Roza, 2001, p. 1). Meanwhile, studies on manuscripts, in general, have been widely carried out.

This research employs a qualitative method. The data sources used are primary sources, namely *Syair Burung* manuscript, whose text edition has been carried out; and secondary sources, namely other

directly related sources but very helpful in conducting analysis, for example, books, journals, and scientific works. While data collection techniques are documentation and observation, through written items such as books, novels, magazines, documents, regulations, minutes, daily notes, and so on (Bungin, 2001, p. 230; Hamzah, 2020, p. 3; Zed, 2008, p. 4).

The steps in analysing qualitative data are (1) processing and preparing the data for analysis by sorting and compiling the data; (2) reading the entire data; (3) coding all data. Coding is the process of organising data by collecting pieces of text and writing them down; (4) coding to describe the setting (domain), people (participant), categories, and themes to be analysed; (5) description; and (6) interpretation (Creswell, 2014, pp. 263–268). Because *Syair Burung* is a literary work, data analysis techniques in literature are an effort to understand literary works from extrinsic aspects which include (a) moral or ethical messages (b) educational values (didactic), (c) philosophical values (d) religious values (e) welfare values, and so on (Endraswara, 2008, p. 160).

## 2. Understanding the character in the manuscript of *Syair Burung*

### Character

The term character comes from English, which means the mental quality or moral strength, the character of an individual who becomes a special personality, driving and driving force, and differentiating one individual from another (Koesoema, 2011, p. 80). In other words, a character is the integrity of all psychological behavior, resulting from the influence of endogenous (genetic) factors and exogenous (environmental) factors embedded in oneself. That is what distinguishes an individual or group of individuals from one another. This means a character is a potential that already exists within humans, awaiting those who influence it. In the Qur'an, it has been stated that humans have two potential characteristics, good and bad. Humans have two possibilities: being a creature who believes and becoming a creature who denies his Lord, as Allah says below.

فَأَلْهَمَهَا فُجُورَهَا وَتَقْوَاهَا

And its enlightenment as to its wrong and its right (QS. As-Syams [91]: 8).

Based on the above verse, every human being has the character to be a good or bad servant, carry out God's commands or transgress, become a believer or disbeliever, or a polytheist. Even though humans are perfect creatures of God, they can be the most despised servants and even more despicable than animals, as in the following words of Allah.

لَقَدْ خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي أَحْسَنِ تَقْوِيمٍ ۖ ثُمَّ رَدَدْنَاهُ أَسْفَلَ سَافِلِينَ

We have indeed created man in the best of moulds, Then do We abase him (to be) the lowest of the low (QS. At-Tin [95]: 4-5).

وَلَقَدْ ذَرَأْنَا لِجَهَنَّمَ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْجِنِّ وَالإِنْسِ لَهُمْ قُلُوبٌ لَّا يَفْقَهُونَ بِهَا وَهُمْ أَعْيُنٌ لَّا يُبْصِرُونَ بِهَا وَهُمْ  
أَذَانٌ لَّا يَسْمَعُونَ بِهَا أُولَئِكَ كَالْأَنْعَامِ بَلْ هُمْ أَضَلُّ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْعُقُلُونَ

Many are the Jinns and men we have made for Hell: They have hearts wherewith they understand not, eyes wherewith they see not, and ears wherewith they hear not. They are like cattle, - nay, more misguided: for they are heedless (of warning) (QS. Al-A'raf [7]: 179).

With the two potentials that exist, humans can determine themselves to be good or bad. This means character tendencies can be divided into two, namely to be "good people" and the tendency to become "bad people." Therefore, the character must be nurtured with positive values so that naturally

people can build and shape a person into a superior individual and have good morals (Fitri, 2012, pp. 34–37).

Internal factors and environmental factors influence character development in each individual for example, (1) internal factors, supporting or inhibiting factors that come from within the individual; (2) external factors, influenced by the surrounding environment. The family environment is the first and foremost educational environment because, in the family, they receive education and guidance for the first time (Ratnawati, 2015).

Based on the preceding description, it can be understood that character is a stable personal attitude resulting from a progressive, consolidation process, integrating statements and actions (Khan, 2010, p. 1; Mulyasa, 2011, p. 3). Indeed, character is believed to be a salient aspect in improving human resources because it helps determine the progress of a nation (Gunawan, 2012, p. 28; Hidayatullah, 2009, p. 9)

### *Manuscript*

One product of a past society that can be used by today's society is manuscripts, which are all relics of past societies written in handwriting and written on paper, fronds, palm leaves, leaves, bark, *daluwang*, bamboo, and so on. This means a manuscript is one legacy in written form that has not been touched by modern equipment such as printing machines, electronic devices, and technology.

Manuscripts can be a source of knowledge for today's society (Jimerson, 2002). After all, they are believed to contain the full content of noble values because they cover all aspects of life such as social, political, religious, cultural, economic, language, literature and so on which are historical and didactic (Roza & Mudasir, 2019). This means the manuscripts contain contents including various fields and diverse. Furthermore, Hermansoemantri (1988, p. 6) divides them into four categories (1) histories; (2) religion; (3) science; and (4) literature.

Therefore, it is important to study manuscripts because they can be a source of knowledge in today's society. Therefore, manuscripts are the most fascinating national documents to study, because they have the advantage of being able to provide broader information than cultural relics in other forms (Mu'jizah, 2017, p. 3).

The current condition of manuscripts has spread throughout the world because more and more manuscripts are found, both from places already well-known for storing manuscripts or from places that have no direct connection with the storage of manuscripts (Ming, 2003, p. 21). There is a view that manuscripts in Malay are among the largest, in addition to those in Balinese and Javanese. This is because the search for Malay manuscripts is still being carried out today in various regions of the archipelago so the number of Malay manuscripts is uncounted (Roza, 2012). In addition, due to the dominance of the Malay race in the archipelago, the manuscripts also used the Arabic-Malay script. Arabic-Malay script is a combination of Arabic script and Malay language employed to write the teachings conveyed by the preacher to his followers (Roza, 2017, p. 179).

Introducing Arabic script to the Malay community underwent a long process because Arabic script is a written language since the Malay community recognised writing and reading, which had not happened during the early days of Islamic Arrival (Roza, 2011, p. 69). For example, the inscriptions on the gravestone in Kedah (*Langgar*) and several other inscriptions in the third and fifth centuries of *Hijri* in Vietnam, Pahang, Bandar Sri Bengawan, and Brunei Darussalam still use Arabic characters and languages (Pudjiastuti, 1997, p. 139).

### **3. Manuscript Description of *Syair Burung***

Several *Syair Burung* manuscripts were found and became collections of the National Library of Indonesia in Jakarta. In addition, also found *Syair Burung* a collection of the Indra Sakti Foundation on Penyengat Island, Riau Islands Province. The author of the *Syair Burung* manuscript was Raja Hasan bin Raja Ali Haji. According to information from various references, both old and new references (Palawa, 2020, p. 60) it is stated that Raja Hasan bin Raja Ali Haji finished writing *Syair Burung* in 1858. The appearance of *Syair Burung*, written by Raja Hasan bin Raja Ali Haji, is predicted to influence the

literary work of *Mantiq at-Tuyur (Musyawarah Burung)* by Fariduddin Attar. His full name is Fariduddin Abu Hamid Muhammad bin Ibrahim, born in Nishapur (1120-1230). While Attar is his nickname for a great Sufi poet, which means, the spreader of fragrance. The *Mantiq at-Tuyur* which was written for three years (1184-1187) is written in an allegorical poetic style that symbolises the life and teachings of the Sufis (Attar, 2001, p. ii).

Therefore, since the 16th century, the works of Persian like *Mantiq at-Tuyur* have influenced the creation of religious poetry by Sufi poets in Malay literary works. For example, *Syair Si Burung Pinggai* by Hamzah Fansuri, a Sufi poet from North Sumatra. Likewise, *Syair Bayan Budiman*, where the verses were created, definitely had a Parsi influence.

This study only focuses on manuscripts that have been studied philologically (Roza, 2001). The following describes a brief description of the *Syair Burung* manuscript.

The manuscript was stored in the National Library of Indonesia in Jakarta with the code W.268. The condition of the manuscript is good and complete. The text is written in black ink and is legible. The font size is not large and not small compared to other manuscripts. The size of the manuscript is 31.5 x 19.5 cm with the manuscript thickness containing 32 pages (271 stanzas). The number of rows is 19 rows and the writing space is 22 x 12.5 cm. The manuscript was written in the Arabic-Malay script (figure 1). The writing method was back and forth according to the sheet of paper. The first line is written on the right side of the paper, and the second line is on the left of the paper. For the third row, return to the right and the fourth row to the left under the second row. In this manuscript, no author identity was found.

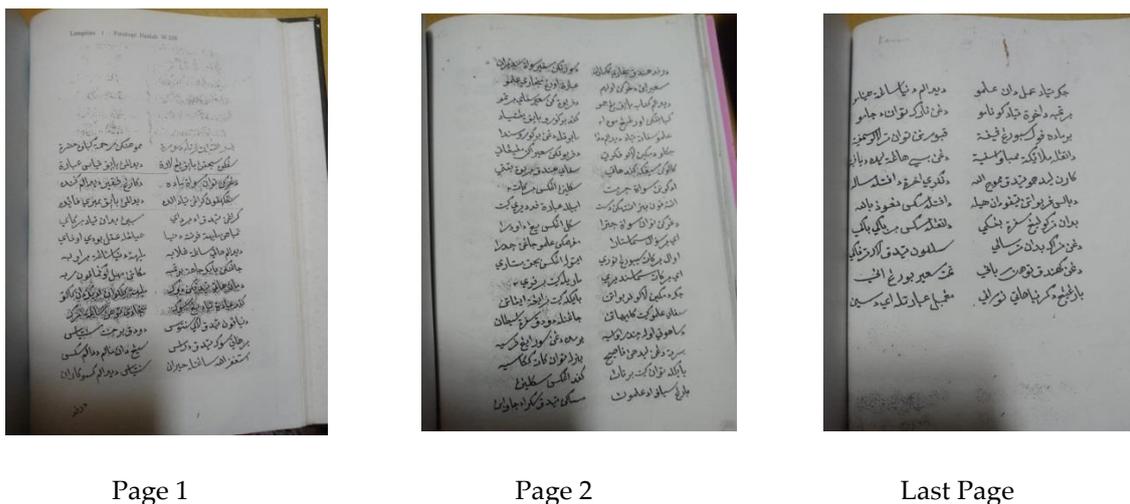


Figure 1 *Syair Burung*

*Synopsis of Syair Burung*

*Syair Burung* tells of a discussion or deliberation held by birds. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the religious knowledge possessed by each and discuss to what extent or what degree the practice of the teachings of each religion in their daily lives. In addition, they also questioned the teachings of Islam, especially those related to daily worship. For example, the notions of religion, faith, Islam, creed, purification, and *istinja*, taking water for prayer or *wudlu*, which requires bathing, *junub*, prayer, and others. The discussion and question and answer were led by Nuri, and at the end of the discussion, they advised each other.

*Content of Syair Burung*

*Syair Burung* is 271 stanzas with 16 episodes of content. The episode implies (1) a short act of a literary work that is an integral part of the main plot, but the boundaries are clear; (2) a part that can stand alone in the sequence of events in a story. Meanwhile, what is related to religious character is

contained in the third episode, namely the deliberation participants to explain the religious knowledge possessed by individuals and the practice of religious teachings in their respective lives. From the discussion, it will be identified the religious character of the discussion participants according to their life background. The third episode of *Syair Burung* was performed by 30 birds with 60 stanzas. The birds are parrots as discussion leaders, birds of paradise, *dewata*, *merpati*, *murai*, *bayan*, *beledu*, *jelatik*, *pipit*, *serindit*, *camar*, *raya*, *kentung*, *tekukur*, *pergam*, *kepodang*, *helang*, *layang-layang*, *merbah*, *paksi*, *ketitir*, *belatuk*, eagle, *pekaka*, *jentayu*, *tiung*, *rawa*, *punai*, *gagak*, and *timbangan*.

### Malay

Malays are people who live in the Malay world with the identity of (1) being Muslim; (2) speaking Malay; (3) having similarities in customs and traditions (Hamidi, 1999, p. 168). In addition, in different contexts, the term Malay generally has three meanings (1) the meaning of the context in Indonesia, namely Malay is one of several tribes or ethnicities such as Javanese, Aceh, Bugis, Makassar, Bali, Mandailing, Batak, Kerinci, Banjar, Lampung, Minangkabau, Madura, Manado, Toraja and so on; (2) the definition of the context in Malaysia where the Malay nationalism movement in the 30s and 40s has separated between these tribes or ethnicities by making them all as a Malay nation or a Malay nation. This is contained in the Malaysian Institution, namely, those who have three main characteristics (a) speak and make Malay the first language; (b) are Muslim; and (c) adhere to the *resam* custom, which is usually practiced by Malays. This second characteristic of the Malay concept allows those who are not originally of Malay descent, such as Arabs, Indians, Chinese, Europeans, and others to become Malay or 'enter Malay' after fulfilling the three characteristics above; (3) the definition of the general context, namely a large national group or race. The term is used in the fields of anthropology and sociolinguistics and by UNESCO to refer to the indigenous people of the Malay Peninsula and Island Clusters, which are now better known as *Alam Melayu* or the Malay World. One element of their commonality is speaking in the language of the parent Austronesian or Malay-Polynesian branch or family of languages (Teh, 2014, p. 7).

According to Wan Hasyim (2014, p. 7), *Alam Melayu* is considered to be the area where human life began at an estimated 15,000 years BC. This is earlier than the establishment of civilisation in the Middle East, while early civilisation in the Chinese continent is said to have grown from the influence of early civilisation growth in the Malay world. The purpose of the initial civilisation was the activities of farming and raising animals. Before that, human life was "primitive" that is, hunting animals and gathering wild plants. Likewise, in the tradition and science of shipping and as sailors, historians have concluded that from the beginning of AD the winged boats they made could travel as far as 80 to 150 km a day depending on wind conditions. They could wreck the oceans of thousands of km in one sail around 3000-5000 years ago. This is conceivably what caused the Polynesian family to become a fraction of the Malay family from an ethnolinguistic aspect. In connection with this study, Malay people are people who live under the leadership of the Riau-Lingga Kingdom led by the sultan as *Yang Dipertuan Besar* (YDB) and accompanied by *Yang Dipertuan Muda* (YDM) from the Bugis tribe.

#### 4. Religious Characters of Malays based on *Syair Burung*

The religious character contained in the manuscript *Syair Burung* is a reflection of the Malay people of their time. The religious character is influenced by endogenous (genetic) and exogenous (environmental) factors experienced by the Malays at that time (Suarto, 2017). It means what forms human religious character is an internal factor, namely a factor that comes from within humans themselves as a skill that a person acquires. Meanwhile, external factors are factors that come from the environment, namely the family or outside the individual. Furthermore, characters cannot be generated instantaneously or quickly but must undergo a long, careful and systematic process. Likewise, the religious character of humans is diverse and can influence people's lives. It integrates and assimilates with various communities they meet, both from the environment they live in and with immigrants from other areas.

Before being touched by Islam, Hindu-Buddhism (Carroll, 2011), which reflected a distinct character of Islam, characterised Malays, especially in the social structure implemented in the caste system. The social system of the Malay community at that time was divided into two groups, namely the kings and the aristocrats as the government and the ordinary people as those who were governed. This situation lasted for approximately 13 centuries in *Alam Melayu* and during that time the Hinduism of India's civilisation colored the social behavior of the Malay community. However, before Hinduism developed in the Malay world, the Malays already believed in animism and dynamism. These two concepts represent the primitive beliefs of the Malays that developed through myths and legends (Roza, 2014).

*Syair Burung* is a symbolic literary work using animals as characters in the story. In the past, declaring an event was done in a disguised way or symbolised by replacing human figures with the names of animals or plants because the author did not dare to write the events that occurred openly (Fang, 1993, p. 11). Therefore, at one time much symbolic poetry was written by Malay authors. This is due to the author's fear and concern about the reactions of various parties, for example, the party who is the object of the essay, the ruler if it contains content portraying the ruler. Thus, as a sense of concern for life in society, including religious life, the author tries to exchange the story actors with animals or plants so that neither party feels disadvantaged. That is the height of the language of society in the past in realising their ideas or main thoughts.

Therefore, at one time, many symbolic poems were written by Malay authors. This is due to the author's fear and concern for the reactions of various parties, for example, the party who is the object of the essay, the authorities if it contains the contents of telling the ruler. Thus, as a sense of concern for life in society, including religious life, the author tries to exchange the actors of the story with animals or plants so that neither party feels disadvantaged. Such was the height of the culture of the ancient people in realising their ideas or main ideas. In addition, because they did not want to cause problems, the character of the community at that time was likened to birds and the name of the poem was named Bird's Poetry. Therefore, *Syair Burung* is a kind of symbolic poetry that compares the actors in the story with the birds that live around the Malay World.

The parrot as the leader of the discussion or question and or deliberation is a bird that is smart and wise compared to other birds. This is written in episode two verses 1 – 2:

- |       |   |  |
|-------|---|--|
| II. 1 | Awal berkata si burung Nuri,<br>itulah unggas bijak bestari,<br>ia berkata sama sendiri,<br>marilah kita berperi-peri.            | Early said the Parrot,<br>that is the wise fowl,<br>he said to himself,<br>let's have fun.         |
| II.2  | Jika demikian laku perbuatan,<br>baiklah kita beringat-ingatan,<br>supaya ilmu kita kelihatan,<br>janganlah duduk seperti syetan. | If so do deeds,<br>let us remember,<br>so that our knowledge is visible<br>don't sit like a devil. |

After careful examination of the content of *Syair Burung*, the religious characters of the Malays contained can be grouped into three characters:

*The group with the character who understand religious teachings and are obedient to practice them*

Those who reflect characters in this group are birds of paradise, *merpati, murai, bayan, beledu, ketitir, jelatik, pipit, serindit, camar, raya, kentung*, and parrots. It can be seen in the following stanza.

- |          |  |   |
|----------|--|---|
| Stanza 1 | Disahuti oleh Cendrawasih,<br>bermadah dengan suara yang bersih,<br>berserta dengan lidahnya fasih,<br>benarlah tuan kata kekasih. | Greeted by Paradise,<br>speak in a clear voice,<br>along with his eloquent tongue,<br>That's right, dear. |
|----------|--|---|

Stanza 2	Baiklah tuan kita bertanya, kepada unggas sekaliannya, barang siapa ada ilmunya, masakan tidak segera dijawabnya.	All right, sir, we ask, to all birds, whoever knows, Really, it cannot be immediately answered.
Stanza 3	Siapa yang tidak menaruh ilmu, baiklah belajar sekalian kamu, janganlah duduk dengan tersemu, di akhirat jemah jadi sesalmu	Who does not have the knowledge, You all should study, Don't sit back, in the afterlife, you will regret.
Stanza 11	Lalu bersyair burung Merpati, ia pun seekor unggas yang sakti, baiklah kita berbuat bakti, serta ilmu kita tuntuti.	Then the merpati sang, he is also a magical bird, well let's do devotion, as well as the science we study.
Stanza 15	Bayan menyahut sambil bersenda, caharilah ilmu sementara muda, apabila ingat di dalam dada, tatkala berkehendak sedialah ada.	Bayan replied while joking, seek knowledge while young, when remembering in the chest, when the will is ready.
Stanza 16	Baiklah berguru sekalian kita, pergi menyembah alim, <i>pandita</i> , apabila boleh bagai dicinta, sampailah maksud yang dipinta.	Let's study, all of us, go worship the pious, the priest, when it can be loved, reach the intended purpose.
Stanza 17	Burung Beledu unggas angkasa, duduk mengaji senantiasa, kepada ilmu terlalu perkasa, sukar dilawan sama sebangsa.	The <i>beledu</i> is a space bird, sitting reciting constantly, to science too powerful, hard to resist the same nation.
Stanza 35	Bersyair pula burung Jelatik, berkata-kata terlalu cantik, sekedarkan ilmu nahu dan mantik, hamba tak gundah barang setitik.	The jelatik bird also sang say beautiful words, about grammar and logic, I'm not upset about anything.

*Groups with the character who understand the teachings of religion but do not practice them*

As for those who have characters in this group, among them are the birds *Paksi*, *Tekukur*, *Pergam*, *Rajawali*, *Kepodang*, *Helang*, and *Layang-layang*. It can be seen in the following verses:

Stanza 28	Burung Pergam pula menyahuti, hamba pun lebih tiada mengerti, dahulunya sudah hamba tuntuti, sepatih tak ingat di dalam hati.	The pergam bird replied, I don't even understand, I used to follow, I don't remember even a word in my heart.
Stanza 32	Si Rajawali menjawab kata, hamba pun gundah di dalam cita, jikalau datang soal pandita, apalah jawab hendak dikata.	The eagle replied, I am upset in my dreams, when it comes to priests, whatever the answer is to say.
Stanza 33	Hamba mengaji kepada ulama,	I study to the scholars,

	paham pun banyak juga diterima, berkatnya sudah ditinggalkan lama, sekarang tak dapat lagi dijelma.	understanding is also widely accepted, His blessings have long been abandoned, now it can no longer be incarnated.
Stanza 37	Burung Kepodang menyahut madah, adinda hai jangan tuan permudah, bersoalkan ilmu yang telah sudah, paham di hati hilang di lidah.	<i>Kepodang</i> birds respond to prayer, sister, don't make it easy, sir, questioning the science that has been, understanding in the heart is lost in the tongue.
Stanza 38	Hamba pun banyak mengadap guru, takut bercakap haru biru, jikalau datang soal bertalu, barangkali tunduk tergaru-garu	I study with many teachers, do not dare to talk much if there is a difficult question, perhaps I will bow in confusion.
Stanza 39	Layang-layang burung dalam guha, ia berkata sambil tertawa, hambapun dapat sepatah dua, tiada cakap menahani dakwa.	<i>Layang-layang</i> bird in a cave, he said with a laugh, I can say a word or two, there are no words to restrain the indictment.
Stanza 40	Segera dia menyahut merdu suara, benarlah tuan madah saudara, rasanya paham sudahlah sahaya, tatkala ditanya hilang kira-kira.	Immediately he answered in a melodious voice, when asked missing approximately. It's true, sir, I think I understand, when I was asked, I lost consideration
Stanza 41	Tambahan kita tidak peduli, Ilmu di dada hilang sekali, mabuklah dengan berjual beli, naik ke surau jadi pamali.	Indeed, if we don't care, The knowledge in the heart is completely lost, crazy on trading, go to the mosque becomes a taboo.

*Groups with the character who do not understand the teachings of religion and do not practice them.*

As for those who have characters in this group, among them are the birds: *Dewata, Jentayu, Tiung, Rawa, Belatuk, Punai, Gagak, Simbangan, Merbah* and *Pekaka*. The following can be heard among his poems revealed in the following verses.

Stanza 6	Kita nin lalai mencari makan, gundah dengan beras dan ikan, sebab diharu olehnya syetan, lupalah handai kita kan Tuhan.	We are careless looking for food, upset with rice and fish, because he was moved by the devil, Forget about our God.
Stanza 7	Sepatah ilmu tidak diamalkan, gilalah dengan bersuka-sukaan, entah Islam entah pun bukan, murka Tuhan tidak disadarkan.	A word of knowledge is not practiced, go crazy with rejoicing, either Islam or not, the wrath of God is not realized.
Stanza 8	Kita sekalian sangatlah lalai, mabuklah dengan nasi dan gulai, ilmu dan amal di halai balai, di dalam neraka badan tersalai.	We are all very careless, get drunk on rice and curry, knowledge and deeds are in the hall, in the hell, the body is smoked.
Stanza 21	Tiung bermadah sambil melompat,	<i>Tiung</i> said while jumping,

	hamba pun salah juga pendapat, hendak mengaji tiadalah sempat, akhirat lepas dunia tak dapat.	I also have the wrong opinion, I want to recite, there is no time, The hereafter is lost, the word cannot be reached.
Stanza 29	Bermadah Gagak mengiraikan bulu, hamba nin tuan sangatlah malu, tiada berguru dari dahulu, tiada mengenal sunah dan fardu.	<i>Gagak</i> said while counting the feathers, As your servant is very ashamed, never study since along time, Never know sunnah and duty.
Stanza 42	Burung Merbah menyahut kata, hambapun gundah di dalam cita, ilmu sepatah tiada terpinta, mabuklah dengan bersuka cita.	The <i>merbah</i> bird answered, even I am upset in my dreams, A word of knowledge is not required, Get drunk with rejoicing.
Stanza 43	Hamba pun juga salah memilih, pekerjaan dunia juga dikasih, negeri akhirat tiada ditoleh, ilmu tak dapat harta tak boleh.	The servant also made the wrong choice, worldly jobs are also given, the Hereafter is unsearchable, knowledge can't get, the property can't.
Stanza 49	Disahut oleh burung Pekaka, hamba inipun tersalah sangka, dikatakan dunia negeri yang baka, lalailah dengan bersuka-suka.	Answered by a pekaka bird, This servant also mistakenly thought, it is said that the world is a eternal country, Negligent with delighting
Stanza 50	Dari petang menantikan pagi, hendak mengaji tiada pergi, hingga sampai tanggal gigi, sesalpun tidak berguna lagi.	From evening to morning, want to study, but never go, until toothless, regret is no longer useful.
Stanza 53	Nuri berkata berbaik-baik, Inilah iktikad orang yang pasik dunia juga yang diselidik, kepada akhirat tiadalah asyik.	The parrot said kindly, This is the will of the wicked the world is also being investigated, to the hereafter is not fun.
Stanza 54	Ayuhai segala tolan saudara, iktikadmu jangan diberi cedera, disini hendak kita bicara, amalkan ilmu supaya mesra.	oh, all my brothers, good intentions should not be disrespected, here we want to talk, practice knowledge as best as possible

This grouping is a form or model of the religious character of the Malay community at that time, where each group is symbolised by birds that have questions and answers accompanied by an acknowledgment from each participant. These self-acknowledgments are revealed in the verses of the poetry so that the religious character of the Malay community at that time is revealed through the actors who are representatives of the birds. To make it easier to understand, it is displayed in the table 1.

Table 1 Grouping of Religious Characters of Malays

Character	Birds	Stanza
Understand religious teachings and be obedient to practice them	<i>Cendrawasih</i>	1-2-3
	Pigeon	11-12
	Magpie	14
	Parrot	15-16
	<i>Beledu</i>	17
	<i>Ketitir</i>	19-20
	<i>Jelatik</i>	35-36
	<i>Pipit</i>	44-45
	<i>Serindit</i>	46-47
	Gull	48
	<i>Raya</i>	51
	<i>Kentung</i>	52
	<i>Nuri</i>	53-54-55-56-57-58-59-60
	Total 13	Total 28
Understand religious teachings but do not practice them	<i>Dewata</i>	4-5-6-7-8
	<i>Paksi</i>	13
	<i>Tekukur</i>	18
	<i>Pergam</i>	28
	Eagle	32-33
	<i>Kepodang</i>	37-38
	<i>Helang</i>	30-31
	<i>Layang-layang</i>	39-40-41
	Total 8	Total 17
Do not understand religious teachings and do not practice them	<i>Jentayu</i>	9-10
	<i>Tiung</i>	21-22-23
	Swamp	24-25
	Maggot	26
	<i>Punai</i>	27
	Crow	29
	<i>Simbangan</i>	34
	<i>Merbah</i>	42-43
	<i>Pekaka</i>	49-50
	Total 9	Total 15
	Total of Birds: 30	Total of Stanza: 60

Source: Processed data

## 5. Contextual Analysis of *Syair Burung*

*Syair Burung* as a literary work has an impact on society and has functions including (1) it functions to encourage humans to create a longing for the essence of eternal life; (2) is a medium for human development to improve personality or good character; (3) to encourage social progress (Syarif, 1996, pp. 127–128). Thus, it can be concluded that literary works function to excite human life or society, not to create false pleasures. Pleasure is only a result, not the ultimate goal.

With the entry of Islam into Indonesian territory, a new era in old Indonesian literature began. Old Indonesian literature, which was previously dominated by Hindu literature, began to shift to literature originating from Islamic countries. Malay literature in writing began at this time. The stories at that time were written using Arabic-Malay script (Roza, 2017, p. 179). Although Islam has grown rapidly in this archipelago since the 13th century, the literature of Islamic influence that has been written to today's society is estimated at the beginning of the 17th century (Djamaris, 1990, p. 18). Islamic influence

literature has a specific purpose, among others, to tell the majesty of Islam and its teachings, the prophets, and their heroes, so that readers are interested in Islam and strengthen their faith (Yusuf, 1984, p. 1).

Along with time at the stage of development and development of Islamic symbols, Islamic teachings are conveyed in various ways, one of which is through books written by religious figures. According to Braginsky (1991, p. 1), the books were written by the Sufis as appreciation, creativity, and use of inspiration revealed by Allah SWT to the conscience. Furthermore, Braginsky also said that in literary works of Islamic influence, in addition to its beautiful or aesthetic function, its didactic function is also very prominent.

Hermansoemantri (1988, p. 117) also reveals that literature is something that is active and functions in society, both for educational purposes, ceremonies, and for entertainment purposes. In other words, a literary work that is read by the reader is not only to enjoy its beauty but also to take lessons or benefits from it. In addition, literary works must be utile and dulce, which is useful and enjoyable, which contains valuable lessons, and gives pleasure through the depth of the language content (Pradotokusumo, 1986, p. 5). According to Sudjiman (1995, p. 15), the nature of dulce in a literary work can be manifested in the form of the sweetness of sound, regularity of rhythm, style of language, and figure of speech, as well as an attractive presentation that creates a sense of beauty. While the utilitarian nature is in the form of the teaching contained in it. Both of these characteristics are expected to exist in a literary work. The teaching contained in a literary work is more easily accepted if it is presented in an attractive way

Furthermore, according to Hashim (1984, p. 1) to find out whether a literary work is valuable or not, it is necessary to do literary research. The results of the research must provide confidence that the literary work under study contains benefits so that people are moved to read and enjoy it. Therefore, a researcher is tasked with offering and as much as possible presenting to the public things that can be enjoyed and utilized from a work.

As a type of literature, poetry does not only serve as solace or entertainment to the public. In addition, poetry also functions as a medium of education and teaching and can be used for religious symbols, and can also function to satirize events that occur in society. Likewise, with *Syair Burung*, the story written in the manuscript as a literary work is very full of functions because the contents of the story of *Syair Burung* talk about the problems of human life.

The function of the story of the *Syair Burung* that can be utilised and enjoyed by the community is as follows.

1. The story of *Syair Burung* is used as solace or entertainment because the beauty of the language is in the choice of words, language style, and regularity of the final rhyme and is presented with an attractive rhythm because the poem is sung to the accompaniment of traditional musical instruments. Even now the musical accompaniment of the poem has been modified by using modern musical instruments such as keyboards and others. This activity can be seen at weddings, circumcisions, and the commemoration of Islamic holidays and national holidays. Thus, poetry becomes part of the life activities of the Malay community, so it functions as entertainment. This fact is following Kayam's (1981, p. 14) expression that one of the functions of old literature is a means of entertainment to forget the burdens of everyday life that befall people. Note the quote below.

Stanza 8.22	Lihatlah akal burung Belatuk, Pura-pura mata mengantuk, Tiada bunyi bersin dan batuk, Sungguhpun ia duduk tercatuk,	Look at the Belatuk mind, Pretend sleepy eyes, No sneezing and coughing sounds, Even though he sits bent.
Stanza 8.20	Belatuk mendengar Rawa berkata, Seperti tidak didengar nyata, Berdiam diri tiada ber warta, Terkelip-kelip kelopak mata.	<i>Belatuk</i> heard Rawa say, As if not heard real, Silence without news, Eyes twinkling.

The quote above shows that the similarity of the sound at the end of each line, accompanied by the choice of words and style of language, makes poetic language beautiful to hear. In other parts, entertaining verses are also found, namely by the appearance of funny scenes. Note the quote below.

2. The story of *Syair Burung* can be used as an educational and teaching tool. Sudjiman (1995, p. 15) calls it a didactic-instructive story that contains teaching and moral guidance. The same thing was also expressed by Pradotokusumo (1986, p. 96), who said that didactic texts are texts that contain teachings on morals and religion. In the story of *Syair Burung* it is found, namely the Islamic teachings about worship (*fiqh*) starting from the first episode to the last episode. Note the quote below.

Stanza 3.12	Ayuhai segala ibu dan bapa, Kita nin tuan sangatlah alpa, Kepada ibadah sangatlah lupa, Dunia nin tidak lagi berapa.	Come on all moms and dads, We, sir, are so negligent, To worship is very forgetful, The world is no longer how much.
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Stanza 14.1	Nuri bertanya sambil bersenda, Kepada Camar ia bersabda, Rukun sembahyang berapakah adinda Berilah tahu kepada kakanda.	<i>Nuri</i> asked while having fun, To <i>Camar</i> he said, What are the pillars of prayer, sister? Tell your sister.
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Stanza 11.8	Camar menjawab dengan ikhlas, Rukun sembahyang itu tiga belas, Hendaklah amalkan jangan malas, Di akhirat juga beroleh balas.	Camar answered sincerely, The thirteen pillars of prayer, Let's practice, don't be lazy, In the afterlife, you will be rewarded.
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3. The story of the *Syair Burung* can be used as a means of religious symbols because the entire contents of the *Syair Burung* story contain Islamic teachings that must be known and practiced by the people. As Yusuf (1984, p. 1) said that the author's goal in writing literary works that tell the teachings of Islam, as well as the prophets and their heroes is to make the readers interested in Islam and strengthen their faith because if something is conveyed in an interesting and alluring, people will surely accept it more easily. Likewise, the reading of *Syair Burung* is part of community activities and has become a tradition so that directly the story of this *Syair Burung* can be heard and known to the public and practice the contents of the story in life.
4. The story of *Syair Burung* also serves as a symbol or metaphor for events that occur in the community. Hooykas (1951, pp. 75–77) says that in the past in the Malay lands there was a way to express events that occurred in a metaphor, namely replacing human characters with animals or plants, because the author did not dare to write down events that occurred in the community openly, for fear of being hit by the law. The contents of the story sometimes involve matters of politics, state finances, high-class romance, the failure of a king's marriage or dignity as well as religious issues. In the *Syair Burung* manuscript, the content of the story presents Islamic religious teachings related to worship. Hooykas (1951, p. 77) adds that the birds who are the actors in the *Syair Burung* act and behave like humans in expressing their opinions and they jointly question the teachings of Islam. Apparently, at that time people's belief in religion began to waver and many no longer cared about their worship, so it was necessary to give warnings so that they would return to religious teachings. Note the quote below.

Stanza 1.4	Di dalam hati sangat gelabah, Melihat dunia sangat berubah, Jangankan baik jahat bertambah, Makanan mahal ugama pun berubah.	In the heart is very excited, Seeing the world change so much, Let alone the good and the evil increase, Even expensive religious foods have changed.
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Stanza 1.7	<p>Astaghfirullah sangatlah heran,          Senantiasa di dalam kesukaran,          Daripada hendak mencari          kegemaran,          Disyuratkan syair suatu sindiran.</p>	<p>Astaghfirullah very surprised,          Always in trouble,          Instead of looking for a favorite.          Suggested a satire.</p>
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## 6. Conclusion

*Syair Burung* is a literary work written in the 19th century with a symbolic flow using animals as story characters. This is because the author did not dare to write down the events that occurred openly. After all, the Malay community at that time was in a state of colonization. Therefore, to state an event is done in a disguised way, namely replacing the characters in the story with the names of animals or plants. *Syair Burung* was written by the author because he saw the religious situation of the people in his country which had changed from its corridor. To write about this situation, the author writes poetry by characterizing various types of birds as characters in the story. Thus, three Malay religious characters are found in *Syair Burung*, namely (1) a group who understands religious teachings and obeys them; (2) groups who understand religious teachings but do not practice them, and (3) groups who do not understand religious teachings and do not practice them.

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