

RAJA ALI HAJI'S PHILANTHROPIC THOUGHT: THE ROLE OF CULTURE AND LANGUAGE IN THE FORMATION OF URBAN MALAY IDENTITY

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Raja Ali Haji's Philanthropic Thought: The Role of Culture and Language in The Formation of Urban Malay Identity Licensed Under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License

Abstract

This article explores Raja Ali Haji's philanthropic thoughts with an emphasis on the central role of culture and language in shaping Malay identity. As a 19th century Malay intellectual, Raja Ali Haji made significant contributions to the preservation and development of Malay culture and language, as reflected in his works, such as Gurindam Dua Belas, Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa and Bustan al-Katibbin. Through a historical and literary analysis approach, this article aims to understand the concept of Raja Ali Haji's cultural philanthropy and its impact on the formation of Malay identity. By using a historical and literary analysis approach, the aim is to understand the concept of Raja Ali Haji's cultural philanthropy and its impact on the formation of Malay identity, especially in urban communities. This research reveals that Raja Ali Haji's thoughts remain relevant in the context of preserving Malay cultural and linguistic identity in the modern era. It can be seen that the thought is implemented in Malay terms, "Adat bersendi syara', syara' bersendi Kitabullah." The Malay community prioritizes adat as the basis of the concept considered in overcoming problems and answering the challenges of preserving Malay culture and language in the contemporary era. This article provides valuable insights into how the concepts of cultural and linguistic philanthropy can be adopted to address the challenges of preserving Malay culture and language in modern times.

Keywords: Cultural Philanthropy; Language; Raja Ali Haji; Urban Malay Identity.

A. Introduction

In Malay intellectual history, Raja Ali Haji emerges as a figure who plays a central role in the preservation and development of Malay culture and language. Born in the 19th century on Penyengat Island, Riau archipelago, Raja Ali Haji was not only

an intellectual, but also a poet and an important figure in championing the maintenance of Malay identity. His deep and philanthropic thinking created a strong foundation for the preservation of Malay culture and language, enriching the intellectual and cultural heritage of the region (Hasan Yunus, 2002).

During the time of Raja Ali Haji, Malay faced various social and political changes that required a deep understanding of cultural values and identity, especially language which was part of Riau's characteristics in establishing its identity as Malay at that time with three main characteristics, namely speaking Malay, having Malay customs, and being Muslim (Sabakti et al., 2020). In the Book of Knowledge of Language, Raja Ali Haji gave many examples of the declining awareness of the Malay community to respect their own language. Raja Ali Haji regretted the tendency of the Malay community to simply copy the syntax of the English and Dutch languages without consideration of the basic values of the Malay tradition. Raja Ali Haji's attention to language as a medium for conveying Islamic messages is actually inseparable from the heritage of the Malay literary tradition. He felt that the entry of Islamic values also gave new nuances to the development of Malay literature.

In this context, Raja Ali Haji's thoughts reflect his determination to preserve and promote Malay culture, as well as providing a foundation for the development of the Malay language as a symbol of identity that is inseparable from the identity of the Malay people (Akmal, 2015). Through his monumental works, such as "Tuhfat al-Nafis" and "Gurindam Dua Belas," Raja Ali Haji not only conveyed moral wisdom, but also illustrated the importance of language as a means to express and pass on cultural values. His philanthropic thinking created an important foundation for the preservation and development of Malay culture, which remains relevant today in the discourse of cultural identity and heritage.

In the 19th century, Malay literature reached the peak of its progress with many Malay works being disseminated to the public and the palace. In the mid to late 19th century, Malay manuscripts underwent changes that were considered positive in an effort to preserve traditional Malay literature. One of these changes was the addition of the author's identity to the works produced, known as the post-tradition period without colophons. This development, which reached its peak at that time, was inseparable from the important role of Raja Ali Haji as a pioneer of this tradition. Raja Ali Haji showed brilliance in taking good things not only from the Malay perspective, but also from Western and other perspectives.

Raja Ali Haji's philanthropic thinking focuses on his role in shaping Malay identity through the preservation and development of culture and language. By analyzing his views on cultural philanthropy, this article invites readers to understand how important Raja Ali Haji's contribution is in shaping the foundation of Malay cultural identity and how these values remain relevant in facing the challenges of modern times. Given that technological advances provide opportunities for the increasingly neglected Malay language, customs and culture in urban Malay Riau communities (Yeti Armaliza, 2013) such as Pekanbaru, Siak, Bagansiapiapi and Bangkinang which tend to be multicultural. In addition, there are many other factors that can weaken Malay culture and language in urban communities such as the weak awareness of the younger generation in developing and preserving Malay customs to the rampant immigrants who enter from various ethnicities with the aim of working to pursue education in universities (Aditya & Zuhdi, 2023).

Raja Ali Haji, famous for his popular work *Gurindam Dua Belas*, was an aristocrat in the land of Malay who set a good example during his life and even after his death. His thinking was deeply grounded in the teachings of Malay and Islam, informing his

thinking and lifestyle. As a politician, cleric, and skilled writer, Raja Ali Haji introduced his views through his writings, whose language was acceptable to all walks of life. Although an expert in linguistics, he always tried to reach out to the people with writings that were easy to understand and well received (Rizki Aldy Danusa, 2021).

Some previous writings have reviewed Raja Ali Haji's thoughts related to politics, education, and religion using content analysis. This research is different because it focuses on Raja Ali Haji's Philanthropic Thought: The Role of Culture and Language in the Formation of Malay Identity. Previously, researchers have never discussed Raja Ali Haji's Philanthropic Thought: The Role of Culture and Language in the Formation of Malay Identity, making this finding unique.

A number of previous studies raised values in Raja Ali Haji's thinking, such as Destita Mutiara in the article "Nilai-Nilai Komunikasi Profetik dalam Syair GDB (Analisis Semiotik Ferdinand De Saussure)," (Mutiara, 2021). Rizky Aldy Danusa with "Pengaruh Pemikiran Raja Ali Haji dalam Kehidupan Sosial-Budaya Masyarakat Melayu Riau 1878," (Rizki Aldy Danusa, 2021) and Muhammad Abdul Ghofur with "Nilai-Nilai Tasawuf Akhlak dalam GDB untuk Pembinaan Akhlak Siswa Madrasah di Era Disrupsi (Kajian Pasal Keempat Gurindam 12 Raja Ali Haji)" (Ghofur, 2020). However, the author notes that the values of spiritual philanthropy in Raja Ali Haji's thought have not been discussed before, and this is a key finding in this study.

In looking at previous studies, it appears that the discussion of the values of spiritual philanthropy in Raja Ali Haji's thought is minimal or almost non-existent. This study highlights this gap and explains that according to the author's observations, there has been no research that addresses this aspect. Most previous studies have focused more on religious, political, theological and Sufism values. Therefore, the author finds the existence of spiritual philanthropy values in Raja Ali Haji's thought, which is then associated with social transformation, to be an innovation or uniqueness in this study, thus becoming a new finding in this research.

Although there have been a number of studies on Islamic philanthropy in general and specifically related to Raja Ali Haji, research on the values of Raja Ali Haji's spiritual philanthropy is still very limited and almost non-existent. This is the gap that is the focus of this research. Research on philanthropic values is considered important as the main foundation for engaging in philanthropic activities, especially when associated with the thoughts of a famous figure such as Raja Ali Haji, who is a literary figure that is very relevant to the context of today's changes.

B. Methods

The type of research used in this research is library research using historical and philosophical approaches, which means that this research tries to describe the symptoms that occurred during the time of Raja Ali Haji and the history in his works which are cultural heritage that still has evidence and documents. In addition, these two approaches also complement each other where philosophical understanding plays a role in connecting the events that occur and the experience of the character under study. While the philosophical approach serves to provide depth to historical understanding, revealing the values, views and theories initiated by Raja Ali Haji and their application in the past.

C. Findings and Discussion

1. Findings

Raja Ali Haji's Biography

Raja (Junus, 2004) Ali Haji has the full name Tengku Haji Ali al-Haji bin Tengku Haji Ahmad bin Raja Haji Asy-Syahidu Fi Sabilillah bin Upu Daeng Celak, who is more famous as Raja Ali Haji. His father was Raja Ahmad ibn Raja Haji Fi Sabilillah and his mother was Encik Hamidah binti Panglima Malik Selangor Raja Ali Haji was born on Penyengat Indera Sakti Island, which was then the center of the Riau kingdom of Lingga, Johor and Pahang in 1808 AD and died in 1873. His grandfather was Raja Haji who was Dipertuan Muda Riau IV and a hero who was famous for his courage in the struggle to repel Dutch colonialism, meeting his martyrdom in a battle against the Dutch Company at Ketapang Bay in 1874 (Hasan Junus, 2000). In 1830 AD he married Raja Safiah and began writing various books through his knowledge and thoughts in the form of poetry and prose with his first book that is very well known to many people, Gurindam Dua Belas.

2. Discussion

Cultural and linguistic philanthropy

Philanthropy today is not only found in the social and economic sectors but has also entered the cultural sector. Raja Ali Haji's style of thinking he poured out in the form of advice, his thoughts on the peak of civilization in society. The principles instilled through his thoughts have descended into a legacy from him to the Malay people of Riau, especially the younger generation today. Based on two future-oriented principles, Raja Ali Haji embedded the basic principles of language and culture maintenance (U.U. Hamidi, 2003). Raja Ali Haji's thought contributes with his thoughts that cover the relationship between state and religion, the structure of government, good leaders, the concept of justice, the sovereignty of sharia, and the importance of deliberation (Khalif Muammar A. Harris, 2017).

A values, ideas and ideals of the past can also be passed on to generation to generation because of this symbol system. The recommendation given by Raja Ali Haji to Arabic to be used as a standard reference for the Malay language, thus also has theological backing and pragmatic value, namely so that the Malay community in understanding its language continues to run within the framework of Islamic values. When understanding the language of the Qur'an we must also have knowledge of Arabic. Thus, Arabic has a high grammatical value, so that it becomes the chosen means for conveying God's messages. Therefore, the transformation of the Arabic language structure and symbols in the Arabic al-Qur'an is very useful for enriching the symbol system and structure of the Malay language.

In Malay culture, Islamic elements and Islamic values become dominant both in the fields of art, language, literature, culture and politics, cultural elements that exist and until now are felt as some historical relics can be observed that cultural products brought by Islam such as Arabic writing contribute greatly to the development of Malay culture. Information about Malay, its people, its socio-economic, cultural, political and religious life to the present society is through Arabic writing. One of the proofs is the relics written in Malay Arabic and the names of the streets written in Malay Arabic (Helmiati, 2014).

In this context, *kemelayuan* cannot be understood without reference to Islam and sharia. The Malay proverb states that "Adat bersendi syara', syara' bersendi Kitabullah," emphasizing the close relationship between adat and Islamic law. Raja Ali

Haji explains that violating sharia can lead to conflict and disaster in society, with concrete examples such as slander, arrogance and denial resulting from non-compliance with Malay ethical values rooted in Islamic sharia.

In addition, Raja Ali Haji (1858) wanted to build a culture of loving knowledge among the people in the Riau-Lingga Sultanate. Therefore, education and scientific activities became the main focus of his activities. According to him, if the king neglects education and science, the negative impact will be felt by all his people because in Islam, political leadership aspires to carry out the prophetic mission of upholding religion and regulating the world (Wakhid, 2021). The people must also have the same awareness and sense of responsibility in improving their quality of life through education and scientific activities, so as to obtain a prosperous life and provide civilization progress for the Malay people Raja Ali Haji (1858) (Rehayati & Farihah, 2017).

Not long after his death, Raja Ali Haji's thoughts inspired the youth of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In that era, the youth began the development of language and literature and other sciences embodied in a professional organization and known as the Rusydiah Club. This organization has activities in printing under the name Mathabaatul Riawiyah or Mathabaatul Ahmadiyah. Rusydiah Club was used as a pulpit by Malay Riau scholars in forging their thoughts against colonialism. Considering that Raja Ali Haji was someone who echoed the resistance to colonizers through knowledge, the club was able to create a platform for Malay scholars in Riau to forge their thoughts against colonization (Tim Penulis, 1978).

In order for foreign cultures not to erode the existing Malay cultural values, Raja Ali Haji felt that the incoming foreign cultural values did not contain elements of religious values, so it was necessary to make efforts to maintain existing cultures, which later the culture if entered into Malay culture would pose new challenges for the community in cultural values (Palawa, 2017).

The maintenance of culture and fostering of the Malay language has been carried out by Raja Ali Haji, at least, based on two principles and future-oriented views. First, as explained in the poem Gurindam Twelve, "If you want to know a nation, look at the language". The main factor is the mind and language (U.U. Hamidi, 2003) This attitude and view held by Raja Ali Haji, according to U.U. Hamidi, inspired and aroused the spirit of Raja Ali Haji's children and grandchildren to build awareness of the importance of preserving Malay language and culture (U. U. Hamidi, 2003). *Second*, that in maintaining and preserving knowledge it is better to do it in the form of a written tradition rather than in the form of an oral tradition. Raja Ali Haji's principles and views, according to Matheson, became the driving force for him to produce his works, *Bustan al-Kitabin* and *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa*.

Likewise, his productivity in generating written works from various aspects, such as poetry/literature, history, politics and religion, especially aspects of culture and language. According to Matheson, Raja Ali Haji's efforts in maintaining and fostering culture and language have become a solid foundation for the formation of the modern Malay intellectual tradition. Raja Ali Haji's attitude in appreciating traditional Malay culture and at the same time utilizing correct and appropriate methods shows him as a "middle man" between the world of tradition and the modern world (Virginia Matheson dan M. B. Hooker, 1988).

Much of Raja Ali Haji's thought is devoted to linguistics as shown in his works, namely the Book of Knowledge of Language and the Book of grammar entitled, *Bustanul Katibin*. Through these works, Raja Ali Haji's thoughts became a reference in the formation of the Indonesian language and the Malay language used in traditional

Malay literature. In his most famous work, *Gurindam Dua Belas*, in the Fifth Article, Stanza 1, Raja Ali Haji says:

*Jika hendak mengenal orang berbangsa, lihatlah kepada budi dan Bahasa
Jika hendak mengenal orang yang berbahagia, sangat memeliharakan yang sia-sia
Jika hendak mengenal orang mulia, lihatlah kepada kelakuan dia
Jika hendak mengenal orang yang berilmu, bertanya dan belajar tiadalah jenu
Jika hendak mengenal orang yang berakal, di dalam dunia mengambil bekal
Jika hendak mengenal orang yang baik perangai, lihat pada ketika bercampur
dengan orang ramai (Haji, n.d.).*

Manners and language are the main factors in everyday life, especially in social life, after good language then look at behavior, because this is the beginning of the assessment when we want to get to know in social life. As also explained in another poem in *Gurindam Dua Belas* Article 7:

*Apabila banyak berkata-kata, di situlah jalan masuk dusta
Apabila banyak berlebih-lebihan suka, itulah landa hampirkan duka
Apabila kita kurang siasat, itulah tanda pekerjaan hendak sesat
Apabila anak tidak dilatih, jika besar bapanya letih
Apabila banyak mencela orang, itulah tanda dirinya kurang
Apabila orang yang banyak tidur, sia-sia sahajalah umur
Apabila mendengar akan khabar, menerimanya itu hendaklah sabar
Apabila menengar akan aduan, membicarakannya itu hendaklah cemburuan
Apabila perkataan yang lemah-lembut, lekaslah segala orang mengikut
Apabila perkataan yang amat kasar, lekaslah orang sekalian gusar
Apabila pekerjaan yang amat benar, tidak boleh orang berbuat onar (Haji, n.d.).*

Gentle or polite speech can make other people happy to be close and friends, on the other hand, if the speech is harsh, many will avoid it. This is a form of Raja Ali Haji's concern for language, which teaches people to speak and speak well. The fact described in *Syair Gurindam Dua Belas* shows that Raja Ali Haji as a scholar, culturist, literary figure, historian, and ulama who really views the importance of ethics for humans. He even linked the mind (and language) to the nation. Because the subtlety of the mind is an important part of the identity of the nation, especially the Malay people. Since then, the famous phrase, "*Bahasa menunjukkan bangsa*" (Malik, 2016).

In spreading his thoughts through the texts, he wrote, Raja Ali Haji used language as a means of expressing his thoughts, until through this language struggle the Malay language reached its glory during his lifetime. The vocabulary he used not only came from the Johor-Riau dialect of Malay, but also used Arabic, Dutch, Orang Laut, Javanese, Makassarese and Bugis words. The use of these various languages facilitated the spread of his thoughts and attracted the attention of the archipelago language at that time.

In the book *Pengetahuan Bahasa* written by Raja Ali Haji, mentioned that: "... segala manusia itu apabila mengenal makrifat yang tujuh dan pengetahuan yang tujuh ... itu serta beriman akan dia, niscaya sempurnalah akalinya dan berbedalah ia dengan binatang pada pihak pengetahuannya" (Raja Ali Haji, 1986a).

The above poem in the book *Pengetahuan Bahasa*, explained that Raja Ali Haji outlined seven main words in the *Al-Bab al-Awwal* (First Chapter) its e-dictionary *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa* (1858). First, Allah is the name of the substance of God the Greatest and Glorious, Second, al-Nabi, namely Ahmad, whose name is Muhammad, Third, al-Ashab, namely all the companions of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, Fourth, al-Akhbar, namely all the great scholars who are pious again muhtadi, who spread Islam to the end of time, Fifth, al-Insan, namely humans who are nothing but creatures made

by Allah SWT, Sixth, al-Awwali, namely the world which is also made by Allah SWT from nothing, and Seventh, al-Akhirat, namely the end of human work and travel (Raja Ali Haji, 1986a).

The importance of language is explained earlier in the book of Knowledge of Language that in discussing the study of language is the science of achieving makrifat, namely recognizing Allah and all his manifestations, strengthening faith and piety, and enhancing noble manners. That is the main basis for every Islamic scientist when they discuss the science of language must be studied and taught properly and well in order to obtain correct knowledge and polite manners.

In the field of language, Raja Ali Haji has laid the main foundations in Malay grammar, fostering and developing it through works written until the end of his life. He succeeded in fostering a love of science to his children and grandchildren and fostering a sense of passion for the beauty of a Malay language and literature, so that when after his death the succeeding generation always felt thirsty and longed to develop what had been inherited by Raja Ali Haji. Therefore, thanks to the language development carried out by Raja Ali Haji and his successor generation who mostly joined the *Rusydiah Klub*, the Malay language became a cultural supporter at that time (U.U. Hamidi, 2003).

Raja Ali Haji's biggest contribution that can be felt today is of course the Malay grammar that became the forerunner of Indonesia's official language. In Riau itself, Riau Malay is the official language of the Riau kingdom which became good and beautiful thanks to the development of Raja Ali Haji. The standard language in the daily life of the Malay people is drawn from the Riau Malay language fostered by Raja Ali Haji during his lifetime. His formulation of the language was the result of his collaboration with Von de Wall. In the making, he analyzed the Malay language that developed around Riau, Johor, and surrounding islands with different accents. From his research, he formulated a language that he said was the unifying language of the large number of separate Malay tribes in the Malay Peninsula.

The popularity of Malay language used as the language of colonial administrators brought enormous changes in social life, especially those related to communication. The change in fact rose from a regional scale to a national scale with the consideration in the Youth Pledge on October 28, 1928 which designed a language change to Indonesian as the language of unity. The important influence given by Raja Ali Haji's thoughts through language changed the language pattern in the social life of Riau people. The inspiration for the magnitude of Raja Ali Haji's thought made him appointed as a national hero on November 10, 2004. In addition, Raja Ali Haji's book entitled *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa* (Book of Knowledge of Language) was designated by the Youth Congress on October 28, 1928 as the national language of Indonesia (Hasan Yunus, 2002).

The importance of language in Raja Ali Haji's view is because language can reflect communal ethics in a society. As in the *Kitab PengeRaja Ali Hajiuan Bahasa* knowledge in the third stanza which reads:

Tutur katanya lembut dan manis

Pada ketika ia di dalam majelis

Handai taulahnya tiada membengis

Mendengar cakupnya tiadalah khalis (Raja Ali Haji, 1986b).

Raja Ali Haji is of the view that language is related to the mind. According to him, deepening the knowledge of language is not only by knowing the structure of the sentence, but what is even more important is to know the meaning and essence of a language in accordance with Islamic values that apply in the Malay tradition. If

applied in everyday life, it will form a good and clear language speech system and can form a high civilization ethic (Raja Ali Haji, 1986a).

Raja Ali Haji's attention to language as a medium for conveying Islamic messages is actually inseparable from the heritage of the Malay literary tradition. He felt that the entry of Islamic values also gave new nuances to the development of Malay literature. So that good Malay literature, in Raja Ali Haji's view, means literature that displays the attitude of a monotheistic worldview, which always involves elements of cleansing the soul (*tazkiyah an-Nafs*) and its moral implications for the benefit of society.

Language is the most important tool used by humans to build civilization and develop spiritual, intellectual and social life. As explained in the idea of the book of *Bustanul al-katibin*, which has made people in the Malay region realize that language has a significant role in human life (Raja Ali Haji, 2005).

In the *Kitab PengeRaja Ali Hajiuan Bahasa* and *Bustanul al-katibin* by Raja Ali Haji in the early 19th century, it clearly shows that at that time Raja Ali Haji had realized that language and literature were important media to build awareness of Nationalism and Patriotism. Raja Ali Haji provided a solid foundation to form a society that was independent and not uprooted from its local roots. Based on the efforts of Raja Ali Haji's hard work in maintaining and developing language and literature, the generations after him had the capital to build their civilization (Barbara Watson Andaya dan Virginia Matheson, 1983).

Raja Ali Haji was not just a product of his time, but he was the conscience and the ultimate example for his nation. He did not stand idly by and watch his society deteriorate and his dignity fall into the hands of other nations, but he thought and mobilized all his abilities to help the community to be released from adversity, as a writer, he did to alleviate his society by using language and his work (Raja Ali Haji, 2005).

In *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa*, Raja Ali Haji emphasized that the only way to overcome lust and the eruption of conflict in society is obedience to the teachings of shari'a, as well as understanding and deepening the Qur'an with a skilled teacher. According to him, correct behavior is behavior based on the commands of Islamic teachings. With religious guidance, these traits that make humans higher than other creatures in the world draw closer to God, so that shame (humility), knowledge (knowledge) and reason (reason) can be maintained. By having knowledge and humility, humans will not be arrogant or exalt themselves. Instead, it will increase the desire to explore the truth of God's teachings and the Hereafter (Raja Ali Haji, 1986b).

Raja Ali Haji showed the importance of language in the Islamic tradition, which he simultaneously expressed in his thoughts about the relationship between language and morality, language and the message of religious knowledge, as described in *Kitab Bustanul al-Katibin*:

"... Adab dan sopan itu dari pada tutur kata juga asalnya, kemudian barulah kepada kelakuan. apabila hendak kepada menuntut ilmu dan berkata-kata yang beradab dan sopan, tidak dapat tidak mengetahui dahulu ilmu yang dua yaitu: ilmu wa al-kalam. Adapun kelebihan ilmu wa al-kalam amat besar sehinganya mengatakan sebagian hukum segala pekerjaan. pedang boleh dibuat dengan kalam, adapun pekerjaan kalam tidak boleh dibuat dengan pedang. ada beberapa ribu dan laksa pedang yang sudah terhenus dengan segores kalam jadi tersarung..." (Raja Ali Haji, 2005).

In *Bustanul al-katibin* above explains that language has an important role in people's lives, adab and politeness become the main factors for a person in his life and then look at his behavior. So great is Raja Ali Haji's attention to language, that when he

sees people who use language without paying attention to the correct rules. His concern is also expressed in the preamble of *Bustan al-Katibin*. The following is an excerpt.

"... Maka jadilah binasa serta orang yang binasa sebab bersalahan tuturnya dengan yang diperbuatnya itu tidak berketahuan, terkadang ditambahinya huruf pada suatu kalimat yang berangkai dan terkadang dikurangkannya pula menjadi pontang-panting, apalagi pada peraturannya dan perkataannya, tiadalah sedap pada telinga orang yang berilmu itu mendengarnya. Telah banyaklah aku dapat akan orang yang demikian itu"(Raja Ali Haji, 2005).

His concern about the arbitrary use of language, without paying attention to the correct rules, was answered by Raja Ali Haji by struggling in language development. This effort was primarily to realize his idealism and belief that the height of national dignity is closely related to the mind and language. In this regard, he wrote two books on language: (1) *Bustan al-Katibin* (1850), a book on spelling and grammar, and (2) *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa* (1858), an ekabahasa dictionary. Both works were the first works in Malay in their respective fields (Malik, 2014).

The challenges of preserving Malay culture in urban society and the role of Raja Ali Haji's works towards it

The occurrence of changes and shifts in cultural values in society due to advances in science and technology which are now related to various aspects of life, ranging from economic, social, educational, and others (Athoillah et al., 2023). gives the opportunity for the neglect of Malay customs and culture in urban Riau communities such as Pekanbaru, Siak, Bagansiapi-api, Bangkinang and others that are multicultural, where Pekanbaru is a city that has many overseas communities, who come from various regions such Minang, Javanese, Medan, and others. From that problem, the weakening of Malay culture and customs in Pekanbaru City, Riau. As a result of being eroded by the cultures of outsiders who enter the Pekanbaru area as immigrant communities who bring their own culture.

Malay culture, especially its language, tends to be drowned out by other cultures besides the Malay Culture that exists in Pekanbaru City. It also happens because of the low awareness of the Malay community in developing and preserving Malay customs and culture, Malay culture also cannot stand out due to the attitude of the original young generation of Riau Malay who do not apply Riau Malay culture in their daily lives (Yetti Armaliza, 2013). This has also been happening for a long time so that the emergence of the works of Raja Ali Haji who tried to preserve Malay customs again. Therefore, the role of the government, stakeholders and traditional leaders is needed to remember and revive Malay culture in the community, including through the use of public relations with a socialization approach that builds linear communication between government entities and the community (Zulkarnain et al., 2023).

In this case, Raja Ali Haji's works can play an important role in exploring Malay culture in society, especially regarding language. Raja Ali Haji's thinking in the field of language, in Raja Ali Haji's view, before maintaining culture and customs, first fix the infrastructure of culture and customs itself, namely language. This means that a person can be said to be cultured and civilized if he previously had a culture and language (Raja Ali Haji, n.d.). Manners with language as expressed by Ali bin Abi Talib "Damaged language illustrates damaged morals" so that Raja Ali Haji in Gurindam Twelve said: "If you want to know the people of the nation, look at the language". In the book *Bustan al katibin* Raja Ali Haji said: "Adab and politeness also originate in speech, then behavior". Morals are closely related to language, which serves as the

reason why he compiled the text of *Bustan Al-Katibin* (Raja Ali Haji, 2005).

Furthermore, Raja Ali Haji compiled a dictionary of Malay language, namely: *Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa*, with the aim of providing guidance to the community in understanding language, religion, and good behavior. Thus, the above explanation of the values of spiritual philanthropy in Raja Ali Haji's thought in the context of social transformation shows that Raja Ali Haji's views provide valuable direction on how to combine spiritual, moral and social aspects in an effort to transform society. Values such as kindness, compassion, justice and spiritual growth become the foundation for advancing collective well-being. Raja Ali Haji underscored the importance of selfless service, building better relationships between people, and respecting local culture and identity.

The implementation of values contained in literary works such as *Gurindam Dua Belas* has a significant role in shaping and strengthening values in urban Malay Riau communities that tend to have forgotten local culture. Some implementation steps in the context of society include education, by including such literary works in the curriculum to provide a deep understanding of moral, ethical and educational values.

D. Conclusion

Over time, philanthropy has not only been limited to the social and economic sectors, but has also expanded into the cultural sector. The thought of Raja Ali Haji, a 19th-century Malay intellectual, reflects the richness of his thought and contribution in shaping the Malay identity. His focus on culture and language is reflected in his monumental works, such as "*Kitab Pengetahuan Bahasa*" and "*Bustan al-Katibin*".

Through a historical and literary analysis approach, this study reveals Raja Ali Haji's concept of cultural philanthropy and its impact on the formation of Malay identity. His thoughts remain relevant in efforts to preserve Malay cultural and linguistic identity in the modern era. The Malay term, "*Adat bersendi syara', syara' bersendi Kitabullah*," reflects the importance of tradition and religion in answering the challenges of preserving Malay culture and language in the contemporary era.

Raja Ali Haji, through his works such as "*Gurindam Dua Belas*," not only became a role model during his lifetime, but also passed on his thoughts on Malay life. As an accomplished politician, scholar, and writer, he opened his mind to the public in a language that was accessible to all. Raja Ali Haji's philanthropic thinking inspires efforts to preserve and develop the Malay identity, passing on cultural and linguistic values that remain relevant in the face of the dynamics of modern times especially in urban society.

Along the way, Raja Ali Haji emphasized the importance of language as a medium for conveying the message of Islam. He designed Malay as a unifying language, contributing greatly to the formation of Indonesia's official language. His thoughts also highlighted manners, politeness, and morality in language, teaching the importance of good and polite speech. Literature and language became the main instruments in shaping identity and civilization. Through his works, Raja Ali Haji laid the foundations of Malay grammar, fostering and developing it to influence the Indonesian language. His thoughts encouraged the preservation of culture, scholarship and morality, making him a central figure in the Malay intellectual struggle.

The legacy of Raja Ali Haji's thought is not only a mirror of the past, but also a pillar for the formation of the modern Malay intellectual tradition. Raja Ali Haji's success in maintaining and developing language and culture provided a strong foundation for the next generation. His thoughts, manifested in monumental works,

illustrate the long journey of philanthropy of Malay culture and language, offering valuable inspiration in maintaining and developing the heritage of Malay identity in the contemporary era.

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F. Author Contributions Statement

This research is the work of four authors with their respective roles carried out with sincerity. Muh Rizki as the first author has full responsibility for the basic concept of research, data collection, and research methods while YUSDANI, Rahmawati and Hamidullah Marazi concentrate on the analysis and interpretation of the results carried out carefully and systematically, each data obtained is then processed to the final stage by the three authors so as to give birth to the final form of research in the form of this article.

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