

Poetic Aesthetics and Qur’anic Numerology in Malay ‘Syair Nasihat’: A Semiotic Study of Rhyme, Meaning, and Spirituality

Asep Yudha Wirajaya

Culture Studies Program, Faculty of Humanities, Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia

Email: asepyudha@staff.uns.ac.id

Bani Sudardi

Culture Studies Program, Faculty of Humanities, Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia

Email: banisudardi_fssr@staff.uns.ac.id

Istadiyantha

Culture Studies Program, Faculty of Humanities, Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia

Email: istadiyantha@staff.uns.ac.id

Warto

Culture Studies Program, Faculty of Humanities, Sebelas Maret University, Indonesia

Email: warto2013@staff.uns.ac.id

Abstract

This study examines the intersection of poetic aesthetics and Qur’anic numerology in the Malay *Syair Nasihat* through a semiotic framework. Moving beyond conventional structural and hermeneutic approaches, this research applies Riffaterre’s semiotics to uncover the relationship between rhyme patterns, sound structures, and layers of meaning embedded in the text. The primary objective is to demonstrate how formal poetic elements—particularly rhyme, assonance,

and alliteration—function not merely as aesthetic devices but as signifying systems that encode spiritual and symbolic meanings. Drawing on philological methods, this study analyzes selected manuscripts of *Syair Nasihat* to establish a reliable textual basis, followed by a semiotic interpretation of its poetic structure. The findings reveal that recurring sound patterns, especially the dominant rhyme scheme, are systematically constructed and closely intertwined with the thematic expression of Sufi teachings. More importantly, the study identifies the presence of Qur’anic numerological patterns, particularly the symbolic recurrence of specific numbers, which reflect deeper metaphysical concepts related to divine unity, faith, and spiritual awareness. These numerological elements are not incidental but operate as part of a broader semiotic system that connects textual form, religious symbolism, and spiritual meaning. In this context, poetic aesthetics serve as a medium for conveying ethical and transcendental messages, guiding readers toward a deeper understanding of the relationship between language, faith, and inner experience. This study contributes to the field of Malay literary studies by offering a novel interdisciplinary perspective that integrates semiotics, numerology, and Sufi aesthetics. It also highlights the relevance of *Syair Nasihat* as a meaningful resource for contemporary literary learning, particularly in addressing the spiritual dimension often overlooked in modern education.

Keywords: Syair Nasihat, Malay literature, semiotics, Qur’anic numerology, and literary pedagogy

Introduction

Malay classical literature, particularly *syair*, represents a rich intellectual and aesthetic tradition in which poetic form and spiritual meaning are closely intertwined [1]–[3]. As a poetic genre characterized by patterned language, rhyme, and rhythmic structures, *syair* functions not only as a medium of artistic expression but also as a vehicle for ethical and religious teachings. Among its variants, *Syair Nasihat* (hereafter *SN*) stands out as a didactic form that conveys moral guidance and Sufi values through carefully constructed sound patterns and symbolic language. Despite the growing body of scholarship on Malay poetry, previous studies have largely emphasized structural, stylistic, intertextual, and hermeneutic approaches [4]–[8]. However,

limited attention has been paid to the semiotic function of poetic sound patterns—particularly rhyme, assonance, and alliteration—as systems of signification that generate deeper layers of meaning. In particular, the relationship between poetic form and Qur’anic numerology remains underexplored, even though numerical symbolism plays an important role in Islamic intellectual traditions [9].

Addressing this gap, the present study applies a semiotic framework based on Riffaterre's theory (1978), to examine how sound structures in SN function as signifying mechanisms. Rather than viewing rhyme and sound repetition merely as aesthetic ornamentation, this study argues that they operate as structured semiotic codes that encode spiritual and symbolic meanings.

Furthermore, this research investigates how these poetic elements intersect with Qur’anic numerological patterns, revealing metaphysical concepts related to divine unity, faith, and spiritual awareness.

Methodologically, this study integrates philological approaches [11]–[13] to establish a reliable textual foundation, combined with semiotic analysis to interpret both formal and semantic structures. Through this interdisciplinary approach, SN is repositioned not merely as a literary artifact, but as a complex system of meaning that connects language, spirituality, and cultural knowledge.

In addition, as one of the classical literary genres widely found across the Indonesian archipelago, *syair* reflects the intellectual sensitivity of poets as cultural agents who respond to social and spiritual conditions through artistic expression (Salleh, 1977). The structured use of rhyme, syntactic parallelism, and sound orchestration demonstrates that poetic composition is not arbitrary, but carefully designed to produce both aesthetic and cognitive effects (Hudak, 2013: 135; Dita, 2010; Lahman, 2018; Meeks, 2017; Syafrial, 2018). This raises critical questions regarding the underlying logic of sound repetition in poetry: why do certain phonetic patterns recur, and how do they contribute to meaning-making processes?

Furthermore, although earlier classifications of Malay poetry have attempted to map its generic forms (Braginsky, 1998: 236; Jusuf, et al, 1978: 7; Fang, 1982: 293; Sutaarga, 1972; Hussein,

1974) SN presents a unique case that challenges rigid categorization. While formally belonging to the poetic genre, its content is deeply infused with Sufi teachings, positioning it at the intersection of literary, religious, and philosophical discourse. This duality makes SN a particularly relevant object of study for exploring how poetic structures function as carriers of spiritual knowledge.

By situating SN within a semiotic and numerological framework, this study not only contributes to the advancement of Malay literary studies but also offers an interdisciplinary perspective that bridges literature, religion, and cultural studies. Moreover, it highlights the contemporary relevance of SN, particularly in reintroducing the spiritual dimension into literary learning, which is often overlooked in modern educational contexts.

Research method

This study employs a qualitative research design with an interpretive orientation to examine the relationship between poetic aesthetics and Qur'anic numerology in *Syair Nasihat* (SN) [9], [14]. Given that the primary data consist of classical manuscripts, a philological approach is applied to establish a reliable and critically verified text as the foundation for further analysis (Djamaris, 2002; Fathurahman, 2015; Ikram, 2019). This approach ensures that the textual data used in the study are both accurate and academically accountable.

The data sources comprise three SN manuscripts. Two manuscripts are preserved at the National Library of Indonesia (PNRI), Jakarta (ML. 759A and ML. 759B, from W. 232), while one manuscript is housed at the Samparaja Museum, Bima (A.036) [15]–[20]. Considering the plurality of the manuscripts, this study employs the base-text method, selecting the most complete and legible manuscript as the primary reference, while other manuscripts are used for comparison to identify textual variations. The editing process is supported by a critical apparatus to document variants and justify editorial decisions [21]–[23].

Following the establishment of the text, the analysis proceeds using a semiotic framework based on Riffaterre's theory (1978). This approach is used to examine how poetic

elements—particularly rhyme, assonance, and alliteration—function as signifying systems that generate layers of meaning beyond the literal level. In addition, this study incorporates an interpretive analysis of Qur’anic numerology [9] to explore the symbolic significance of recurring numerical patterns and their relation to spiritual concepts such as divine unity, faith, and metaphysical order.

The analytical procedures are conducted through several stages: (1) manuscript inventory and catalog tracing; (2) codicological and textual description; (3) textual comparison and establishment of the base text; (4) critical editing with apparatus; (5) identification and analysis of poetic sound patterns; (6) semiotic interpretation of the relationship between sound structures and meaning; and (7) examination of Qur’anic numerological patterns and their symbolic implications.

Through this integrated methodology, the study aims to reveal how poetic form, semiotic structures, and numerological symbolism interact to construct a unified system of aesthetic and spiritual meaning in *Syair Nasihat*.

Results

Conventionally, the verse consists of 4 lines; each row consists of 2 periods. The periodus, which is interwoven from the first verse to the last verse of the verse, forms the periodicity. Periodicity is a means of building poetry so that it becomes beautiful. This formal form is a fixed bond pattern that repeats itself from the initial stanza to the last stanza, that is, each line consists of 2 periods, each period consists of 2 words. So, in the corresponding verse is periodicity and also the number of lines in each repeated stanza: 4 - 4. As for the verse correspondence in the form of linking, each stanza consists of 4 lines, and each line consists of 2 syntactic units (groups of words or *gatra*), consisting of the first verse to the last verse. Correspondence from the beginning of the stanza, the first line to the end of the stanza, the last line, the order is similar.

Correspondence and periodicity are the formal forms of poetry. In fact, there are still poetry of Pujangga Baru which is tied to correspondence and periodicity. In general, new (modern) poetry

distorts the meaning of poetry according to the old view. New poetry is no longer bound by formal forms, correspondence and periodicity. Therefore, new (modern) poetry is called free poetry or free poetry. Free poetry is actually bound by its own nature.

In general, each periodus consists of 2 words. Furthermore, discussing the formal structure of SN, first of all attention is directed to the sound layer and the layer of meaning because these two elements are the most important means of understanding poetry. This is due to the lyrical nature of poetry. Therefore, the sound unit and the meaning unit are the main means of expression. The aesthetic units of sound are rhyme, figurative sound, and orchestration. In poetry, the units of sound intertwine to obtain intensive expression. Even the aesthetic units of sound are closely interwoven with the aesthetic units of meaning layers to obtain the maximum artistic value.

Physical Beauty

To be able to fulfill the sound equation at the end of the array, the author makes various efforts as seen in the following quote.

*hendaklah engkau ingatkan diri
nafi dan isbat hendak kaucari
jauh sekali pun hendak dilayani
itulah tandah orang yang ari* (SN, h. 37)
*remind yourself
nafi and isbat you want to find
far away to be served
that is the sign of someone who is wise* (SN, p. 37)

The *ari* word in the above quote should be a wise word. This is done by the author solely so that the final sound in the verse matches the previous lines so that the end of the same verse is obtained, namely a-a-a-a. In addition, the author also uses the equivalent words "salat" and "prayer" as shown in the following quote.

*ingat-ingat hai segala yang berhati
jangan sekali-kali tanggalkan salati*

jangan kautaksirkan berbuat bakti
hidupmu itu akhirnya mati// (SN, h. 24 – 25)
Remember everyone who is hearted
do not ever leave the salati
do not expect to do service
your life finally dies // (SN, p. 24 - 25)

The creativity of the authors can also be seen, by utilizing certain regional language vocabularies and dialects, such as Javanese and Malay dialects. Even the author also uses some foreign language borrowed vocabulary. The citation is as follows.

nyawah keluar terlalu sakit
itulah jalan yang amat sulit
baiklah baguru barang sedikit
supaya luas kubur yang sempit (SN, h. 21)
his soul came out too sick
it is a very difficult path
okay get a little stuff
so that the area of the grave is narrow (SN, p. 21)
ajaib sekali orang yang sugi
membuat rumah besar dan tinggi
mempunyai perhiasan terbagi-bagi
tiada kan sendiri badannya rugi (SN, h. 27)
miraculously a person who sugi
make the house big and tall
have jewelery fragmented
the body loses itself (SN, p. 27)
hendaklah anakku sebanyak pikir
mencari ilmu jangan kautaksir//
jangan ingat menjadi opsir
baiklah engkau menjadi fakir (SN, h. 9 – 10)

let my child think a lot
looking for knowledge do not estimate //
don't remember being an officer
ok you become indigent
hendaklah orang yang dijadikan kapitan
mengembangkan payung di tangannya rotan
jikalau kurang-kurang ingatan
kelak menjadi tentaranya setan (SN, h. 9 – 10)
let the captain
develop a rattan umbrella in her hand
if you lack memory
later became Satan's army (SN, p. 9 - 10)

It can be seen that the author's efforts to present the “physical” beauty are reflected in the final sound in each line. By displaying this "physical" beauty, it is hoped that it can arouse the interest of listeners or readers to appreciate and even practice the content contained in the lyrics.

So, the beauty that is displayed in the form of poetry and the utilization of language, actually directs the listener or reader to be able to grasp the 'Divine Beauty' which can be felt by the five senses and recognized by the soul or heart (Braginsky, 1993: 28). Thus, the intention of presenting beauty in literary works is to instill harmony in a heart that is overly strong and overwhelmed by negative feelings, while entertaining.

Before discussing further, matters related to the function of beauty, especially those presenting the phenomenon of 'Divine Beauty', it is necessary for the author to present the concept of beauty from the point of view of Sufism. Sufism can be interpreted as an effort to find a way to obtain spiritual love and perfection. Initially, Sufis admire the outward views that can be felt and felt with the senses, but over time the satisfaction of feeling that which is born gradually subsides because they fully realize that this world with all its beauty is transitory. Then they turn to the spiritual world, a world that is more perfect and "eternal" combined with the meaning of love and the perfection of God, and finally union with God. So, beauty (*Jamil*) is perfection (*Kamâl*), and perfection (*Kamâl*) is justice (*Jallâl*). This can be seen through the following quotations.

bismillah itu suatu firman
fardunya itu kepadanya iman
dihubungi pula dengan rahman
hasillah maksud pada yang beriman
bismillah is a word
his obligation is to him faith
also contacted with rahman
the result means to the believer
alhamdulillah puja Yang Esa
kepada Allah Taala Tuhan yang kuasa
jikalau kurang kita periksa
mengenal ketuhanan terlalu susah
Alhamdulillah, praise the One
to Allah Almighty God Almighty
if less we check
recognizing divinity is too difficult
selawat akan Nabi Muhammad
ia-lah penghulu sekalian umat
ia-lah kelak memohonkan syafaat
kepada Allah Taala meminta rahmat
Blessings to the Prophet Muhammad
he is the chief of all the people
he will ask for intercession later
to Allah Almighty ask for mercy
kemudian daripada itu amabakdu
fakir mengarang suatu mada
hai anakku orang muda indah-inda
moga-moga menurut seperti sabda (SN, h. 1 – 4)
then from that amabakdu
the poor compose a mada

Hi my beautiful young man

hopefully according to the word (SN, pp. 1 - 4)

Based on the above quotation, it can be seen that after the author has done a long "literary prayer" (to borrow Braginsky's term), then the author writes his work which consists of several beautiful stories to make the listener happy and aware of his mistakes.

"Literary prayer" consists of several expressions, first: basmalah, which means that the author makes a request to the Creator in advance, by chanting the Name of Allah, which focuses on the immanent aspect of the Divine Substance, which contains all creation in a potential form that is still intact and not yet divided. It is this name which gives form to all beings. Then, the author turns to the Name Rahman, which for the first time manifests beings in their respective forms, and finally to Name Rahim, which embodies all things that are good and lovely, as well as beautiful and 'perfect' literary works. The second expression: hamdalah, means praise to God who has given grace (creative energy) to the author, so that he can produce a 'perfect' creation (work). The third phrase, selawat, means prayer to the Prophet Muhammad.

In other words, "literary prayer" is intended so that the entire literary creation process can be successful. In order to be endowed with divine creative energy, namely inspiration (receptive stage), and so that the inspiration that has been received is properly recorded in a perfect text (agentive stage). It is these harmonies that form a kind of "channel" that connects the author, God (the creative exertion) and the reader (the perceiver). Creative energy "spilled" through literary works is expected to be able to influence the reader's awareness to always draw closer to Allah Almighty.

Inner Beauty

The inner beauty (structure) of SN can be seen through the choice of words and the composition of the rhymes presented in the following quote.

bismillah itu suatu firman

fardunya itu kepadanya iman

dihubungi pula dengan rahman
 hasillah maksud pada yang beriman (SN, h. 1)
bismillah is a word
fardunya it to him faith
also contacted by rahman
results in the believers (SN, p. 1)

Based on the quotation, it is known that at the end of the array it has the same ending syllable, namely "fir-man", "i-man", "rah-man", and "ber-i-man". So, the final rhyme pattern of the first verse is a-a-a-a. Thus, in speech lyrics the sound layer must be aimed at sounds or sound patterns that are "special" or special in nature, that is, those used to get poetic effects or artistic value (Pradopo, 1997: 16). For example, in the first stanza of the first line there is an assonance of i, a, and u, with a balanced composition, that is, each repeats 3 times.

In addition, the Arabic letters in the basmalah pronunciation are repeated 3 times, namely the letters alif (ا) and mim (م). The letter alif (ا) is the first letter in the pronunciation of Allah and the letter mim (م) is the first letter in Muhammad's pronunciation. The value of the letter alif (ا) is 1 and the number value of the letter mim (م) is 40. If the value of the number is multiplied by the number of occurrences (occurrences) in the basmalah pronunciation, you will get: for the letter alif (ا), which is $1 \times 3 = 3$, and for the letter mim (م), which is $40 \times 3 = 120 = (1 + 2 + 0) = 3$.

So, it can be understood that the repetition of the number 3 that occurs in the verse is not just present, without a specific purpose and purpose. From a mathematical perspective, it is known that the number 3 is a prime number. One of the numbers included in prime numbers, which is considered mysterious or unique is the number 19 (Mufti, 2004). The relationship between the number 3 and the number 19 can be seen through the word "*basmalah*" which is contained at the beginning of the first stanza. The reading of 'basmalah' is the opening statement of the letters in the Koran, namely "*bismi'l-Lāhi ar-rahmāni ar-rahīmi*" (which means: "In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, Most Merciful"). In fact, the 'basmalah' (in Arabic) consists of 19 letters (19 x 1). Based on this description, it is known that there is a relationship between numbers 3, 19, and

the basmalah reading. In addition, in these lines it is also emphasized that basmalah is a part of God's word (an-Naml [27]: 30).

From this context, it can actually answer the phenomenon of the absence of bismillah recitation in the opening section of the QS. at-Taubah [9] and the appearance of the pronunciation bismillah in QS. an-Naml [27]: 30. From the numerological perspective of the Koran (Soemabrata, 2006), this further confirms that there is a relationship between numbers 3, 9, and 27. Q.S. an-Naml [27], is indeed placed as the third 9, namely 9, 18, and 27 or $9 \times 3 = 27$. In addition, if the two compositions are added, the result is $2 + 7 = 9$. The number 9 also the third iteration, which is 3, 6, and 9 or $3 \times 3 = 9$.

As for the number 30, if it is formed in a single number (one digit), it will be obtained, namely $3 + 0 = 3$. In addition, the number 30 can be understood when it is associated with the numerology of the letter lam (ل), which has the same numerical value, which means representing Mulk or kingdom.

In connection with the meaning of the word *mālik al-mulk*, Ibn Faris argues that the name shows that Allah swt is the Almighty and Authoritative Substance in everything (Subhan, 2008: 247). From the word *mulk* (kingdom or sovereignty) comes the word *milk*, which means ownership. From this series of letters *m – l – k*, various other forms of derivation can be found, such as: (a) *al-mulk*, which means kingdom; (b) *al-milk*, which means property owned; (c) *al-malik*, which means a ruling king who has authority; (d) *al-mālik*, which means the holder of authority over something or king; (e) *al-malīk*, which means a very powerful king; and (f) *al-malakūt*, which means the place of angels in the sky or the invisible divine kingdom. *Al-malakūt* is the opposite of *al-mulk*, which means earthly or visible kingdom.

Based on this description, it can be understood that although the word *al-mulk* has many forms of derivation, basically it does not leave the original meaning contained therein, namely authority and power. Here, it is clear that Allah is the Almighty King as well as the Owner of bismillah. In the context of Q.S. an-Naml [27]: 30, the prophet Solomon (as) used the power or strength of the bismillah to remind the queen of Balqis of the power of Allah swt.

As for the relationship between Q.S. at-Taubah [9] and Q.S. an-Naml [27]: 30 can be seen through the word "Taubah" which is the title of the letter at-Taubah, which has the same meaning as the word repentance or repentance. Repentance has the meaning of "change" because basically a person who repents is a person who consciously wants to change a certain condition that was previously considered bad or bad, to a better condition.

This shows that the prophet Solomon (as) as the messenger of Allah wanted the queen of Balqis to make changes, both for himself and for his people, from sun worshipers to people who believed in Allah swt. In other words, changing the condition of the queen of Balqis and her people from a state of darkness (disbelief) to a path of light (faith) to the Divine light of Rabbi as the Creator. So, the possibility of not having the word bismillah as the boundary between the Q.S. al-Anfāl [8] and Q.S. at-Taubah [9] is to emphasize the existence of a very close relationship between the word "taubah" and what the prophet Sulayman (as) did to the queen of Balqis, namely inviting her to change her attitude and stance into a human who believes only in Allah SWT.

In addition, the word bismillah in the Koran will still be 114 letters or a number of letters and a number of asbābun nuzul, namely bismillah which was first found before Q.S. al-Fātihah [1], 112 pieces are between surahs and letters, except among Q.S. al-Anfāl [8] and Q.S. at-Taubah [9], and another one in part of the verse Q.S. an-Naml [27]: 30, which is actually from there the word bismillah begins. By maintaining the number of bismillah recitations of 114 in the Qur'an, this also strengthens the message from bismillah about the value of faith and unity in Allah the Creator, as previously described.

Bismillah has a numeric value of 57, which comes from the sum of the letter number and verse number Q.S. an-Naml [27]: 30, which is $27 + 30 = 57$. This shows half of the number of letters in the Koran. Meanwhile, if the value of the letter and verse numbers is multiplied, the number value will be $27 \times 30 = 810$ ($8 + 1 + 0 = 9$). This indirectly shows a balancing form of bismillah reading that is not found in QS. at-Taubah [9]. So, bismillah which is part of the Koran also talks about the value of balance.

Thus, the letters that make up the words in the Koran are indicative of a message. When a Muslim reads the Koran, the letters that were hidden will appear presenting a message. The reading of bismillah contains a message, namely (a) humans must recognize alif (ا) - Allah as the Creator through the signs of His creatures; (b) recognizing mim (م) - Muhammad as the messenger of Allah; and (c) recognizing Bā (ب) as a reflection of one's own self. Humans need to recognize themselves in order to fulfill the mandate of Allah SWT as caliph on earth in accordance with His provisions and will.

In addition, the relationship between the value of the bismillah number as much as 57 and the number of letters in the Koran which is 114 can be understood if the two values of these numbers are made into a single number (one digit), it will get $5 + 7 = 12 = (1 + 2) = 3$; and $114 = (1 + 1 + 4) = 6 = (2 \times 3)$ or (3×2) . The combination of numbers 23 and 32 can be understood when referring to the letter number in the Koran, the number 23 is the number of the letter al-Mukminūn, which means "the believers" and the number 32 is the letter as-Sajdah, which means "Sujud". The message conveyed through the numbers from the second number of this letter seems to invite all people to follow the instructions and the way of salvation through the practice of the Koran, namely to become a believer (Q.S al-Mukminun [23]), and always prostrate and obey (Q.S as- Sajdah [32]) on all the decrees of Allah, including all the decrees written in the preamble of the English Koran (Pakistani print) is written, "Bismillah is the quintessence of Al-Fatihah in the same manner as Al-Fatihah is the quintessence of the Qur'an itself".

Thus, humans who offer prayers are included in the category of believers (Q.S al-Mukminūn [23] = those who believe), standing on their prayer mats (Q.S as-Sajdah [32] = prostration), standing on values. -the value of prostration and obedience to Allah SWT as stipulated in the Koran. Humans who establish prayers must be able to make themselves as "jewelery". The message of prayer in question, of course, does not stop at the ritual prayer. Thus the value of the prayers can have a positive impact in everyday life. Of course, those who pray properly and correctly, will not do immoral, vile, and evil work which will harm both themselves and others around them. Become a person who is liked by the community, a person who is able to provide exemplary values in the lives of other humans and the surrounding community. In other words,

the meaning of the jewelry is the upholding of Islamic religious values which are based on the Koran and this sunnah in real life. This is exactly what the bismillah reading wants to convey. So, it can be understood that the repetition of the number 3 that occurs in the verse is not just present, without a specific purpose and purpose. From a mathematical perspective, it is known that the number 3 is a prime number. One of the numbers included in prime numbers, which is considered mysterious or unique is the number 19 (Mufti, 2004). The relationship between number 3 and number 19 can be seen through the word "bismillah" which is contained at the beginning of the first stanza. The recitation of 'bismillah' is the opening statement of the letters in the Koran, namely "bismi'l-Lāhi ar-rahmāni ar-rahīmi" (which means: "In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, Most Merciful"). In fact, the 'bismillah' (in Arabic) consists of 19 letters (19 x 1). Based on this description, it is known that there is a relationship between numbers 3, 19, and the reading of the bismillah.

In other words, saying basmalah which is done every time it starts a job, actually reminds people to always be aware that they have become a person who believes in Allah SWT. Basmalah pronunciation, of course, must be followed by an attitude of totality, a *zuhud* attitude that everything that humans will do is only because of Allah alone (Soemabrata, 2006: 195). So, the spirit of basmalah, namely the spirit to always be in the name of Allah, and to make everything because of Allah alone in every human action. To begin with the name Allah is the first manners and guidance that Allah revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. The beginning is in accordance with the main principle of Islamic teachings which states that Allah is *al-Awwal wa al-Akhir wa azh-Zhahir wa al-Bathin*. Therefore, in His name everything must be started and with His name every movement and direction will be carried out (Shihab, 2004: 11). Thus, the basmalah spirit is actually to always serve all human life to Allah SWT. The spirit of monotheism, to always make Him one, there is no god but Allah and there is no partner for Him.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that *Syair Nasihat* (SN) is not merely a didactic work of Malay literature, but a complex semiotic system in which poetic aesthetics, spiritual teachings, and symbolic structures are deeply interconnected. Through a semiotic analysis grounded in

Riffaterre's framework, the findings reveal that rhyme, assonance, and alliteration function as structured signifying mechanisms rather than ornamental features. These sound patterns systematically contribute to the production of meaning by reinforcing the thematic articulation of Sufi teachings and ethical guidance.

Furthermore, this study identifies the presence of Qur'anic numerological patterns embedded within the poetic structure. The recurrence of specific numerical elements operates symbolically, reflecting metaphysical concepts such as divine unity, faith, and spiritual awareness. These findings suggest that poetic form in SN is deliberately constructed to encode layers of meaning that extend beyond the textual surface, linking linguistic expression with religious symbolism and philosophical reflection.

In this context, poetic aesthetics serve not only as a medium of artistic expression but also as a vehicle for transmitting spiritual knowledge. The integration of sound structures, semantic layers, and numerological symbolism forms a unified system that directs readers toward a deeper engagement with both the text and its transcendental dimensions.

Theoretically, this study contributes to Malay literary studies by offering an interdisciplinary approach that integrates philology, semiotics, and Qur'anic numerology. Practically, it highlights the relevance of SN for contemporary literary learning, particularly in reintroducing the spiritual dimension into modern educational contexts, where such perspectives are often marginalized.

Acknowledgements

This article is part of the results of independent research from the Institute for Research and Community Service (LPPM) Sebelas Maret University Surakarta, 2020. Thank you also to (1) Almarhum Prof. Dr. Rachmat Djoko Pradopo (Gadjah Mada University) for providing suggestions, criticism and comments related to aspects of poetry and matters related to the structure and meaning of poetry; (2) Prof. Dr. Sangidu, M.Hum. (Gadjah Mada University) which has also been pleased to provide critical notes, particularly related to the meaning of Sufism in literary works or poetry; (3) Prof. Dr. Oman Fathurahman, M.Hum. (Syarif

Hidayatullah State Islamic University) who have been willing to take the time to discuss and also provide useful input for the completion of this article; (4) Dr. Abdullah, M.Hum. (Diponegoro University) which has also provided suggestions for improvements; (5) Drs. Teguh Purwanto, M.Si (Head of the Center for Services and Services for the National Library of Indonesia) who has been instrumental in providing old manuscripts which are used as the object of study in this article; and (5) Mrs. Annabel The Gallop, Ph.D. (British Library) who have also agreed to be a pleasant discussion partner.

References

- Al-Attas, Syed Naguib. (1968). *The Origin of Malay Sha'ir*. Kuala Lumpur: Language and Library Council.
- Behrend, T.E., et al. (1998). *Main Catalog of Archipelago Manuscripts Volume 4: National Library of the Republic of Indonesia*. Jakarta: Yayasan Obor Indonesia and I'Ecole Francaise d'Extreme Orient.
- Braginsky, Vladimir (1993). *Beautiful, Beneficial and Perfection: History of Malay Literature in the 7th - 19th Century*. Jakarta : INIS.
- Braginsky, Vladimir (1998). *Sufism and Malay Literature: Studies and Texts*. Jakarta : RUL.
- Braginsky, Vladimir (1998). *The System of Classical Malay Literature*. Leiden: Brill.
- Dita, Shirley N. (2010). A stylistic analysis of Montage. *Journal 3L The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*. 16 (2), p. 169-191.
- Fang, Liaw Yock. (1982). *History of Classic Malay Literature*. Singapore: National Library, PTE. LTD.
- Fathurahman, O. (2015). *Indonesian Philology: Theory and Method*. Jakarta: Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University Press.
- Hudak, Thomas John. (2013). "Proverbs, proverbial elaboration, and poetic development in the Tai languages" in *The Aesthetics of Grammar: Sound and Meaning in the Languages of Mainland Southeast Asia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Edited by Jeffrey P. Williams, *Texas Tech University*. DOI:<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781139030489.010>, pp 135-150.

- Hussein, Ismail. (1974). *The Study of Traditional Malay Literature with a Selected Bibliography*. Kuala Lumpur: Language and Library Council, Ministry of Education, Malaysia.
- Ikram, A. (2019). *Introduction to Research*. Jakarta: Indonesian Archipelago Textbook Society (MANASSA).
- Jusuf, Jumsari, *et.all*. (1978). *Anthology of Symbolic Poetry in Old Indonesian Literature*. Jakarta: Cultural Media Development Project, Directorate General of Culture, Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia.
- Lahman, M. K. E., Richard, V. M., & Teman, E. D. (2018).ish: How to Write Poemish (Research) Poetry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 107780041775018. doi:10.1177/1077800417750182. pp 1–13. Reprints and permissions: sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav DOI: 10.1177/1077800417750182 journals.sagepub.com/home/qix.
- Meeks, C. (2017). Poetic sense: Sound and imagery. Retrieved from <http://www.chrismeeks.com/blog/poetic-sense-soundand-imagery>
- Mufti, Arifin. (2004). *Mathematics of the Universe: Codetification of Prime Numbers in the Al-Quran*. Bandung: Main Book Qibla.
- Murata, Sachiko. (2003). *Chinese Sufi wisdom*. Yogyakarta: Discourse Creation.
- Pradopo, Rachmat Djoko. (1997). *Poetry Study*. Yogyakarta: Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Salahuddin, S. M. R. and M. (2007). *Bima Manuscript Catalog: Collection of Samparaja Cultural Museum*. Mataram: Samparaja Bima Museum.
- Salleh, Muhammad Haji. (1977). *Tradition and Change in Contemporary Malay-Indonesian Poetry*. Kuala Lumpur: University Kebangsaan Malaysia.
- Setyowati, Novi, *et.all*. (2017). "Islamic Eschatology in Syair Ibarat and Khabar Kiamat" in the *SMaRT Journal: Society, Religion and Tradition Studies*. Vol 3, No 2 (2017). Semarang: Semarang Religion Research and Development Center.
- <https://blasemarang.kemenag.go.id/journal/index.php/smart/article/view/524>. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18784/smart.v3i2.524>
- Shihab, M. Quraish. (2004). *Tafsir Al-Mishbāh: Message, Impression, and Harmony of the Qur'an. Juz 'Amma. Volume 1*. Jakarta: Heart Lantern.
- Soemabrata, Iskandar AG. (2006). *Numeric Messages of the Qur'an*. Jakarta: Republika.
- Subhani, Ja'far. 2008. *Asmaul Husna Encyclopedia*. Jakarta: Misbah.

- Sutaarga, M. Amir. (1972). *Catalogus collection of Malay manuscripts Central Museum Dep. P & K*, Jakarta: Project for Inventory and Documentation of National Culture.
- Syafrial, Hadi Rumadi, Oki Rasdana. (2018). "The Aesthetic of Mantra as Medical Treatment in Malay Riau" in International Seminar and Annual Meeting BKS – PTN Wilayah Barat, Fields of Language, Literature, Arts, and Culture, held by FKIP UNSRI in collaboration with BKS-PTN Wilayah Barat in September 21st-22nd 2018 at Horison Hotel, Palembang, South Sumatera, Indonesia. Vol 1 No 1 (2018)
- Syafrial, Hadi Rumadi, Elmustian. (2018). *Mantra*. Pekanbaru: Azizah Publishing.
- Winstedt, R.O. (1977). *A History of Classical Malay Literature*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press.
- Wirajaya, Asep Yudha. (2019). *Poetic Aesthetics of Classical Malay Literature*. Surakarta: Library Oase.
- Yatim, Othman MD, dkk. (2011). The Malay-Islamic Intellectual Tradition: Instead of Metaphor to Scientificism. *Jurnal Melayu UKM*. Vol. 6, p. 73-85.
- Zulfadhli. (2010). Mantra in Minangkabau Literature and Poetry Sutardji Calzoum Bachri: An Analysis of Comparative Literature. Composition: *Journal of Language Education, Literature and Art*. 10 (1), p. 60-67.