

Awakening Early Conscience: Islamic Values and Religious Moderation in Syeikh Abdurrahman Shiddiq's Syair

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Abstract

This study critically examines Syair Ibarat dan Khabar Kiamat by Syeikh Abdurrahman Shiddiq as a culturally grounded medium for early Islamic education and the cultivation of religious moderation. Utilizing a qualitative-descriptive method with a hermeneutic approach, the research identifies embedded pedagogical messages that align with core Islamic principles shahādah, ṣalāh, ṣawm, zakāh, and ḥajj as well as values of moderation, including tolerance, patriotism, anti-radicalism, and cultural accommodation. The analysis integrates multiple theoretical lenses: al-Attas's ta'dīb, Gardner's multiple intelligences, Gadamer's hermeneutics, Nurcholish Madjid's inclusive Islam, Lickona's character education, and the value clarification technique (VCT). Findings demonstrate that the syair functions not merely as literary expression but as a strategic moral-educational tool that harmonizes religious doctrine with local wisdom. It supports the formation of spiritually aware and culturally rooted learners while reinforcing inclusive and contextualized Islamic values. Therefore, this syair offers a relevant pedagogical model for fostering moderate Islamic identity in early childhood educational frameworks.

Keywords: Syair Ibarat, Islamic education, religious moderation, young children.

Introduction

Classical Malay literature has played a significant role in shaping the cultural and religious identity of the Malay people. It functions not merely as an aesthetic expression but as a transgenerational medium for transmitting spiritual, social, and moral values (Parwanti et al., 2021; Raudati & Adisaputera, 2017; Sukesti, 2015). Among the most prominent genres in this literary tradition is syair, a form of narrative poetry that flourished from the 17th to the early 20th centuries, particularly in Malay regions such as Riau and South Sumatra (Akmal, 2015). According to Kratz (2006), syair represents a vital component of traditional Malay poetry alongside pantun, gurindam, and seloka with broad implications for community education.

The strength of syair lies in its ability to convey Islamic and moral teachings through poetic and rhythmic language, making it not only a communicative tool but also an aesthetically rich medium for da'wah and education (Saefudin, 2020; Setyowati et al., 2017). Spiritual values such as monotheism (tauhid), ethics, brotherhood (ukhuwah), and eschatological awareness are not presented dogmatically or instructively, but through captivating metaphors, rhythms, and repetitions. This distinctive approach imbues syair with both emotional depth and gentle delivery. UU Hamidy (1983) describes syair as an "aesthetic sermon" (pengajian estetik), a process of internalizing religious values through artistic expression that fuses beauty (estetika) and wisdom (hikmah) in a moving narrative structure. In this sense, syair is not merely literature or entertainment, but a pedagogical instrument embedded within the oral culture of the Malay community.

This educational potential becomes particularly strategic in the context of early childhood education. Children in the 4–6-year-old developmental stage are highly receptive to rhythmic language, repetition, and auditory or visual symbols (Arkas & Suryana, 2022). According to developmental psychology, children at this age more easily absorb values when messages are delivered in musical, narrative, and enjoyable formats (Suryana, 2014). Syair aligns perfectly with these characteristics, making it a highly effective tool for cultivating foundational spiritual and ethical sensibilities from an early age.

In practice, syair serves as a holistic learning medium, integrating cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions simultaneously. Through syair, children are not only introduced to Islamic values but are also invited to experience them through rhythm and poetic language. This makes syair an adaptive and powerful means for nurturing Islamic character in a natural way, touching both thought and feeling. Therefore, utilizing syair as a learning tool in early Islamic education is not only relevant but harmonizes with children's developmental needs and the humanistic-cultural approach to da'wah.

Syair also reflects the integration of local values with Islamic teachings. Scholars such as Hamzah Fansuri, Raja Ali Haji, and Syeikh Abdurrahman Shiddiq employed this poetic form to convey messages of monotheism, ethics, and Sufi spirituality in grounded and contextual ways. In the Malay world, religious instruction was delivered not only from the pulpit but also through literature and oral culture (Jazuli, 2021; Sumarsih et al., 2014). This approach fosters a Muslim identity that is polite, civilized, and appreciative of diversity and tolerance.

However, in the face of changing times, significant challenges have emerged. A national study conducted by Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs (2022) revealed a low understanding of religious moderation among elementary school children, particularly regarding tolerance, empathy, and appreciation of diversity. This indicates a weak foundation in religious and spiritual literacy from an early age. Consequently, there is a growing need for pedagogical strategies that are not only textual but also engage emotional and cultural dimensions (Margiyanto, 2022; Na'imah et al., 2020). In this context, syair especially the work of Syeikh Abdurrahman Shiddiq offers a peaceful, inclusive, and culturally rooted educational alternative (Arbi et al., 2021).

Syair Ibarat and Khabar Kiamat stands as one of the most monumental religious works in the Malay tradition. Authored by Syeikh Abdurrahman Shiddiq, a moderate Sufi scholar from the Indragiri Sultanate, the poem conveys core Islamic teachings such as the Five Pillars of Islam, social ethics, and values of moderation through a gentle and engaging narrative. The syair's structure and language are highly relatable to children, giving it strong potential as a tool for contextual Islamic character education.

Despite its value, research on Syair Ibarat dan Khabar Kiamat remains limited to philological, eschatological, and literary aspects. For instance, Setyowati et al. (2017) focus on Islamic eschatology, while Ahmad Darmawi (2000) emphasizes the philological dimension. Its pedagogical potential for instilling Islamic and moderation values in early childhood has not yet been adequately explored in scholarly studies.

Based on this background, this study aims to examine how Syair Ibarat dan Khabar Kiamat can function as an educational medium to instill two key dimensions: (1) core Islamic values, rooted in the Five Pillars, as a foundation for early religious

understanding, and (2) values of religious moderation, such as tolerance, patriotism, anti-radicalism, and appreciation of local culture.

Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using the method of library research, as outlined by Sidiq & Choiri (2019) and Zed (2008). Its primary focus is to analyze the Islamic values and principles of religious moderation embedded in the classical Malay literary work *Syair Ibarat dan Khabar Kiamat* by Syekh Abdurrahman Shiddiq al-Banjari, written in Jawi (Arabic-Malay script). This approach is considered most suitable for exploring implicit meanings in literary texts and interpreting their religious messages, particularly in the context of early childhood Islamic education (Susilo, 2017).

The main data source for this study is the text of *Syair Ibarat dan Khabar Kiamat*, both in its printed and transliterated forms, which serve as the primary materials of analysis. In addition, the research incorporates secondary sources such as academic articles, scholarly journals, books of tafsir, theories of Malay classical literature and Islamic education, as well as national policy documents related to religious moderation and character education for children. Data collection was conducted through a systematic review of literature, utilizing digital library catalogs, academic repositories, and publicly accessible cultural heritage archives from the Malay tradition.

The analysis phase adopts two primary approaches: content analysis and textual hermeneutics. Content analysis is used to categorize and classify verses from the *syair* that contain themes related to the Five Pillars of Islam (shahādah, ṣalāh, ṣawm, zakāh, and ḥajj) as well as indicators of religious moderation such as patriotism, tolerance, anti-radicalism, and openness to local culture (Creswell, 2020; Raharjo, 2019). Meanwhile, the hermeneutic approach aims to interpret the symbolic meanings, spiritual messages, and moral dimensions embedded in the poetic verses. Interpretations are carried out with careful consideration of the socio-historical context in which the *syair* was written and understood by the community.

Table 1. Research Source Triangulation

Type of Source	Example of Source	Purpose of Triangulation
Primary Text	<i>Syair Ibarat dan Khabar Kiamat</i> (original manuscript and transliteration)	To directly extract Islamic and moderation values from the primary text
Theoretical Literature	Tafsir books, Islamic education theories, classical Malay literary frameworks	To reinforce the interpretation of verses through relevant scholarly perspectives
Policy Documents	Ministry of Religious Affairs' guidelines on Religious Moderation, PAUD Curriculum	To examine the alignment of the <i>syair's</i> content with national education and da'wah policies
Psychological & Pedagogical Perspectives	Child development theories, Islamic pedagogical principles	To assess the applicability of <i>syair</i> values in relation to cognitive and character development in early childhood

To ensure the validity of interpretations, source triangulation is applied by cross-referencing findings from the *syair* with supporting literature, including Qur'anic exegesis, hadith, official documents from Indonesia's Ministry of Religious Affairs, and early childhood education theories. This step aims to ensure that the value interpretations derived from the *syair* are not isolated, but rather in line with established scholarly understandings. Additionally, the readability and acceptability of these values in shaping children's character are further analyzed from the perspectives of developmental psychology and Islamic pedagogy.

Results and Discussion

This research found that the poem "Ibarat dan Khabar Kiamat" by Sheikh Abdurrahman Shiddiq al-Banjari (1344) contains very rich Islamic messages that are relevant for strengthening Islamic values and religious moderation in early childhood. The poem not only serves as a religious text but also as a pedagogical tool that contains values of faith, worship, and morality, as well as principles of diversity and humanity.

Table 2. Main Themes and Sub-Themes of the Research

Main Theme	Sub-Theme / Content
Strengthening Islamic Values in Early Childhood	Shahada, Salat, Fasting, Zakat, Hajj; Conveyed in rhythmic and poetic verses; Internalization of the teachings of the pillars of Islam in an emotional and aesthetic manner.
Strengthening Religious Moderation Values in Early Childhood	Tolerance, love for the homeland, anti-radicalism, accommodation of local culture; Values of moderation are subtly woven through metaphors and moral messages in the verses of poetry.
Locality and Spirituality: Contextual Education in the Malay Style	Integrasi nilai Islam dengan budaya Melayu; Penolakan pendekatan eksklusif; Pemanfaatan khazanah lokal seperti syair untuk pendidikan karakter dan spiritualitas anak secara membumi.

Strengthening Islamic Values in Early Childhood

In the context of Islamic education, early childhood is viewed as a phase of basic character formation. Jean Piaget (2013) in his developmental theory explains that children aged 2–7 years are in the preoperational stage, where they absorb information through symbols, imagination, and stories (Papalia et al., 2009). Therefore, learning media that is narrative and aesthetic in nature, such as poetry, becomes very relevant and effective in conveying Islamic spiritual and ethical values.

The poem "Ibarat dan Khabar Kiamat" integrates Islamic values into symbolic and metaphoric forms that are suitable for the child's world. Messages such as "mentioning the name of Allah," "guarding the tongue," "prohibition against excessive laughter," and "diligence in studying" are forms of internalizing the values of the pillars of Islam conveyed narratively and gently. This is in line with Ibn Khaldun's (1958) view, which in his *Muqaddimah* states that education must take into account the child's intellectual and psychological abilities, and should not be overly burdensome or frightening.

The values of the pillars of Islam are explicitly found in several verses of poetry. The instillation of these values is carried out through imaginative narratives, religious metaphors, and warnings about the consequences of neglecting religious commands. This research identifies five dimensions of strengthening the pillars of Islam: First, Shahada: Emphasized through the call to know Allah and the Prophet from a young age. Children are encouraged to mention the name of Allah, which in the verse is referred to as the form of early piety and the key to all deeds.

٥٧٤. ايوهي سودارا يغ بوديمان
عملكن شهادة توحيد دان ايمان
معيكوه فرنته حديث دان فرمان
ايتله امانة توهن يغ رحمن

0574. *Ayo hai saudara yang budiman
Amalkan syahadat, tauhid dan iman
Mengikut perintah hadis dan firman
Itulah amanat Tuhan yang Rahman*

In the Poem of Metaphors and the News of the Day of Judgment, Sheikh Abdurrahman Shiddiq provides motivation and spiritual reinforcement to young children so that they consistently get into the habit of reciting the shahada, especially *lā ilāha illallāh*, regularly every day. The consistent repetition of this declaration of faith is intended to shape the child's identity and religious character from an early age (Somad, 2021). According to the moral message in the verse, this habit will have a significant eschatological impact in the hereafter, especially on the Day of Resurrection, where children who consistently recite the shahada will receive special attention from Allah SWT, have the opportunity to see Him, and attain unparalleled happiness, divine pleasure, and abundant blessings.

Second, Prayer. This is described as the pillar of religion and the obligation that will be questioned first in the hereafter. There is an implicit description that abandoning prayer causes spiritual loss and suffering after death.

٠٠٤٣. کرن سمبهیغ تیغ اکام
مغرجاکندي برسام
مندیریکن سمبهیغ ساغت اوتام
منغکلکن دي هیلغ کرما

0043. *Karena sembahyang tiang agama
Mengerjakan dia bersama-sama
Mengerjakan sembahyang sangat utama
Meninggalkan dia hilang karama.*

Verse 0043 in the Poem of Metaphors and News of the Day of Judgment emphasizes that prayer is the pillar of religion, and its performance in congregation is a form of strengthening the social dimension in worship. The statement implies that anyone who establishes prayer means they are collectively supporting the structure of the Islamic religion; conversely, abandoning prayer means they are collectively undermining the foundation of the religion. In a spiritual perspective, prayer is the primary expression of servitude and a concrete form of a servant's obedience to Allah SWT. This act of worship is also the first deed to be judged in the hereafter, demonstrating the central position of prayer in the structure of Islamic teachings (Firmansyah, 2019).

Spiritually, prayer serves the function of maintaining spiritual awareness so that one constantly remembers Allah and remains in existential closeness to Him. Meanwhile, from a social perspective, the practice of performing congregational prayers, such as inviting children to the mosque, is encouraged as an effort to foster solidarity and collective discipline. Prayer is also believed to have a preventive function against deviant behavior, as emphasized in the Quran, that prayer can prevent immoral and wrongful acts. Thus, prayer not only serves as an indicator of a person's spiritual quality but also reflects the moral and social dimensions that shape a child's character comprehensively (Wahab, 2018).

Third, Fasting. In this regard, Sheikh Abdurrahman Shiddiq, through SKK, conveyed the values of patience and the virtue of controlling desires through illustrations. Children are taught

to understand the meaning of self-restraint, not just hunger and thirst. For example, it can be found in the following verse:

٠٢٠٦ سكل مؤمين يغ فواس
دهادف بيدداري سنتياس
مهاليكين زبرجد امس سواس
دمكينله كرنيا توهن يغ اس

0206. *Segala mukmin yang puasa
Dihadap Bidadari senantiasa
Mahligainya zabarjad emas suasa
Demikianlah karunia Tuhan yang Esa.*

Verse number 0206 which reads: "All believers who fast // Before the Houris always // Their throne made of zabarjad and gold" illustrates the form of spiritual motivation given by Allah SWT to His servants who perform fasting, particularly as a heavenly reward. In this stanza, the houris and palaces made of emerald and gold are depicted as symbolic representations of the magnificent and unimaginable pleasures of the afterlife, beyond human comprehension. The depiction is not merely eschatological but also serves as a persuasive strategy that stirs the inner consciousness of the faithful, including children, encouraging them to perform worship with enthusiasm.

For young children who have shown the willingness and ability to observe fasting, even if partially or limited, their efforts deserve appreciation and reinforcement. These efforts reflect the process of internalizing deep spiritual values, while also demonstrating that teaching fasting to children is not only about the ritual aspect but also about the formation of character, patience, discipline, and orientation towards the afterlife. If Allah SWT Himself uses beautiful narratives to motivate His servants in observing fasting, then the educational approach towards children should also emulate this method by providing rewards, positive reinforcement, and illustrations of benefits that stir their imagination and hope.

Fourth, Zakat: Although not explicitly referred to by the term "zakat," there is an illustration of the importance of helping the poor, giving charity, and not being stingy—which leads to Islamic social practices.

٠١٦٢ ايوهي سكلين تولن اخواني
اكن حق ادم جاشن براني
جك دفيوات سباكي اين
دوسان دتمبع براوعكل بومي

0162. *Ayohai sekalian tolan ikhwani
Akan hak anak adam jangan berani
Jika diperbuat sebagai ini
Dosanya ditimbang berangkul bumi.*

According to Islamic law, the rights referred to in the verse of the poem pertain to the obligation of paying zakat. Both classical and contemporary scholars agree that zakat is a religious obligation that must be fulfilled by every Muslim who possesses wealth that has reached nisab and haul (Ibrahim & Tambi Chek, 2020; Qardhawi, 2011). This obligation is absolute for those who meet the criteria, as a form of purifying wealth, a manifestation of social concern, and the fulfillment of the rights of others contained within the wealth possessed. Thus, the verses not only emphasize the aspect of individual worship but also strengthen social awareness and the collective responsibility of Muslims through the instrument of zakat. Fifth, Hajj: The value of the spiritual journey and the importance of fulfilling the fifth pillar of Islam is symbolically depicted through a narrative of the journey to the afterlife, which is full of struggles and must be prepared for from an early age.

٢٠٧ سكال مؤمين يڠ نايك حج
موكان فرسيه امة برسري
دودق دهاف بيداري
مهاليكين انده تيا ترفري

0207. *Segala mukmin yang naik haji
Mukanya bersih amat berseri
Duduk dihadap Bidadari
Mahligainya indah tiada terperi*

Verse 0207 in the Poem of Metaphors and the News of the Day of Judgment, which reads "Every believer who performs the pilgrimage // His face is very clean and radiant," illustrates the spiritual and psychosocial impact of performing the Hajj on Muslim individuals. According to Sheikh Abdurrahman Shiddiq, the pilgrimage of Hajj not only provides rewards in the hereafter but also results in both outward and inward transformations that can be visibly seen in daily life. A radiant face, a clean and calm physical appearance, and an aura of authority are manifestations of the spiritual depth of someone who has undergone a profound spiritual experience through the pilgrimage of Hajj.

This verse suggests that the pilgrimage can shape a complete, stable, and soothing personality. This is evident from the gentle speech, calming demeanor, and attitude full of tranquility and maturity. Thus, Hajj is not just a formal ritual of worship, but a process of character formation and social exemplary behavior that is evident in conduct.

Sheikh Abdurrahman Shiddiq also describes the rewards in the hereafter for those who perform the Hajj perfectly, which include heavenly pleasures such as beautiful maidens and unparalleled magnificent palaces. This depiction reinforces the eschatological dimension in Islamic education, which not only emphasizes obligations but also awakens strong hope and spiritual motivation within a Muslim, including children who are introduced to the values of the pilgrimage from an early age.

According to Al-Attas (1991), education in Islam is not merely a process of transfer of knowledge, but rather primarily the internalization of adab, which is a process of humanization oriented towards a system of values, morals, and proper relationships between humans and Allah, humans with each other, and humans with their environment. Adab, in Al-Attas's view, is the highest pinnacle of true religiosity, which does not stop at the cognitive aspect (knowing), but penetrates into the affective (feeling) and psychomotoric (acting) aspects. Therefore, Islamic education that only conveys the pillars of Islam through memorization, without being followed by understanding and habituation, is not sufficient in shaping the character of a true Muslim.

The Syair Ibarat and Khabar Kiamat serve as pedagogical media that reflect a holistic vision of ta'dib. The value of the shahada in the verses is not only present in the form of verbal acknowledgment of the oneness of God and the prophethood of Muhammad (PBUH), but is also instilled through an invitation to always remember Allah in daily life, even from childhood (Rokhayati et al., 2021). Prayer, as the pillar of religion, is depicted not merely as a ritual routine, but rather as a form of worship that will determine a person's fate in the hereafter—a form of eschatological education that touches on the realm of ethical awareness and personal responsibility. The value of fasting is explained through the symbols of self-control, restraint of desires, and the virtue of patience, all of which are aspects of inner etiquette. Meanwhile, the values of zakat and hajj are presented as reminders of the importance of social solidarity, empathy towards others, and the spiritual struggle that must be cultivated from an early age (Wigati & Wiyani, 2020).

This poetic text contains an integration of knowledge (ilm), deeds (amal), and manners (adab), which according to Al-Attas are the three main pillars in an authentic Islamic education system. When children are invited to understand religion not just through commands, but through contemplation, imagination, and the gentleness of poetic language, what is actually

being done is an existential and cultural transformation of values. This process is far more effective in shaping a strong moderate Islamic character rooted in Sufi values and local wisdom.

The approach of using poetry in teaching the pillars of Islam is not a form of simplification of the teachings, but rather an effort to aestheticize values within the framework of *ta'dib*. This emphasizes that traditional literature such as poetry has high epistemic and pedagogical relevance in shaping a complete and grounded Islamic spirituality. In the context of early childhood education, this approach aligns with the need for a learning model that is integrative, affective, and dialogical, and rejects an indoctrinative approach that tends to overlook the psychosocial development stages of children.

Islamic values are not conveyed in the form of rigid or normative instructions, but rather through contemplative narratives that evoke feelings and activate the imagination and affection of children. The delivery, which is poetic, repetitive, and musical in nature, is very effective in reaching the intuitive, symbolic, and aesthetic thinking and learning styles of early childhood.

In the perspective of Islamic pedagogy, this aligns with the principle of *tadabbur* (contemplation), which emphasizes that a good understanding of religion must be accompanied by feelings, self-awareness, and internalization of meaning. Verses that evoke feelings and lead to p

Strengthening the Values of Religious Moderation in Early Childhood

The concept of religious moderation in Islam represents the embodiment of the principle of *wasathiyah*, which is explicitly stated in Surah Al-Baqarah (2:143). Moderation does not imply diluting the values of faith (*'aqidah*), but rather practicing them in a proportional, just, and non-extremist manner (Shihab, 2019). These values are clearly reflected in *Syair Ibarat dan Khabar Kiamat*, which avoids violent diction, does not marginalize specific groups, and instead promotes compassion, social empathy, and spiritual piety that is friendly toward others.

According to Hans-Georg Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics, understanding a text is never static or singular but is continuously shaped through a dialogical interaction between the text and the reader's horizon. In his seminal work *Truth and Method* (1975), Gadamer explains that every text including literary texts such as *syair* contains meanings that are not merely linguistic or textual but also historical, cultural, and existential. This means that interpreting *syair* should go beyond grammatical or literal understanding toward experiencing meaning (*Erfahrung des Sinns*), which is informed by social context, lived experiences, and the reader's value framework.

Reading *Syair Ibarat dan Khabar Kiamat* as a medium of religious moderation opens up dynamic interpretive spaces regarding Islamic teachings. Messages found in the *syair* such as the prohibition against tyranny (*zulm*), encouragement toward gentleness, awareness of the afterlife, and respect for fellow human beings are universal values that, through a hermeneutical approach, become sources of ethical-spiritual meaning that are both contextual and adaptive. In other words, the *syair* is not merely a linguistic product or religious expression; it serves as a reflection of local civilization, poetically blending Islamic teachings with Malay culture.

Gadamer's concept of the fusion of horizons (*Horizontverschmelzung*) is highly relevant here. He posits that true understanding arises when the horizon of the past (the author and the text) meets the horizon of the present (the reader). In this case, the horizon of Syekh Abdurrahman Shiddiq who lived within the context of the Malay sultanate and Sufi tradition intersects with that of modern readers seeking Islamic values that are moderate, tolerant, and contextual amidst social plurality. This process generates not only linguistic comprehension but also new spiritual experiences and social awareness. Such a reading enables Islamic values to emerge as a productive social energy rather than as an exclusive doctrine or divisive tool.

Gadamer's hermeneutic theory also emphasizes the importance of pre-understanding (*Vorverständnis*) in interpreting texts. This means that children or early readers possess their own cultural horizons and life experiences, which shape how they understand the values within

the syair. Therefore, educators must instill value comprehension contextually, using familiar local cultural language and evocative narrative symbols. In this regard, syair as a traditional Malay aesthetic form functions as a hermeneutical bridge between the universal values of Islam and the particular horizons of local understanding.

In contemporary Qur'anic exegesis, such an approach has been widely adopted by Muslim scholars like Mohammed Arkoun and Abdullah Saeed, who emphasize the necessity of contextual, historical, and dialogical readings of religious texts. They critique the scripturalist-legalistic approach that detaches texts from social realities, advocating instead for interpretive models that value the plurality of meanings and recognize the dynamic interplay between text, culture, and society. As part of the oral religious tradition, syair naturally accommodates this interpretive possibility.

This perspective also aligns with the thought of Nurcholish Madjid, a prominent Indonesian Islamic reformer who underscored the importance of grounding Islamic values in inclusive and dialogical social practice. In his works, such as *Islam: Doctrine and Civilization* (1992) and *Islam, Modernity, and Indonesian Identity* (1993), Nurcholish emphasized that Islam is a universal religion whose essence upholds the principle of *rahmatan lil 'ālamīn* a mercy to all creation. This principle encompasses not only the relationship between humans and God but also interpersonal and environmental relationships.

According to Nurcholish, ideal religiosity should not be exclusive, fanatical, or coercive. Rather, it should be realized through social praxis that is tolerant of differences, open to interfaith dialogue, and committed to embracing diversity as a necessary aspect of human life. This inclusive Islam is not one that weakens identity, but one that remains firm in its principles while exercising wisdom in practice. In other words, such inclusivism is not relativism but an acknowledgment of pluralism within the ethical framework of Islamic universality.

The syair consistently promotes values of religious moderation in line with the indicators set by the Indonesian Ministry of Religious Affairs (2019), including:

First, Love for the Homeland and National Commitment: This is expressed through exhortations for people to become servants of Allah who benefit society, alongside prohibitions against sowing enmity. These values are embedded in verses that advocate social harmony and encourage deliberation (*musyawarah*) as an expression of love for one's nation.

٥١. تيف ٢ هاري باج شهادة
استميو توبت سرت صلوة
سكل فكر جانث بيك مشواره
دغن سودارا تولن دان صحابة

0151. *Tiap-tiap hari bacalah syahadat
Istimewa tobat serta sholawat
Segala pekerjaannya baik musyawarat
Dengan saudara taulan dan sahabat*

Verse 0152 of the syair, which reads "Deliberate sincerely // It is a fortress most firmly built," conveys an important teaching on the urgency of mutual consultation (*musyawarah*) in community life. According to Syekh Abdurrahman Shiddiq, deliberation serves as a strong foundation, metaphorically referred to as a "fortress," which functions as a safeguard against division and conflict. Through *musyawarah*, decisions are made collectively based on consensus, rather than personal dominance.

The syair also emphasizes that deliberation must be conducted with courtesy, wisdom, and a focus on the common good. Expressing one's opinion should not involve degrading or hurting others, but rather reflect clarity of thought, intellectual merit, and moral value. This is illustrated in the verse "each person's thoughts are considered," highlighting the importance of intellectual contribution in decision-making processes.

Verse 0151 states, "In all affairs, consult // With brothers, companions, and trusted friends," underscoring that *musyawarah* should be applied to all significant matters, especially those that

affect the collective. Ideally, such consultation is carried out with those closest individuals who understand the full context and issues at hand. Thus, before reaching any strategic decisions, there should be dialogue and collective consideration to arrive at a fair and wise consensus.

Secondly, on Tolerance: There is no verse in the syair that attacks other groups or claims exclusive ownership of truth. On the contrary, the text emphasizes that acts of worship must be accompanied by good character and ethical behavior toward others. Children are invited to recognize differences and to live with compassion and empathy.

٠١٩١ ايوهي سودارا سكراله تنتوت
سكل فجاجر جاجنله لوفوة
كفد الله كيت نن تاكوة
سام سكمفوغ ايكوة مغيكوة

0191. *Ayohai saudara segerakan tuntut
Segala pengajar janganlah luput
Kepada Allah kita nan takut
Sama sekampung ikut mengikut.*

The first and second lines emphasize that knowledge must be pursued from an early age. All forms of knowledge including religious, social, and humanitarian education—should be introduced to children as early as possible. In the context of tolerance, this means that children need to be familiarized with values such as respect for differences, mutual assistance, and peaceful coexistence. Education should not only focus on cognitive development but also on instilling values and attitudes.

The third line states that any knowledge acquired should lead a person to become closer to and more conscious of God. The concept of taqwa here is not merely about fear, but about spiritual awareness that fosters noble character. Children who are taught to revere God in a gentle and inclusive way will grow into individuals who respect all of His creations including those of different religions, ethnicities, and cultures. Ultimately, the value of tolerance is born from a healthy spiritual consciousness.

The final line “the whole village follows in unity” reflects the spirit of mutual cooperation (gotong royong) and social solidarity. This value is essential to instill in early childhood through practices such as playing together, group activities, and stories that highlight harmonious living amid diversity. Children should be encouraged not to discriminate against peers, to help one another, and to be given examples of resolving conflicts peacefully.

Third, Anti-Radicalism: The syair repeatedly encourages children to avoid harsh behavior, insults, or harming others. Radicalism is portrayed as a deviation from the true path of Islam.

٠١٧١ فكر جان ايت سغكوه دتكه
استيوا مياكتي هب الله
سراس مرتوهكن كعبة الله
سكلين عملت ها بيس برفنده

0171. *Pekerjaan itu sungguh ditegah
Istimewa menyakiti hamba Allah
Serasa merasa meruntuhkan Ka'batullah
Sekalian amalnya habis berpindah.*

This syair presents a profound spiritual message: harming fellow human beings, especially the vulnerable, is likened to destroying the Ka'bah the holiest site in Islam. It even suggests that all good deeds may become “transferred in vain” or nullified if accompanied by acts of injustice

toward others. The syair strongly emphasizes the importance of not causing harm to others, particularly those who are weak (hamba dha'if).

In the context of early childhood education, empathy toward peers who are different, refraining from hurting friends, and avoiding bullying are concrete expressions of anti-radical attitudes. Radicalism in early childhood may manifest in small acts of aggression such as mocking, yelling at, or even hitting friends. This syair provides a strong moral foundation by asserting that harming others is a disgraceful act that ultimately harms the perpetrator and may invalidate their virtues.

Fourth, Cultural Accommodation: The syair employs vocabulary, idioms, and metaphors typical of the Malay tradition, which are easily understood by children within their cultural environment. The Islamic values taught in the syair do not contradict local traditions; instead, they enrich and refine them.

٢٣٣ ايوهي سكين صحابه يغ حاضر
نصحتكو اين امبيلله فيكير
كارن مغارغ اورغ يغ نصير
جادي دمكين برهواة شعر

0233. *Ayohai sekalian sahabat yang hadir*
Nasehatku ini ambillah fikir
Karena mengarang orang yang naksir
Jadi demikian berbuat syair

Syeikh Abdurrahman Shiddiq firmly asserts that syair is not merely a literary composition, but a powerful medium of da'wah (religious outreach) and education rooted in local culture and worthy of deep reflection and dissemination. His call to "companions" reflects the social context of the syair as a vital element of Malay oral tradition, thriving within the community. Through familiar and poetic language, the syair serves as an accessible channel for conveying Islamic values. Thus, syair should be regarded not only as an authentic expression of local heritage but also as a theologically legitimate and strategically effective tool for grounded, culturally attuned Islamic preaching. In promoting syair, we are not merely preserving tradition; we are reinforcing an Islam that is compassionate, moderate, and contextually relevant to the lived realities of the people.

From a cultural hermeneutic perspective, this syair can be interpreted as a literary-religious response to the socio-cultural challenges of its time when the process of Islamization had to coexist with societal pluralism, and religious values had to be instilled without fostering exclusivism. In this light, the syair functions as an agent of moderation and a guardian of harmony, internalizing Islamic values into a culturally embedded form that is embraced across communities.

Pedagogically, the values of moderation embedded in Syair Ibarat dan Khabar Kiamat align closely with the principles of character education as formulated by Thomas Lickona. According to Lickona (1991), character education is a deliberate effort to help children understand, internalize, and practice universal moral values that form the foundation of social life. He outlines four core values to be nurtured from early childhood: respect, responsibility, fairness, and caring. These are not only ethical cornerstones of civilized coexistence but also central to cooperative moral development.

As an educational form of literature, syair plays a strategic role in localizing and instilling these values. Messages such as the importance of guarding one's speech, keeping promises, honoring parents, avoiding harm to others, and being mindful of the consequences of one's actions all reflect the principles of respect and responsibility. For example, when the syair discourages children from using harsh words or laughing excessively, it is, in essence, teaching self-control, social sensitivity, and adherence to communal norms.

The values of fairness and caring are also communicated through narratives that encourage empathy, mutual aid, and refraining from harming others. From the standpoint of moral

developmental psychology, these values are part of the early stages of prosocial moral development, as outlined by scholars such as Carol Gilligan and Lawrence Kohlberg. Children raised in environments that promote empathy and solidarity are more likely to develop healthy, tolerant, and cooperative social relationships. *Syair Ibarat dan Khabar Kiamat* imparts these values in a gentle and digestible manner, woven through rhyming, narrative, and reflective language that resonates with young learners.

The pedagogical strength of this *syair* lies in its ability to convey moral messages through symbols and the language of local culture. Within the Malay community, *syair* is not merely a tool of communication or entertainment but functions as an informal educational medium used by parents, teachers, and community elders to shape the character of the younger generation. As such, the moral teachings embedded within the *syair* do not feel foreign or externally imposed; rather, they emerge naturally as part of the daily life and cultural fabric of Malay children. This aligns with the principles of culture-based character education, which is considered more effective because it is rooted in the values already alive within the community.

Character education through *syair* also supports the principle of internalizing values through habituation and emotional reinforcement, rather than mere cognitive memorization. This notion is reinforced by Lickona and David Brooks (2003) in their concept of character education that works, which argues that values become character only when they are integrated into daily habits, emotions, and tangible actions. Thus, *syair* that is repeatedly recited, sung, or used in children's games does not merely transmit values it creates performative moral experiences.

Interpreting *Syair Ibarat* and *Khabar Kiamat* through the lens of Gadamerian hermeneutics not only opens new pathways for understanding classical religious texts but also contributes to the development of a religious moderation consciousness grounded in local experience, culture, and Malay spirituality. In the context of early childhood education, this approach goes beyond transmitting religious dogma; it nurtures reflective, open-minded, and coexistent modes of thinking from an early age critical foundations for building a tolerant and inclusive society.

Meanwhile, in the framework of Nurcholish Madjid's thought on inclusive Islam (*rahmatan lil 'ālamīn*), these religious literary texts serve as tangible manifestations. This indicates that religious moderation is not merely a modern discourse, but deeply rooted in the local Islamic intellectual tradition. Therefore, reading and teaching *syair* to children from an early age is also part of the effort to cultivate an Islam that is compassionate, moderate, and tolerant within our social spheres. *Syair Ibarat* and *Khabar Kiamat*, in this light, can be understood as integrative character education tools: they blend Islamic values, universal ethics, and local cultural identity into a familiar, aesthetic, and emotionally resonant form. Thus, *syair* is not just a literary legacy, but a pedagogical resource highly relevant for shaping a civilized, moderate, and contextually grounded generation of Muslims in a multicultural society like Indonesia.

Locality and Spirituality: Contextualized Education in the Malay Tradition

The poetic approach in early childhood education is not merely a strategy for conveying moral messages aesthetically, but also reflects the importance of education based on local wisdom a priority in curriculum and pedagogical development in many multicultural countries, including Indonesia. In the Malay context, *syair* (rhymed verse) is not just a literary form, but serves as a "repository of values" that encapsulates the dimensions of custom, religion, and morality, as emphasized by Tenas Effendi (2004) in *Tunjuk Ajar Melayu*. Literature, particularly *syair*, thus becomes a vehicle for transmitting noble values that are time-tested and contextually relevant to the social life of the community.

Syair Ibarat dan Khabar Kiamat by Syeikh Abdurrahman Shiddiq clearly embodies this function. It does not present Islam as an abstract normative doctrine or

rigid legal discourse, but rather as a localized narrative conveyed through gentle, musical, and reflective Malay idioms. This demonstrates how Islam in the Malay world has been transmitted through cultural rather than confrontational means an accommodative and adaptive approach. When Islamic values are communicated in the language of one's own culture, they become more easily internalized as they resonate with children's lived experiences and are embraced as part of their identity.

According to James A. Banks (2006), effective education in pluralistic societies requires a multicultural approach, one of whose core principles is the connection between education and learners' cultural identities. Religious education that is detached from its cultural context often fails to foster emotional attachment and existential reflection in children. Conversely, when religious values are taught through familiar narrative and symbolic structures, children not only learn what is right, but also why it is right within the framework of their cultural experience. This is the unique strength of *syair* in shaping children's moral consciousness in a contextualized way.

The integration of religious and cultural values in *syair* also reflects the integrative-holistic approach to Islamic education, as affirmed by scholars such as Zamakhsyari Dhofier and Azyumardi Azra (1999) in their studies of *pesantren* (Islamic boarding schools). They argued that Indonesia's Islamic educational tradition has always accommodated local cultural elements without compromising the core tenets of Islam. This is also supported by the eco-pedagogy approach, which views local wisdom as an ecological, social, and spiritual value system that should be preserved in early childhood education (Gruenewald, 2003).

Syair Ibarat dan Khabar Kiamat is not merely a traditional religious literary text, but a vivid representation of contextual Islamic education that harmoniously unites three vital elements: religious teachings, the moral and cultural values of Malay tradition, and a sense of national identity. Within its verses, the values of *tawhid* (monotheism), social ethics, and awareness of the afterlife are expressed through language, symbols, and local cultural structures deeply rooted in the collective consciousness of the community. This positions the *syair* as an educational medium that not only teaches what is right but also cultivates why and how to be right all framed within children's social and cultural experiences.

The contextual nature of this educational method aligns with the principles of the Value Clarification Technique (VCT), developed by Louis Raths, Merrill Harmin, and Sidney Simon (1978). VCT emphasizes that effective value education does not merely deliver moral information but encourages learners to reflect, choose, and internalize values consciously and thoughtfully. This approach is vital in character education because it fosters a cognitive-affective process that enables children to see values as integral to their identity not just as external obligations.

Syair Ibarat dan Khabar Kiamat, in both structure and content, facilitates this process. Its verses portray the afterlife, consequences of good and evil deeds, and the importance of charity and kindness encouraging deep moral reflection, even in early childhood. When values are conveyed through emotionally resonant narratives that stimulate imagination, value clarification occurs in a more natural, personal, and impactful manner.

In the Malay cultural context, this approach supports the continuity of cultural values that unite religion and tradition into a singular philosophical framework. The traditional Malay expression, "*adat bersendikan syarak, syarak bersendikan Kitabullah*"

(customs are grounded in religious law, and religious law is grounded in the Quran), reinforces that there is no dichotomy between religion and culture, but rather a synergy. Thus, education based on texts like syair not only facilitates the formation of religious identity but also strengthens children's cultural and national identity.



Figure 1. Theme Word Cloud

Such an educational approach holds strategic relevance in cultivating a moderate and character-driven generation amidst the challenges of the digital age and globalization an era where children are frequently exposed to foreign values that may conflict with Islamic and local cultural ideals. Local-based character education, as offered through syair, serves both as a cultural and spiritual fortress and a value bridge connecting the wisdom of the past with the challenges of the future.

Conclusion

This study affirms that *Syair Ibarat* and *Khabar Kiamat* by Syeikh Abdurrahman Shiddiq hold significant value in strengthening Islamic principles and religious moderation in early childhood education. These syair do not merely narrate the pillars of Islam in imaginative and poetic forms, but also embed values of tolerance, patriotism, and anti-radicalism, all conveyed through the language and symbols of Malay culture. The syair's approach aligns with contemporary character education theories such as *ta'dib* in Islamic education (Al-Attas), the value clarification technique (Raths & Lickona), and local wisdom-based education (Tenas Effendi). With their rhythmic, metaphorical, and contextually grounded structure, these syair serve as effective pedagogical tools for internalizing values in a reflective and affective manner. They are not just literary aesthetics but also culturally rooted vehicles for instilling character, spirituality, and universal human values in children. Thus, integrating syair into early childhood education can be a strategic means to shape a generation of Muslims who are not only ritually devout but also polite, moderate, and prepared to thrive in a pluralistic society.

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