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Irmawati Marwoto

Fakultas Ilmu Pengetahuan Budaya, Universitas Indonesia, irmawati_marwoto@yahoo.com

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BIRD SYMBOLISM IN PERSIAN MYSTICISM POETRY

Irmawati M. Johan
Faculty of Humanities, Universitas Indonesia
irmawati_marwoto@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

This article discusses about bird symbolism in Persian Mysticism Poetry, because images of birds in Islamic mysticism are important symbols and are included in the prominent symbols among other symbols such as wine, roses and gardens. The bird symbol does not only have one single meaning, namely a symbol of the soul, but it also has another meaning. The bird symbol not only as a symbol of the soul but also as a symbol of certain people, experiences and creation. The Sufis who isolate themselves are symbolized as birds in the cage of exile, while Sufis who are killed are symbolized as holy birds that have returned to their nest. Those Sufis who meditate and concentrate are symbolized by birds of silence and the prophets, angels and saints are symbolized by birds flying in the heavenly garden. In, Indonesia, the study is important data which can give meaning to Islamic archeology, considering that Sufism, which was very influential in Indonesia, was spread by both the Persians and the Arabs. This research uses library data, which is collecting data about it, identifying, classifying and then analyzing it. From the results of the analysis it was found that the ideology of birds as a symbols of divinity, symbols of a holy persons, free souls which materializes in the archaeological remains in the form of ornaments or decorations on ancient Islamic tombs such as the tombs of the Wali Sanga in Java and Madura. This is related to the depiction of birds as symbols of free spirits reaching heaven, the guardians and spreaders of Islam in Java and Madura.

KEYWORDS: mysticism, Persian, poetry, symbol, archaeology

INTRODUCTION

In various archaeological sites along the northern coast of Java to Madura, especially on the cupola tombs of prominent figures who spread Islam in Indonesia, many reliefs with bird motifs were found. These birds are depicted in various positions, some flying, others perching on trees. In addition there are other figures of birds that appear without any other motives around them.



Figure 1.
A bird relief on the grave of Sunan Prapen in Giri, East Java

In fact, the image of flying birds has long been a universal symbol of the human soul rising towards a higher reality, starting with the winged gods from the ancient Near East to the winged angels in the Bible and the winged souls in Plato's *Phaedrus*. Poets have described the power of wings to lift the human soul to heaven (Ernst 2003: 617). The comparison of human souls to birds is common throughout the world. This comparison appears in various primitive religions and still continues today. In Turkey, even today when someone passes away people say *Kusu Uctu*, meaning "the bird soul has flown away" (Schimmel 1980: 317). In the Islamic world this bird image is very popular especially in Iran and other countries influenced by its culture, such as the Ottoman Empire and India (Schimmel 2001: 7). Bird images were first discovered in the writings of philosophers, Sufis and poets such as Ibn Sina (d. 1032AD) in *Risalat Al-Thayr* (Writings about birds), Al-Gazali (d. 1111AD), Suhrawadi (d. 1199M) Baqli Ruzbihan (d.1209AD), Farid-ad-Din-Attar (d.1220) with his very famous works *Mantiq at-Tayr* (Bird conversations) and Jalaluddin Rumi (d.1240) in one of his works entitled *Tasbih at Thuyur* (The Birds' Prayer Beads) and *Fihi ma Fihi* (The Sweet Search) *Diwan -I Kabir* (Spring), *Masnawi* (Ernst 2003: 617; Nasr1994: 112; Schimmel 1993: 66-86). Abu Yazid Bistami (d.870AD) in his book *Syarb Ash-Syathiyyat* describes himself as a bird with a body of oneness and wings of eternity which flies in the sky without any strength, until it reaches the tree of eternity and consumes its fruit. Yazid's view can be interpreted as the return of the bird's soul to the Heavenly garden. Yazid himself was described as a secluded Sufi figure who (ifrad) was described as "a bird in a cage of exile". (Ernst 2003: 632).

The bird used as a symbol of the soul is not always the same type of bird. In the works of Ruzbihan, the symbol of the nightingale and the eagle, which he calls *Simurg* and *Anqa*, are more common. *Simurg* birds are sometimes combined with *huma*, a bird that over shadow prospective kings. The stupid *Huma* in the book *Abrar al-Asyiqin* is a picture of the human soul. The nightingale is often associated with the image of roses which symbolizes unrequited love (Schimmel 1986: 299; Ernst 2003: 623,638). The images of the *Bulbul* in

Persian poetry symbolize humans who passionately love the beauty of roses, the unreachable God. While the *Simurg* birds in Iranian mythology, which were originally supernatural birds and helpers of human beings, later became the symbol of God in Persian Islamic literature (Ernst 2003: 626; Schimmel 1986: 299).

The use of birds as symbols is more common in the mystical works of Sufism, hagiography etc. (Braginsky 1993). But in various studies, it is apparent that birds used as symbols do not only have one meaning. One way to understand the meaning of those symbols is to study the various writings by experts. Although the understanding obtained in this way does not necessarily describe the meanings put into those symbols by the Sufi poets at the time of writing, we have at least tried to interpret those bird images often used in Islamic Sufism. Thus, the research on the meaning of birds in Islam will be sought in Sufism poems, especially in the works of three famous Sufis namely Rusbihan Baqli, Jalaluddin Rumi and Fariduddin Athar. These three figures were selected because their works have been widely researched and discussed.

Based on this, in this paper the meaning of birds in Islam will be sought in Sufism poems, especially those of three famous Sufis namely Rusbihan Baqli, Jalaluddin Rumi and Fariduddin Athar. These three figures have been selected because their works have had a great influence on Malay Sufi literature. According to Abdul Hadi (2014) the influence of Persian Sufi literature on Malay Sufi literature is very strong. The work of Fariduddin Attar, i.e. *Mantiq al-Tayr*, has been translated into Malay with the title *Hikayat si Buring Pingai* (the Story of the Bird of Pingai), *Andai-andai si Burung Pingai* (the Wishes of the Pingai Bird) and *Hikayat Burung Berau-Berau* (The Story of the Berau-berau Bird). Likewise, Hamzah Fansuri's works, such as *Syarab al-Asyiqin*, take many references from Parsi Sufism poems such as Attar, Rumi Iraqi etc. Archaeological evidence in the form of a tomb on the site of the Kingdom of Pasai in Aceh also shows the influence of Parsi Sufism in Indonesia. On the tomb of Husamuddin al-Nain, also known as Naina Husamuddin who died in the 15th century, is engraved a poem by Sa'di al-Shirazi a Sufi poet who lived in Iran in the 13th century AD (Hadi 2014: 21-24).

RUZBIHAN BAQLI

Rusbihan is a Sufi figure known for his love of beauty. He came from Shiraz and lived during the Salgur dynasty in Persia. He died in 1209 M (Ernst 2003: 618). In addition to being known as a Sufi, Rusbihan was also a poet. His works *Shatiyat* and *Abhar al-Asyiqin* (11-12M) are filled with colorful images of Bulbuls and fine roses in many hues. When the soul of the Bulbul is intoxicated by the rose, the bulbul, using the ear of his soul, will be able to listen the song of the Alast bird (Am I not your God?). Rusbihan reveals that red roses are the manifestation of God's majesty. Thus he used the image of roses which were loved by poets throughout the world. The image of God is presented as the image of a rose; the presence of the Divine is described as a sparkling red rose. The nightingale symbolizes the longing soul which will always love that rose forever. The Bulbul has a metaphysical connotation of the soul and the rose with divinity (Schimmel 1993: 308-9). Sometimes Rusbihan also talks about other birds such as peacocks, Hudhud birds and crows as found in

Syarb I Syathiyat and *Ruzbihan Nama* (Ernst 2003: 638 cat.25). Ruzbihan uses the image of a trapped bird to describe a soul trapped in its body. However, there is hope that the soul can be free and eventually reach the position of an eagle perched on the wrist of the hunter, God. To achieve this, the soul must strive to discipline itself and avoid bad friends, as Ruzbihan says:

"Begin to distance yourself from the flock of stupid sparrows
In order to fly towards the Anqa bird,
so that your soul will not fly on broken wings. "

There are times when Ruzbihan obscures the difference between the nightingale or Bulbul and the Simurgh bird because the poet strongly emphasizes the rise of mankind towards divine attributes. The soul rises like a heavenly bird to find its identity, which is to find God through its true self. When the *Simurgh* bird in the soul flies from the human realm to the realm of God, the developing soul in the form of clay that Adam was made of is described as saying to himself in Adam's clay that the search and reflection of the shadows of the Anqa bird has become the shadow of God. At another time, the soul was filled ecstasy because it changed from the self-elimination of the bulbul to the courage of the *Hudhud*, who did not hesitate to convey his knowledge to the Prophet Solomon (Ernst 2003: 624-5).

Images of the soul birds according to Ruzbihan are also used to describe the heavenly habitat. A bird's nest is a symbol of the actual bird's house in heaven not on earth. Bird nests must be built in trees found in the heavenly garden, such as the lotus plants and Tuba trees that birds find when they obtain the right to enter Heaven. However, entering the heavenly garden is not easy. The rebellious nature of the soul should be snared with a bait symbolized by sugar granules. Because only sugar granules baits can make the birds get caught in the trap. The trapped birds and the fall of Adam who was trapped in to the mud are metaphors used by Ruzbihan to describe the soul's fall to earthly matters (Ernst 2003: 626). Ruzbihan calls the Sufis who are persecuted and killed as chasity birds that have returned to their nests. In refers to addition, in *Abhar al-Asyiqin*, there are times when he symbolizes the Prophet Muhammad as a "nightingale from pre-eternal love" and "a *simurgh* bird in a post-immortal cages". The Simurg bird and the nightingale are two different bird symbols. The *Simurgh* is a symbol of God who is loved, while the nightingale is a symbol of human beings who love; but, the dynamic role of the prophet Muhammad, mediates the difference between these two symbols (Ernst 2003: 21).

In addition, birds are used by Ruzbihan metaphorically to refer to the soul and the prophets. It is also used as a symbol s of angels and saints who are described as birds flying in the heavenly garden. The symbols of people who concentrate and meditate, are the birds of silence (Ernst 2003: 621, 638.cat.24). Ruzbihan sometimes used birds as symbols of creation. The figure of speech used is the personification in of the verses of the Koran and Hadith. Many poets were inspired by verse 17: 4 of the Qur'an: "There is nothing that does not praise and give thanks to God." To show that all beings are grateful to Him, the beautiful singing of the birds is a natural example to be used as a metaphor of God's creations.

According to Ruzbihan the Qur'anic verses are not just words but also *teofani verbal* that serves as a catalyst to transform the soul's sense of hearing. He explained his approach in interpreting the scripture as the long flight of a bird to a heavenly garden (Ernst 2003: 629-931).

FARIDUDDIN ATHAR

Fariduddin Athar was a Sufi who lived in Nishapur Persia in the 12th century . In 1230 he was killed by the soldiers of Jengis Khan (Bayat 2001: 67-8). For centuries Fariduddin Athar's poetry influenced the seekers of mystical knowledge. Fariduddin has written more than a thousand other texts. Jalalluddin Rumi the famous Sufi poet and founder of the Darwis Order considered Fariduddin Athar to be a model for Sufi teachers. He said: (Bayat 2001: 66)

"Everything I said about the truth, I learned from Fariduddin Athar"

One of his very famous and important works in the Sufi world is *Mantihq al-Thayr*, which means the language of birds / the forum of birds, which refers of the Quranic verses about the moment when God taught the language of birds to the Prophet Solomon.

"And David left his inheritance to Solomon. And Solomon said:
"O man. The language of birds has been taught to us and we have
been given everything. Surely it (all) is truly a gift (Qur'an 27:16).

Mantihq al-Thayr tells about birds which to be able to reach their destination, God, must fly a course that is full of obstacles. This ritual search was led by the *Hudhud* birds, as the symbol of the spiritual teacher.

Through his intoxicating poems when praising God and His Messenger, he brings the reader to the realm of worldly existence and servitude of the human soul entangled in lust as described by the journey of the birds which are full of danger posed by the presence of the *Simurg* (Nasr 1994: 115). The story of *Mantiq Al-Thayr* tells about birds who were gathering to choose a leader. The *Hud-hud* bird appeared among them, declaring that the king they were looking for was the *Simurg*. In the quest to find the *Simurg*, the *Hud-hud* was chosen as the leader. The *Hud-hud* told them that on the way to mount *Qaf*, where the *Simurg* was hiding, they would cross seven cosmic mountain valleys. The first was the valley of search (*thalab*) which scribes the search for truth. Only the seekers with humble hearts could pass through the first valley to the second valley, namely the Valley of Love (*Isyq*). In this valley the fire of love would begin to grow in their hearts and they would be burning inside desire to meet the beloved King. Here the seekers would encounter obstacles that tested their love. The *Hud-hud* said to the birds:

"The face of the lover must be ablaze, glowing and burning like fire. Love does not deal with the mind If you have inner vision, *Zarah-zarah* in this world will be revealed to you. But if you look at it with your mind's eye you will never understand how necessary it is to love "
(Fariduddin Athar 2001: 142-3).

The third valley is the valley of Conviction (*ma'rifah*). Here the seekers will be illuminated by the truth. He will get knowledge about the Beloved (*gnosis*). The journey will continue to the fourth valley, namely the valley of satisfaction of the heart (*istighna*), here the seekers will eliminate their desire to own worldly goods. In the fifth valley, namely the valley of oneness (*tawhid*) the seekers will experience that all existence is essentially one. The diversity of ideas, experiences and living things actually comes from The One. The sixth valley is the valley of admiration or confusion (*hayrat*), here the seekers will forget his selfhood, reason will no longer function. With the heart's eye, he will see the light leading towards the gate of divinity and secrets will unfold. The last valley is the melting valley of dissolution (mortal). Here the seekers will finally understand how a drop of water becomes one with the ocean. He sink into the ocean of Unification with the Beloved (Nasr 1994: 116; Bayat 2003: 73-4).

The birds gather and prepare to fly towards the cosmic mountain to find the *Simurg*. However, on hearing about the difficulty of the journey they have to go through, each bird begins to make excuses not to participate. Thus, the *Hud-hud* and the other birds start to argue over the matter. Their reluctance to participate in this search symbolizes the lustful soul which is avoiding the flames of purgatory. While the arguments and the debates that occur symbolize the Sufi teachers (the *hud hud*) who are teaching their *murshid* (students) (Nasr 1994: 117).

The nightingale or Bul-bul, which symbolizes the love of external beauty rather than inner beauty, argues that his love is a rose which can solve all difficulties when one looks at it. He does not need to wander around. His love for roses is enough for him. He has the secret of love that no other creature has. He then sings a love song:

"I know the secrets of love. All night I poured out love calls. Intoxicated flute music. God was inspired by my laments, and I made the roses prostrate themselves, and moved the hearts of the lovers. I teach the mysteries with my melancholic tunes, and anyone who listens to me is sure to be fascinated. Nobody knows that I only reveal my secrets to the rose. For the sake of the rose, I have forgotten everything there is, even myself. Achieving the *Simurg* - ah, that's far beyond my reach. The love of the rose is enough for the Nightingale"
(Bayat 2003: 71).

The Hudhud replied to the nightingale's song:

"You are only intoxicated by superficial appearances, with pleasures in tantalizing forms. The love of the rose has sealed your heart. No matter how

beautiful the rose is, the flower will wither, and the love for something that is so mortal can only cause instant changes in Perfection. When a rose smiles at you, it only wants to fill you with sorrow, because he laughs at you every spring. Ignore the roses and all their blinding redness (Bayat 2003: 72).

Fariduddin Athar used symbolic imagery in all his works. Every story he told requires contemplation. What Fariduddin Athar wanted to convey in this conversation is a description of humans who have a great desire to seek perfection, but often stop when they encounter progress. This happens to those who want to follow the Sufi path. Many are fascinated by the initial stages of consciousness and think that they have achieved full illumination. Fariduddin Athar tells us that we should not mistaken imaginary love for true love (Bayat 2003: 72).

The Parrot that symbolizes the love of worldly life and its eternity, seeks the source of life to make this life eternal and feels satisfied with such goals (Nasr 1994: 118). As he said to the hud-hud:

"I am so charming that a cruel man with an iron heart
has locked me in a cage. Bound in this prison,
I long for the source of immortal water guarded by *Kizr*.
I want to go to this water source. The spring of *Khizr* is enough for me "
(Aththar 2003: 32)

The Hudhud answered:

"He who does not want to leave his life is not a being. Life has been given so that one day you can be a noble friend. Enter the circles of those who are noble and follow their path with joy "(Aththar 2003: 32).

The *Hud-hud's* answer embodies the meaning that the soul was created to be offered to God, as a "perfect state" (entelechy) and the cause of its existence, which is therefore happiness (Nasr 1994: 118).

The peacock, who originated in heaven but fell to earth because he helped the devil when he was luring Adam out of heaven, also revealed the reason for his reluctance to join. (Nasr 1994: 118). He said:

"The artist of this world ", uses the jin's brush in his hand to form me, but my fate is not worthy of jealousy. I befriended snakes in the heaven of this world, and because of that I was driven away with contempt. But I hope that there will be some directions which will lead me out of this dark place to the large houses that stand there forever. How can you expect me to try to get to the *Simurg* when I have lived in the heaven on earth? I have no other desire than to stay there once more " (Aththar 2003: 33).

The Hud-hud replied:

"The King's Palace is far better than your heaven.

The palace is a place of residence for the souls, it is eternity,
it is the purpose of our true desires.

The Most High is the Great sea;

The grace heavenly earthly is only a small drop

If you want to be perfect, look for the universe,

choose the universe and be the universe" (Aththar 2003: 33-4).

After falling to the earth, the peacock seeks refinement to obtain heaven. This is like the esoteric people who seek mere heavenly pleasures rather than a relationship with God, in other words they are looking for a house rather than "the Host" (Nasr 1994: 118).

The Duck that spends its time swimming, refuses to leave because he does not want to leave the water he loves (Nasr 1994: 118). He said to hud-hud:

"No one has ever witnessed a more attractive
and holier creature than me.

Which bird can live and move in the water like me?

among the birds I am a convert who has clear eyes,
dressed in clean robes and living in a sacred element.

Nothing benefits me besides water.

Why then should I leave it? (Aththar 2003: 34-5).

The Hud-hud said:

"O, you who finds joy and satisfaction in life in the water! You become
lazy and sleepy there. Water is only good for those who are beautiful and
clean-faced. If you are like that, so that's fine But how long will you stay
clean" (Aththar 2003: 35).

The dependence of the duck on water symbolizes mere physical obedience to worship without breaking into its meaning (Nasr 1994: 118).

The Jungle fowl who loves rocks, expressed his objections to join the search for the *Simurg*. He said to the Hud-hud:

"I like to wander among the ruins because I like rocks. The rocks light a fire in
my heart and make me feel satisfied. My heart has been wounded by a hundred
sorrows, because my love for precious stones has tied me down to the mountain.
Love for other things, while the kingdom of stones is eternal, the gems are from
an everlasting mountain. How could I wish to go boldly to face the *Simurg*? "
(Aththar 2003: 36-7).

The Jungle fowl that loves different kinds of stone symbolizes humans who are bound to sparkling wealth and ownership (Nasr 1994: 118).

The Hud-hud answered:

"O, you who contains the colors of all the stones, the blood of your heart stains your claws and beaks, and your efforts to search for the gems lower your dignity. Isn't a gem just a colored stone? But your love for gems has frozen your heart. Without these colors, gems are just ordinary pebbles. Look for the true gems that are of pure quality and don't feel satisfied with a pebble" (Aththar 2003: 37).

Now, the Humay raised his objections to the Hud-hud. The *humay* is a kind of imaginary creature that has the body of a lion, the head and wings of an eagle and a beard. In Latin it is known as a griffin and is considered a ferocious creature. The *Humay* is a symbol of worldly power (Aththar 2003: 38 cat.1; Nasr, 1994: 118):

"I am not a bird like all of you, my passions and insatiable desires are moving me and to fulfill them I am separated from other creatures. Kings are appointed because of the influence of my shadow. Everyone is looking for protection under my wings. Do I still need a friendship with the great *Simurg* when glory is already with me because of my nature?" (Aththar 2003: 38).

The Hud-hud replied:

"O, slave of pride, do not ever spread out your shadow again and do not ever boast again. Even if your shadows put rulers on their thrones, they will soon encounter misfortunes and lose their glory forever. Whereas if they do not, they will face such terrible calculations in the future" (Aththar 2003: 39).

The eagle came to deliver his reasons. The eagle symbolizes humans who try to approach the king to obtain worldly power. They do not want to give up their noble position in the palace (Nasr 1994: 118).

"I am happy to be with the kings and ignore other creatures. I cover my eyes with a hood so that I can perch on the king's hand. I do not feel called to take part in this journey, I am satisfied being fed by the king's hand; his palace is good enough for me. I have no other desire other than spending a life full of joy in this way, both by serving the king and by hunting according to his liking" (Aththar 2003: 40).

The Hud-hud replied:

"O you who are bound to an outward form only and do not care about intrinsic values, the *Simurgh* is worthy of the position of king, because his authority is second to none. Even though earthly kings may be fair too, they may also be guilty of being unjust. Those who are closer to him, will be in a better position. The believers are forced to oppose the king, so their lives are often in danger. Therefore the king can be compared to fire, so stay away from him "(Aththar 2003: 40).

The stork came to express his reasons for not participating in the journey. The stork symbolizes the sadness and gloom of the soul; he does not want to leave the changes that continue to occur, just like the changes in the ocean waves (Nasr 1994: 118-9):

"My beautiful house is partitioned by the sea between the coastal lakes, where no one hears my songs. Sad and depressed I contemplate on the edge of the salty sea full of longing for fresh water, for if there is no fresh water, what will happen to me! Even though the water is turbulent and the waves break at my feet, I cannot swallow even a single drop. However, if the sea loses just a little of its water, my heart will burn with anxiety. For beings like me, my passion for the sea is enough. How can a creature like me, who only searches for a drop of water, reach a unity with the Simurg? "(Aththar 2003: 42).

The nightingale replied:

"O thou who does not know the sea, the sea is an element that is totally devoid of loyalty. Don't trust it or it will end your life by drowning you. Sometimes the water is bitter, sometimes salty; sometimes the sea is calm, sometimes turbulent; constantly changing, never fixed; sometimes the sea tide rises, sometimes it recedes. How will you find a place of rest for your heart there? " (Aththar 2003: 42-3).

The owl came forward with a confused face, objecting to join the search for the Simurg. He is a symbol of stinginess and does not want to leave the solitude he has chosen (Nasr 1994: 119):

"I have selected a place to stay, a dilapidated house that has collapsed. I was born among the ruins and there I have found pleasure. The love of wealth has led me there, because the treasures were among the rubble of the ruins. I was able to hide my efforts that are full of the desire to search for wealth. I am weak and only love these treasures and ruins " (Aththar 2003: 44).

The Hud-hud replied:

"O you who are intoxicated by the love of wealth, surely you will also die in that wealth, while the new life sneaks away before you reach your noble goal. The love for gold is a characteristic of those who do not believe. Don't you know that those who have corrupted their morals by the love of gold will be like fake money whose face that will change into that of a mouse on the Day of Judgment? "(Aththar 112003: 44).

The last bird to state his reason was the sparrow that appeared weak and soft-hearted, trembling like a flame from head to foot. The sparrow symbolizes human weakness (Nasr 1994: 1199):

"I'm pensive, confused and desperate. I don't even know how to live and I'm fragile like a hair. Nobody can help me and I don't even have the strength of an ant. How could a weak creature like me try to find the *Simurg*? "(Aththar2003: 46).

The Hud-hud replied:

"O you who are losing hope, you who are sometimes sad and sometimes happy. I will not be fooled by this contrived reason. You're somewhat hypocritical. Also in your humility you show a hundred signs of boastfulness and pride. You don't need to talk, just seal your lips and start walking. If you burn, you will burn with the others "(Aththar 2003: 46).

After the birds had put forward their reasons which were basically their mental problems, they finally agreed to start their journey. For years and years they went on their long journey and toward the end of the journey almost all had succumbed to death, thirst, broken wings, heat, fatigue and insanity. Because of the severity of the journey, from the thousands of birds which started off on the journey, there were only thirty birds left to reach Mount Qaf. They were all in a very poor condition. They were exhausted, featherless and wingless. However, they were the selected birds. When they reached the palace gates, they experienced a flash of satisfaction. They saw thousands of suns, each more brilliant than the other, thousands of moons and stars that were just as beautiful. As described by Attar (Nasr 1994: 20-1):

"They saw a form without qualifications and images,
Beyond perception, thought and understanding.
When His sparks and perfection are cast out,
Hundreds of worlds will burn in an instant.
One hundred thousand suns blushing beautifully

One hundred thousand moons and stars, and even more.
They will see everything in amazement,
They will come like atoms in a dance. "

The birds begin to tremble in fear before this majestic sight. After a long time, out came the head of the palace household. The birds were put to the test once again. They were told to return to the place they came from. But the birds refused and insisted on meeting the Simurg. Finally the door was opened for them, after drawing a hundred curtains, a new world was revealed behind the veils. Now the light from all light radiated and all of the birds sat on the *masnad*, the noble and great seat. When they were all settled down despite everything, they realized that the Simurg was there with them (Attar 2001: 180-181). At that time the thirty birds (Si-murgh) saw the Simurgh's eternal face, they became unconscious. In this situation, they begged the Simurgh to reveal the mystery of their nature and His nature. Then came the answer from His majesty:

"My majesty is like a mirror. Whosoever comes will see himself in that mirror. Because you come as Si-murgh, all 30 (si) of you appear in that mirror. I am far, far behind the Si-murgh, because I am the true and eternal Simurgh. Therefore, immerse yourselves in me, so that you may rediscover your selves in me ... "(Attar 2001: 181-2; Nasr 1994: 124).



Figure 2.
The Simurg bird in Mantiq al-Tayr by Fariduddin Atar.

JALAL AL-DIN RUMI

Anyone who is familiar with the world of Sufism, will certainly have heard the name Jalal al-Din Rumi, because he was a Sufi teacher who was very famous in his time and his works were most widely translated. In addition, he is known for his poems which are considered the best models in Persian Poetry. Rumi's teachings are highly valued and utilized by Sufi teachers right up to the modern mystics (Bayat 2003: 147). Rumi was born in Balkh (Persia) on September 30, 1207 A.D. His real name was Muhammad but in his poems he used the name "Khamusyî" (meaning silent). Silence is an expression favored by the Sufis. It refers to the deepest mysteries of humans, namely Divine love that cannot be expressed in words. Rumi used that word many times in his poems to refer to the heart that prays or focuses on God (Hadi 1985: xiii). In his poem *In the Silence*, Rumi used the word *silence* many times (Rumi 2000: 1198-99).

Clear the surface of the mirror with your breath
Go with him without words
He knows all your good deeds
He is someone who turns the wheel of sound
In silence with silent words.

Every thought buried in your heart
Will be revealed to you
One by one, in silence.

Change each form of your thoughts into
a bird.
Let them fly
To other parts of the world.

One is an owl, one is an eagle,
The other is a crow.
Each is different from the other
But in silence they are of the same nature.

In order to be able to see the moon that is not
Visible to the naked eye
Direct your gaze into your heart
Look at yourself in silence

In the 15th century, Rumi was known as Mawlavi who came from Mulla-yi-Rum, which means "student from Anatolia". Among the Persians he is better known by the name Mawlana (meaning "our teacher") while in the western world he is known as Rumi which

refers to Asia Minor where he spent most of his life in the city of Konya (Bayat 2003: 149; Hadi 1985: xiii; Nasr1994: 127; Schimmel 1986: 322).

Rumi's father, who was named Baha Al-Din Walad, was a famous Sufi in Balkh who founded the Kubrawiyyah Order. When Rumi was 12 or 13 years old, he left his hometown and never returned. On his journey, in Nishapur he met Fariduddin Athar who gave him a book *Asrarnamah* (Book of Secrets) as a gift. The works of Fariduddin Athar, which teach Sufism principles through stories and fables, greatly influenced Rumi's works. The city of his final destination was Konya in Anatolia, where the Rum Seljukiah dynasty ruled in peace. At that time the city was a place of refuge for Muslims during the Mongol invasion. Rumi's father died in this city when Rumi was 24 years old. After his father's death, Rumi replaced his position as an expert in religion. Then he studied with Burhan al-Din Muhaqqiq Tirmidhi who taught him his father's spiritual teachings. The two eventually travelled to Aleppo and Damascus. This was the place where Rumi had the opportunity to study with a great Sufi of that time, namely Ibn-Arabi from Spain. On his return to Konya, Rumi became the leader of the Konya University even though he was already recognized as a Sufi teacher (Bayat 2003: 150-1; Nasr1994: 120-30; Shimmel 1986: 323).

Over the years 1244- 1245, Rumi's life changed through his meetings with Shams Al-Din Tabrizi, a mystical figure who was a strange and powerful influence on Rumi. He was the one who kindled in him the fire of mystical love - as described by Ghazzali, aynu'l Qudat and the RuzbihanBaqli – an absolute love that excited him thoroughly and caused him to abandon his family and students for months and months. He left everything he possessed and knelt in dedication before his teacher. When Rumi reappeared he had changed. He no longer gave religious lectures but gave guidance through the intoxicating Sufi dance and as a substitute for philosophical discussions, he played the flute or the fiddle. From an intellectual man, Rumi had turned into a poet who lived an ascetic life and was intoxicated by love. He really melted into the love he had just discovered; the love that was revealed to him by his teacher. In his poem *Lies*, Rumi describes the love that can bring the soul to its creator (Rumi 2000: 178).

They say,
"People who were born on Earth
will not join the angels of heaven "
Lie!

They say,
"A sincere soul must stay in
A worldly nest;
He will never fly
soaring high on the wings of love ”
Lie!

One day Shams disappeared and never returned. Some researchers stated that Shams had been killed by one of Rumi's students who was jealous. Without his teacher, Rumi fell into

deep sadness and despair. He expressed these feelings in his poems in the *Matsnawi* and the majority of Rumi's *gazel* mention the name Shams. (Bayat 2003: 158; Rumi 2000: 14-19; Schimmel 1986: 324-5).

Rumi often referred to Shams as "the sun" and "the moon". When he recounts a meeting with his friend and teacher in an atmosphere of mystical ecstasy, he more often refers to him as "the sun", a symbol of those who have reached *ma'rifa* (enlightenment). But when he is longing for mystical unity and longing to meet with his teacher and God, then he will refer to his teacher as "the moon" a symbol of one who reflects the light of God (Hadi 1985: xii).

The only truth I know is
 My teacher, Tabriz Shams
 The Light of his Sun never shone on
 Something without perpetuating it (Rumi 2000: 71).

In another poem entitled *Gold Cup*, Rumi also mention his teacher using the Sun:

When my heart sees the ocean of His love
 My heart jumps up and shouts,
 "Find me if you can"
 O, where should I find my lost heart?
 He is the Sun.
 In the footprints of his steps
 Guidance for the steps of each heart (Rumi 2000: 68).

When Rumi died on 17th December 1273, the Maulawiyah Order was continued by his student Husamuddin who inspired to Rumi to write the *Matsnawi*. After Husamuddin died the order was led by Rumi's son, Sultan Walad (Schimmel 1986: 323). The work Rumi produced is massive; more than 26 thousand stanzas are collected in the *Matsnawi* (6 volumes), the *Diwan*-(veneration poems) collected in the *Diwan-Sham-I Tabriz* consist of 36 thousand stanzas. The description of Sufism (Tasawwuf) in *Fihi Ma Fihi* (It is what It is), *Maqalat* and Exegesis of the Qur'an (interpretations) and reviews of the works by Sufis such as Sana'I, Fariduddin Athar and Ibn-Arabi, Makatib in the form of a collection of Rumi's letters to his companions. *Majalis-I Sab'ah* is a prose work which contains Rumi's sermons and lectures and other writings (Hadi 1985: xxiii; Nasr 1986: 135-139).

In his poems Rumi uses many symbols of birds, both birds as symbols of the soul that is always longing for and loves God, and various kinds of black and evil birds from the material world. The nightingale is a bird very much liked by Rumi, because of the love of the bird to the rose, which both symbolizes the connection between passionate love and eternal Beauty as well as the phoenix (Simurgh). In his poem entitled *A Heap of Dust In Unity*, Rumi uses the Phoenix as a metaphor of the soul (Rumi 2000: 210-11).

O soul,
You are a Phoenix
That is created and arises from the heap
Of dust in unity.
Why don't you fly?

In his poem, the Birds of Heaven, Rumi expresses the love of the soul for the Creator (Rumi 2000: 93-96).

Lovers of truth, rise up
Let's start on our journey to Heaven
We have seen enough of the world
The time has come to meet different people.

Let's act like the birds of heaven
Who fly while drinking sweet tasting water

Love is our faithful guide
Down a path paved with suffering

Let's stay quiet for a moment
Give room to the Voters to have their say
Let's ponder for a moment
Until we can hear His Voice
Who calls us in the night

Our garden is filled with a flocks of nightingales
The crowd of crows has flown away

In the heart of the lover there is a stringed instrument
Which plays the melody of longing.

In addition to the nightingale, the eagle (*Elang*) is the symbol of the prophets who are described as the ones with the most difficulties. The basis for the use of figures of speech are used is to provide a true standard of living of all the prophets and which becomes a touchstone for all believers (Renard 2001: 40; Schimmel in Renard 2001: 8-9). In his poem entitled *Towards the Invisible*, Rumi uses the Eagle as a symbol of the Prophets.

When you beat your wings and feathers
You have been freed from this cage.
When you go to heaven, you reach the world of the soul.
You were once a precious eagle,

Who was snared by an old woman.
Then you heard the sound of a drum calling,
You flew across space and time.

Like a sick nightingale,
Bearing the burden of love.
You fly here and there together

With a flock of owls.
Then you smell the fragrant rose garden
You fly to meet a rose.

O heart, you are truly an amazing bird
When you reach the heights of heaven,
When you're flapping your wings

Now the words have finished their work
The wound that they carried have closed and healed
Now it's time for you to stop and rest
In the beloved arms (Rumi 2000: 223-6).

Far across the east and west are fluttering the wings of birds
Their song thrills the hearts of those who listen:
He flew between the earth and the throne of God together with
His majesty and glory.
Birds that soar without the prophet Solomon are bats that
Have fallen in love with the darkness.
Come closer to the Prophet Solomon, o despicable bat, don't
Let yourself be swallowed by the darkness forever (Hadi 1985: 27).

Eagles sometimes symbolize the *Nafs muthma`innah* (peaceful soul) which is called home by its Creator. This is illustrated in *Fihi ma Fihi*, which begins with the teacher's hands shaping his students in the path of Sufis. This event is compared to fledglings which when learning to fly must experience many difficulties until they are finally be able to serve their master. Rumi depicts this moment as a proud bird sitting on his master's hand and rubbing his head against his master's chest, while begging forgiveness for the violations he has committed. There are times when the Eagle is symbolized as an ecstatic bird that describes the power of divine love that is intent on winning the hearts of reluctant humans, just like an eagle that pounces on its prey (Schimmel 1993: 84-5).

Although Rumi argues that the spirits cannot be described as taught by Allah in the Al-Quran (Sura 17:85): "They ask you (Hai Muhammad) about the soul. Say "the Spirit is the command of my Lord; and you are not given only a little knowledge ", but he often talks about it. The spirit is considered to be a hidden meaning in human form which is contrasted with the body (Chittick 2003: 41-44).

The spirit is like an eagle, the body is bound by shackles
And with broken wings. The body always boasts of its beauty
and its splendor, while the spirit always conceals the beauty
of his wings and feathers. In the form of an egg, you are
an amazing bird — because you are in an egg; you can't fly.
When you are able to destroy the physical prison, you will be
able to flap your wings and fly with the spirit.

O people! This body holds you in torment. Your soul-bird
imprisoned because of another bird. The Spirit is an eagle,
the body, a crow. An eagle is hurt by crows and owls.
When will my soul birds be released from their cage and fly
in the garden. How foolish is a bird in a cage that never tries to
To fly away

Rumi gives a metaphor to describe what happens when a prophet is teaching his people. God taught human beings through the prophets. This is compared to someone using a mirror to train a parrot. The teacher stands behind mirror to train the parrot. The parrot is used as a symbol of a student. The student thinks that the reflection in the mirror is the person who is speaking, even though the real teacher is unseen. Here Rumi illustrates that for the sake of the people, the prophets enter the world of "letters and sounds" to become teachers of mankind (Renard 2001: 84). In one of his poems entitled *Blind Followers*, Rumi used the metaphor of the parrot as a student who was studying (Hadi 1985: 16)

A parrot looking into the mirror
Thought he was looking at himself.
And he learned human conversation, while imagining
A bird like himself was talking to him.
That is a selfish student.
Nothing does he see in the Teacher other than himself.
Perfect reason is really fluent in speaking
Next to the mirror is the teacher's lesson
The Spirit that is a human secret
Invisible. The words he imitates, he memorizes.
That's all. A parrot who has no close friends

For mystics, the prophet is seen as a paradigm model of relations between the Creator and his creations. A Prophet is a model for the people, not only a historical figure or merely a personification of a divine nature. The patterns of values and behavior behind specific aspects of the prophet's life history became an object of study of the mystics. Allegories and fables were created to recount the virtues of the prophets which are characteristics of the prophets through human and animal characters. In fact, sometimes stories are used in which the

prophets themselves symbolize something or someone who plays a role with the types of humanity as ideal mystics or spiritual guides (Renard 2001: 40).

The Prophet Adam became a model of the Prophet's struggle to stay in touch with true knowledge. He taught the creatures their names and the "songs" of God. He also became a model of a student's experience as an untrained eagle. The protection found in the prophet Noah's ship is used as a metaphor of a sheikh's search for knowledge. The flood is a metaphor for the grand jihad. For Rumi, the Prophet David was a Sheikh whose decision helped the Disciple to destroy lust with weapons of reason. Luqman became a student model for David the Sheikh, because of his patience which taught the seekers to look for hidden prey rather than prey that is outwardly attractive. The Prophet Muhammad was seen by Rumi as an ideal spiritual guide, as a helper for sick people who made them realize the causes of the disease and taught them about the great jihad. He also considered the Prophet Muhammad as a sheikh who fought against the symbol of lust (Renard 2001: 238-243).

According to Rumi, the world can only be understood through love. Love is meant to eliminate selfhood, in order to achieve perfect unity with God, the lover. This elimination of the self becomes the essence of love in Sufism which is a mystical translation of the hadith of the Prophet "poverty is my neighbor". This poverty is defined as self poverty or the suppression of the self or the control of worldly desires. The purpose of self-elimination is to cast a light on the road to understanding reality. There is no essential form except God (Hadi 1985: xiv-xv).

In the poem *Diwan I kabir* Rumi tells about spring in Konya. After a storm one night, suddenly the roses blossomed covering the city in fragrant fresh leaves. The fragrance of the *idge* flowers filled the streets. It was really like a beautiful paradise; unlike winter in the Anatolian highlands which lasts very long and is very cold. There are blocks of ice everywhere and there is no light and warmth of the sun. Ice and snow are symbols of humans who languish as they are bound to the materialistic world. But they also want to be free like an isolated human heart which longs to return to the Divine Ocean (Schimmel 1993: 66-7).

Spring is described by the melting snow that allows the people in caravans to leave their dark huts to continue their journey. Thus the soul, being free from material bonds moves towards the loved one, to his home. Winter is *khalwah*. During this period the Dervish concentrates on gathering spiritual power. During winter the beautiful soul birds fly away, leaving only the crows that are related to the cemetery. The crow had once taught Qabil how to bury his killed. The Crows are very happy during the fall. When everything starts to freeze and the nightingales leave the rose garden. Then the crow wears his nice black clothes and walks arrogantly, unaware that he is terrifying. If the crow had known it were so bad, it would have melted like the snow because of its sadness. (Schimmel 1993: 60-71).

If only he had knew, he could have fly to a rose garden that was open during the spring. He would have understood the longing of the crows who are pining for their master's palace. Rumi shows them never to despair over divine grace. The crows who are occupants of the low lands of the material world can turn into eagles and even become beautiful white eagles (Himmah). Even though they are an unfortunate creatures, he can attain a high spiritual state and witness the manifestation of divine holiness, once he releases his snow-

like qualities. This transformation can occur with Love and Divine Grace. In the spring, the crows disappear. The true soul birds will return, namely the nightingales that sing melodies of longing for the roses. (Schimmel 1993: 71-2).

The Male peacock is the image used by Rumi in comparison with spring. The peacock which walks around arrogantly because of his love of a friend's face, because the garden and male peacocks together beautify help to improve themselves. The colorful birds that display their dazzling feathers "like the hearts of lovers" stimulate people's souls to dance and then unite. In the *Matsnawi* Rumi tells the story of a proud peacock who wants to repent and so he pulled out all his colorful feathers. He was then reprimanded by a Sufi for doing that because, after all, his beauty was God's creation. After that incident, peacock feathers were used as pointers when reading the Al Quran (Schimmel 1993: 82-83).

In the spring, besides the nightingales, the crane or *laklak* also appears and in the Turkish tradition this bird is considered to be a godly bird that goes on the Hajj pilgrimage every year using a white robe. This bird prefers to build its nest on towers and mosques.

The "soul" crane has arrived:
Spring has arrived too - where are you?
The world is lively sparkling with leaves
And beautiful roses!

The sound *laklak* made by the crane is a constant pledge to the Lord's majesty: *al-mulk lak, al`izz lak, al-hamd lak* (the kingdom, majesty and all praise are Yours!). Thus the cranes are able to "kindle the fire of monotheism in a doubtful heart" (Schimmel 1993: 71-2).

Other soul birds that have become selected by Rumi are parrots that carry a special role in the mystical realms of Sufi poets. The green feathers show that the bird come from heaven. This bird is a symbol of wisdom and incessantly gives warnings and instructions. His words are sweet like the lover who imagines his lover (Schimmel 1993: 85).

CONCLUSION

Images of birds in Islamic mysticism are important symbols and are included in the prominent symbols among other symbols such as wine, roses and gardens (Braginsky 1993). The bird symbol does not only have one single meaning, namely a symbol of the soul, but it also has another meaning. Baqli Ruzbihan (dec.1209 AD) used the bird symbol not only as a symbol of the soul but also as a symbol of certain people, experiences and creation. The Sufis who isolate themselves are symbolized as birds in the cage of exile, while Sufis who are killed are symbolized as holy birds that have returned to their nest. Those Sufis who meditate and concentrate are symbolized by birds of silence and the prophets, angels and saints are symbolized by birds flying in the heavenly garden (Ernst 2003: 620-621,638). Fariduddin Athar (1230M), especially in his poem *Mantiq at-tayr*, used the image of birds as a symbol

of the soul represented by 30 birds looking for the king, while the *Simurgh* is a symbol of God who is longed for by the 30 birds. The soul is pictured as a heavenly bird rising to find its God through its true self (Ernst 2003: 624).

The type of soul birds that appears in the poems are not always the same. Ruzbihan used the symbols of the nightingale and eagle which he called *Simurgh* and *Anqa*. The *Simurgh* bird was sometimes combined with the *huma*, which is a bird that over shadows prospective kings. The *Huma* in the book *Abrar al-Asyiqin* is a picture of the human soul. Whereas the nightingale is often associated with images of roses as a representation of unrequited love. But sometimes he talks about the peacock, the hudhud in *Syarb-i Syathiyyat* and *Abbrar al-asyiqin* and the crow in the *Ruzbihan Nama* (Schimmel 19: 299; Ernst 2003: 623,638: cat. 2-4).

The image of the nightingale in Persian poetry shows human beings who passionately love the beauty of roses, that is, God who cannot be reached. While the *Simurgh* bird in Iranian mythology, which was originally a human and supernatural helper, which later became a symbol of God in Persian Islamic literature (Ernst 2003: 626; Schimmel 1986: 299). In his poems, Rumi used the image of birds as symbols of the soul and the types of birds he liked were the nightingale and phoenix while he used the eagle as a symbol of the prophets (Rumi 2000: 210-11; Renard 2001: 40). However, sometimes the eagle was not only used as a symbol of the Prophets but also as a symbol of the natural soul (*mutmainah*).

The study of bird symbols is important data which can give meaning to Islamic archeology in Indonesia, considering that Sufism, which was very influential in Indonesia, was spread by both the Persians and the Arabs. The ideology of birds as a symbols of divinity, symbols of a holy persons, free souls which materializes in the archaeological remains in the form of ornaments or decorations on ancient Islamic tombs such as the tombs of the Wali Sanga in Java and Madura. This is related to the depiction of birds as symbols of free spirits reaching heaven, the guardians and spreaders of Islam in Java and Madura.

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