4. Da’Wa

As a proselytising religion, Islam obliges its followers, without exception, to undertake missionary activities. These activities are subsumed under the Arabic term ‘da’wa’, which literally means ‘a call’ or ‘an invitation’. In Indonesia, however, as in many other countries, da’wa has become a complex term, directed more internally to the Muslim community than to non-Muslims and encompassing both the specific idea of tabligh, or preaching as well as the broader idea of “the propagation of Islam not only by preaching and publications, but also by deeds and activities in all areas of social life … [or] a comprehensive Islamization of society”.

Both meanings are employed in this chapter. Da’wa is a significant means of struggle by Shi’is in Indonesia for the purpose of gaining recognition as a community and a madhab. In a broad sense, the institution of Shi’ism itself can be seen as a da’wa institution. This chapter provides a brief description of the general developments of Shi’i da’wa, followed by an examination of its ideals. I will then describe the basic elements of the institution and the various kinds of da’wa activities undertaken by Shi’is. This also includes details of the educational training for agents of da’wa, the da’i.

A. General Developments of the Da’wa Institution

In the decade following the Iranian Revolution of 1978-1979, da’wa activities undertaken by Shi’is in Indonesia were generally carried out on an individual basis, with one exception: the role played by the famous educational institution of YAPI, founded in Bangil, Java in 1976. Missionary activities in this period were not generally institutionalised; in fact they were often conducted ‘underground’. This was partly because of the absence of a known institutional centre for Shi’ism. (The government and religious authorities in Indonesia had been unable to identify the existence of this Muslim minority group in the country until the open establishment of Shi’i institutions).

Since the late 1980s, however, leading Shi’i figures have started to establish Shi’i foundations called yayasan. The yayasan is a legally recognised institution based on relatively loose conditions: a number of people form the executive board of the foundation, a certain amount of money is designated as basic capital and an address has to be registered. Renowned Shi’i foundations in Java, in chronological order of establishment, include: Al-Hujjah (founded in 1987) in

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1 Boland (1971:193).
The Struggle of the Shi’is in Indonesia


Since the late 1980s, Indonesian Islam has witnessed the proliferation of these Shi’i institutions. Recent estimates suggest that there are more than 80 scattered across the country, mainly in the cities and towns. Although the exact number is unknown, reliable sources show that there has been a significant development in both their quantity and quality. In 2001, 36 Shi’i foundations and 43 majlis ta’lim (educational council or meeting place) were affiliated to the Yayasan Rausyanfikr of Yogyakarta. Similarly, some years ago, the ICC of Al-Huda in Jakarta published a list of 79 Shi’i foundations. With a few exceptions, all the organisations on the list are inventoried as yayasan. (In 2004, when I was concluding my research, the number of yayasan must have been even greater, as I came across a number not included on the ICC list). A small number of these foundations develop into larger multi-functional institutions, carrying out various roles in the community - religious, educational and cultural - but most remain small bodies known only to a limited number of people. The development of these institutions may fluctuate, with some even stopping operation. For these reasons it is difficult to provide an accurate figure of the number of Shi’i foundations in Indonesia.

Yet given the relatively small number of adherents to Shi’ism in Indonesia, the number of their institutions is relatively large. The geographical distribution of these institutions reflects the scattered distribution of Shi’i communities throughout the country. It also illustrates the dynamics of their social, cultural, educational and religious activities. Moreover, since the establishment of yayasan is an integral part of the Shi’i missionary process, they can be seen to reflect a great missionary zeal among the Shi’is. They are also evidence of a transformation from individual to institutional agency in the da’wa activity. From a historical perspective, the establishment of such a large number of institutions marks an advance in the development of Shi’ism in Indonesia.

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4 Formerly, a list of Shi’i foundations in Indonesia could be seen at http://www.alhuda.or.id/data-yayasan.htm. However, the current homepage of the Islamic Cultural Centre of Jakarta no longer publishes this information.
Several points can be made about this process. First, there has been a tendency among Shi‘i ustadhs and intellectuals (with a few notable exceptions)\(^5\) to establish foundations as a means of disseminating their teachings. Almost all of Indonesia’s Shi‘i religious teachers and intellectuals have been or are currently connected to one or more Shi‘i foundations. The motivation to establish foundations is enhanced by the fact that there are relatively simple rules for their establishment. Organisations are required to provide three people, statues and a certain amount of capital, which must be formally recognised by a notary. Since office premises or a building are not required, it is very common for residential properties to be used as operational centres. There are at least two interconnected motivations among the founders. First, most Shi‘i teachers and intellectuals earn a living in the private sector and they need an institutional platform for their religious aspirations. Since their madhhab is not the madhhab of the majority of Muslims in the country, there is little possibility for them to join existing religious institutions. Theoretically, their involvement in foundations is a way of accumulating economic and symbolic capital, both being interconnected. The second motivation, then, is for the accumulation of this social capital in the development of social relations and networks.\(^6\) By means of the yayasan, the ustadhs and intellectuals can create more formal communication with international Shi‘i institutions or organisations; they can more easily obtain free Shi‘i scholarly works - books and periodicals - printed by institutions or associations in Iran, Iraq, Kuwait and other countries. Such works have contributed greatly to the development of Shi‘i Islam in Indonesia.

The second point to be made is that with a few exceptions, Shi‘i foundations are located in urban areas throughout the country, from Sumatra to West Irian. This underscores the fact of the growth of the Shi‘i community in Indonesia as an urban phenomenon. It is also congruent with the fact that most university graduates and Qum alumni who become Shi‘i intellectuals, activists or ustadhs tend to live in cities or towns. Generally, they establish the centre of the foundation close to, or even in, the founder’s own home. This satisfies the demands of the local community for religious instruction and guidance in the teachings of Shi‘ism and also provides a base for propagating these ideas to the Muslim community at large. (Nota bene Shi‘i missionary activities have both internal and external orientations). There is a clear correlation in terms of the greater the number of Shi‘is living in a particular city or area, the greater the number of Shi‘i foundations established there. Thus, Jakarta, home to Indonesia’s largest community, has the largest number of foundations. In 1995, the journal

\(^5\) Included in this category is the famous Shi‘i religious teacher, Husein Syafi‘i al-Muhdar of Jember, East Java who accuses those who establish foundations of having social and economic interests, rather than promoting religious teachings to the community (Husein Syafi‘i al-Muhdar, interview, 12/10/2002).

\(^6\) Bourdieu (1986).
Ulumul Qur’an mentions 25 Shi‘i institutions having been set up in Jakarta.\textsuperscript{7} This is not to say categorically that there are no Shi‘i institutions in rural areas; for instance, the Al-Hakim Foundation, a famous Shi‘i institution established by the late Zainal Abidin Al-Muhdar (d. 2003) attracts people from the rural areas and villages close to its centre in Pringsewu, Lampung. By and large, however, the establishment of Shi‘i institutions remains an urban phenomenon.

The third important point regarding the establishment of Shi‘i institutions for da‘wa is that the growing number of foundations in Indonesia corresponds also to the increasing number of Qum alumni returning home. To name a few, Fathoni Hadi established the Al-Hujjah Foundation in Jember in 1987, Ahmad Baragbah established Al-Hadi in 1989, Abdullah Assegaf founded the Al-Wahdah Foundation in Solo in 1994 and Rusdi al-Aydrus established the Ath-Thohir Foundation in Surabaya in 2000. Furthermore, many Qum alumni become leaders or ustadhs of existing Shi‘i foundations. Among them are Zahir Yahya at the Al-Kautsar Foundation in Malang (East Java), Husein Al-Kaf at the Al-Jawad Foundation in Bandung, Abdullah Assegaf at IPABI in Bogor, Muhammad Syuaib at the Al-Mujtaba Foundation in Purwakarta, West Java and Herman Al-Munthahar at the Amirul Mukminin Foundation in Pontianak, West Kalimantan. It is evident that missionary zeal has motivated these Qum alumni to act so that da‘wa activities may be institutionalised and well organised.

A fourth point of interest is that the Shi‘i foundations were all established by, or belong to groups of people with ties of friendship or kin. In this regard, institutions rarely belong to a single person. The Al-Jawad Foundation, for example, was established in 1991 by a group of activists who graduated from universities in Bandung, including Ahmad Jubaili, Wawan Tribudi Hermawan, Rivaldi and Yusuf Bachtiar.\textsuperscript{8} The same was true of the founders of the Muthahhari Foundation three years earlier. In contrast, the founders of the Fatimah Foundation are all members of the al-Muhdar family living in Jakarta. The al-Muhdar clan were known as Shi‘i adherents in Indonesia long before the Iranian Revolution of 1978-1979. The executive board of their foundation consists of Muhammad Andy Assegaf, Akma Syarif and Imah Azzahra, who are all children of Abu Bakar Assegaf and his wife Fatimah Syundus al-Muhdar.\textsuperscript{9} Ahmad Muhajir al-Muhdar and Alwi Husein al-Muhdar serve as important religious teachers and advisers to the foundation. Tazkiya Sejati, also listed among the Shi‘i foundations, was founded in 1997 by the family of Indonesia’s ex-Vice President Sudharmono in co-operation with Jalaluddin

\textsuperscript{7} Nurjulianti and Arief Subhan (1995:20).
\textsuperscript{8} Wisananingrum (2001:84).
\textsuperscript{9} Syi‘ar (July 2002:46).
Rakhmat. Due to its adoption of various practices of Sufism, this institution has been instrumental in attracting a number of Jakarta’s urban upper-middle class to Shi’ism.

Compared to the above-mentioned institutions, the establishment of the ICC of Al-Huda was unique in the sense that it involved the collaboration of several prominent figures in Indonesia with Iran. Its board includes Jalaluddin Rakhmat, Haidar Bagir and Umar Shahab as the founding council and the Iranian Muhsen Hakimollah as director. The ICC is the largest Shi’i foundation in Indonesia and employs about 30 staff, some of whom are Qum alumni, to run its activities. The foundation is highly dependent on its Iranian director, not only in terms of authority and responsibility, but also for financial resources. Since its establishment this Islamic centre has functioned as a co-ordinating body in organising the celebration of Islamic festivals. It also plays an important mediating role among Shi’i institutions in the country and in relations between Iran and the Shi’i community in Indonesia, a function which was once carried out by the Iranian Embassy in Jakarta.

This description leads us to the fifth point regarding Shi’i institutions: aside from the co-ordinating function of the ICC of Al-Huda, some institutions are closely connected and co-operate with each other in the field of da’wa, while there are tensions between others. Both of these situations are due to influential relationships between certain ustadhs and intellectuals. A pertinent example is the cooperation between several Shi’i ustadhs and institutions in West Java that has contributed to the setting up of the regional association called KIBLAT (Komunitas Ahlul Bait Jawa Barat, The Ahl al-Bayt Community of West Java). This umbrella organisation encompasses several foundations in the province, including Al-Jawad of Bandung, Al-Kautsar of Bandung, IPABI of Bogor, Al-Kazhim of Cirebon, Al-Mujtaba of Purwakarta and As-Syifa of Garut. However, KIBLAT excludes the Muthahhari Foundation, which is known to harbour tensions with Al-Jawad and its associates. Co-operation, competition and tension have all characterised the relationship between Shi’i ustadhs, intellectuals and institutions in Indonesia.

Finally, the existence of Shi’i institutions is very important for the Shi’i community as a whole, particularly in terms of their functions. First, since the existing Sunni mosques cannot be used as places to perform Shi’i rituals and ceremonies, the foundations have provided alternative space for religious expression. Second, aside from this religious function, the institutions are also places to hold meetings in which a variety of issues can be discussed, including those of the Shi’i community or of Muslims in general. Religious instruction and guidance, as well as educational programmes, can be provided in or through the institutions. Third, the institutions are platforms for spreading the teachings of Shi’ism to the Muslim community at large. A variety of da’wa programmes are
carried out in or through the institutions. In addition, through the publication of periodicals and books, the institutions extend this role beyond da’wa into the cultural field. Thus the multi-functional Shi’i foundations have become institutional agents in the reproduction and dissemination of the Shi’i tradition in Indonesia.

The religious life of the Shi’i community is heavily dependent on the continued existence and functions of these institutions. However, the above description by itself does not identify such institutions as Shi’i in nature. Below we attempt to examine this matter.

B. The Ideals of the Shi’i Institutions

In order to gain a comprehensive understanding of the nature and identity of the Shi’i institutions, it is worth examining the written ideals that form their philosophical basis and programmes, even though these ideals may not always be fully put into practice. With the exception of IPABI (Ikatan Pemuda Ahlul Bait Indonesia, Indonesian League of Ahlul Bait Youth) the names of the foundations never include explicit terms or phrases indicating that they are Shi’i. Yet should we look more closely, these names often reveal Shi’i connections. For example, institutions such as Al-Jawad, Al-Muntazar, Al-Mahdi, Al-Mujtaba, Al-Hadi and Al-Kazim are all named after Shi’i Imams. In addition, some foundations take their names from prominent Shi’i learned men, such as Mulla Sadra or Mutahhari, while others use terms closely associated with the Shi’i tradition, such as the Babul Ilmi Foundation (Gate of Knowledge) which is the phrase used to refer to ‘Ali bin Abi Talib, the first Imam. However, names such as the Islamic Cultural Centre of Al-Huda in Jakarta or LSII (Lembaga Studi and Informasi Islam, Institute for Islamic Studies and Information) in Makassar give no clue to their Shi’i nature.

In this respect, the Muthahhari Foundation is the single Shi’i institution that provides us with the rationale for using a specific name. Given the fact that Mutahhari is the name of an Iranian Shi’i learned man, it follows that many people can identify the foundation as Shi’i. In its publicity brochure, the founders of the institution explain that the name chosen has philosophical meanings related to the organisation’s own goals, as well as to the current historical reality that Muslim society is facing a variety of problems. They describe the establishment of the foundation as an attempt to address one of the most fundamental problems, the lack of ‘ulama able to lead and unite the various segments of Muslim society. The founders see this problem as having

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originated from a dichotomy in the comprehension of the religious and secular sciences in the Muslim world, including Indonesia. On the one hand, there exist traditional ‘ulama, qualified in the fields of Islamic knowledge but lacking sufficient knowledge of contemporary life. Their approach to problem-solving becomes irrelevant. On the other hand, there are Muslim scholars who have a strong Islamic spirit and understand contemporary information yet are ‘ignorant’ in Islamic learning. Their problem-solving tends to be superficial. The desire to bridge this divide formed the rationale behind the establishment of the Muthahhari Foundation.

Ayatollah Murtada Mutahhari was a reformist Shi‘i ‘alim and professor at Tehran University, who after the victory of the Iranian revolution became a member of its Revolutionary Council. He was assassinated on 2 May 1979. The founders of the Muthahhari Foundation saw this Ayatollah as a 20th century intellectual-‘ulama and a model for all Islamic scholars. He met three requisites: qualification in the fields of traditional Islamic knowledge, a comprehension of the secular sciences and a concern for and activities in the social field.¹¹ His thought, in more than 50 books comprising almost all aspects relevant to the needs of Muslims – individual human existence, society, nature and history – is considered strategic for the establishment of an Islamic civilisation and the maintenance of an Islamic world-view. Furthermore, in the eyes of the founders of the Muthahhari Foundation, he was an open and moderate scholar who promoted freedom of thought and religious belief free from sectarianism. Finally, this learned man was known for his exemplary moral conduct.¹² Jalaluddin Rakhmat writes “From Muthahhari we learned three things: the meeting of traditional Islamic knowledge with modern sciences, openness, as well as combination between intellectualism and activism”.¹³ In this way, the complex of meanings symbolised by the name Muthahhari also characterises the various roles of the institution, its programmes and its activities.

As institutions legally recognised in Indonesia, the Shi‘i foundations have various stated ideals in terms of goal, vision and mission. Their philosophical basis supports their missionary nature and orientation. This is reflected in a comparison of the ideals of four of the country’s largest: the Muthahhari and Al-Jawad foundations in Bandung, and the Fatimah Foundation and ICC of Al-Huda, both in Jakarta.¹⁴ Al-Jawad was established “to practice the teachings of ahl al-bayt in daily life individually and collectively, as well as to develop and

spread them among society at large”. The homepage of the website of the Al-Jawad Foundation has the slogan “a deliverer of the pure Islamic message” and tells of how it was established to organise activities directed towards achieving its ideals: first, the creation of skills - intellectual, social, spiritual and professional - among its members in carrying out da’wa of the teachings about ahl al-bayt; second, the establishment of media for spreading the teachings of ahl al-bayt to the community at large and third, the collection of economic sources to support da’wa activity.

The Fatimah Foundation has goals essentially like those of the Al-Jawad Foundation but it formulates them in a different way, stating “the goal of the Fatimah Foundation is to create itself as a means for its ummah to develop the teaching of the ahl al-bayt”. The Fatimah Foundation has adopted the slogan “penetrating religious insights” and has the mission to be ‘a servant’ of the followers of the Prophet Muhammad and his ahl al-bayt. It sees its missionary activity as necessary in order that Muslims in Indonesia can accept the teachings and follow them in daily life. The Fatimah Foundation formulates its vision around the idea of five kinds of responsibility: responsibility to God, to the Prophet Muhammad and his ahl al-bayt, to all followers of Shi’ism and to all members of the Foundation. The fifth states: “finally, we are responsible for making our foundation an open one to those seeking the truth”. All of the above clearly shows that the Fatimah Foundation was established in order to propagate Shi’ism in Indonesia.

The ideals of both the Al-Jawad and the Fatimah foundations are narrow, in so far as they aim to propagate the teachings of Shi’ism. The word ‘Shi’a’ is absent in their statements for the simple reason that the term has generally negative connotations in Sunnism and among the Sunni community in Indonesia in particular. The words “ahl al-bayt” or “family of the Prophet” are more commonly used because they are acceptable among both Sunni and Shi’i Muslims (see Chapter One). Both Al-Jawad and Fatimah emphasise the term “the teachings of ahl-al-bayt”. This is in contrast to the formal written ideals of both Muthahhari and ICC of Al-Huda, where the words ahl al-bayt are hardly ever found. In this regard, two important points can be surmised: first, the ideals of the Al-Jawad and the Fatimah foundations are directed towards a Shi‘i mission to the wider society, while the written ideals of both Muthahhari and ICC of Al-Huda do not confine them solely to the Shi‘i version of Islam. Second, the first two institutions tend to implement a strategy of openness and do not practice taqiyya, while the other two, as will be shown below, tend to practice taqiyya.
The *Muthahhari* Foundation, with its slogan “for the enlightenment of Islamic thought” was established to organise programmes in the fields of *da’wa*, education and Islamic civilisation for the benefit of Indonesian society at large. As mentioned in its brochure,\(^{15}\) its general goals are:

1. To receive lessons for the development of Islamic thought and propagation from an intellectual-learned man who has the qualifications required to formulate Islamic alternatives in solving contemporary problems.

2. To create a vehicle for the growth of scientific attitudes - a depth of comprehension of modern knowledge, insight, moderation and tolerance.

3. To contribute to a formulation of an Islamic worldview and social planning for a future Islamic civilisation.

4. To participate in the production of intellectual *‘ulama* and *‘ulama*-intellectuals by means of an alternative system of education in the fields of Islamic knowledge and other relevant sciences.

5. To contribute to the establishment of unity and Muslim brotherhood (*wahdah and ukhuwwah Islamiyah*) free from sectarianism.

Aimed at implementing a *da’wa* programme in its widest sense, ICC of Al-Huda has formulated a more general vision “to realise Islamic society with a spiritual and intellectual enlightenment based on high integrity”. The complete missionary ideals of the foundation are:

1. To reconstruct and promote Islamic values in the life of society.

2. To reconstruct an Islamic culture with spiritual values.

3. To motivate intellectual enthusiasm based on Islamic values and objectivity.

4. To describe and reconstruct Islamic understanding in accordance with the Qur’an and Hadith.

5. To motivate love towards Allah, His messenger, the Prophet’s family and all human beings.

6. To plant the seeds of good conduct (*akhlaq al-karima*) in every aspect of the life of the nation and the state.

The stated ideals of both *Muthahhari* and ICC of Al-Huda share broad concepts such as the promotion of ‘Islamic values’, ‘Islamic civilisation’ and ‘Islamic culture’. Furthermore, even though both use the term ‘Islam’ in a wider sense

\(^{15}\) Yayasan Muthahhari (1993:20).
rather than Shi’ism in particular, their emphasis is different. For example, ICC of Al-Huda stresses the importance of Islamic brotherhood and unity among Muslim groups. A striking contrast between the two is that, as their names suggest, ICC of Al-Huda is focused in the field of culture, while Muthahhari concentrates more specifically on education and on the production of intellectual-learned men. Compared to the stated ideals of Al-Jawad and Fatimah, those of Muthahhari and ICC of Al-Huda are much broader, even though all four have missionary characteristics, and all four share the ultimate goal of realising an Islamic society.

An important point regarding the stated ideals of these four Shi’i institutions in Indonesia is their apparent lack of interest in the field of politics. The only slightly political aspect is the sixth point of the missionary ideals of ICC of Al-Huda, which emphasises the importance of moral values in aspects of life related to the state and nation. This becomes the more interesting because Shi’ism itself does not distinguish religion from politics. Viewed from their stated ideals, the Shi’i institutions are concerned only with religion, education and culture, fields considered appropriate in the propagation of Shi’i teachings as well as in the realisation of an Islamic society in Indonesia. The written ideals suggest there will be no involvement in political practice, even though in reality, their leaders and members may individually take part in politics. This illustrates the fact that these stated ideals are just that – ideals – and whether or not they become reality remains to be seen. We now need to understand the institutional elements which make up the Shi’i institutions.

C. The Institutional Elements

Well-established Shi’i institutions in Indonesia possess the following elements: an ustadh or some kind of religious teacher, the jama’a, or members, a variety of da’wa activities and a centre for these activities. These basic elements maintain the existence and the functioning of the institution and should be considered as a unified system. In addition, there are also supporting elements, which may influence the organisation of da’wa activity. In every institution there is an executive board and staff or activists who organise da’wa and manage or assist in the development of the institution. Examples of well-established institutions include Al-Jawad in Bandung, IPABI in Bogor, Al-Muntazar, Fatimah and ICC of Al-Huda, all located in Jakarta. There is also YAPI (Yayasan Pesantren Islam) in Bangil, East Java, Al-Hadi in Pekalongan and the Muthahhari Foundation, whose formal educational programme will be described and analysed in detail in the next chapter. With their own buildings and facilities such as an office, library, bookstore and so on, the physical portrait of these institutions shows
the extent of their involvement in various kinds of activities. ICC of Al-Huda is the largest foundation, with a luxurious building, facilities and a large number of staff.

The well-established foundations usually have one or more permanent ustadh whose main duty it is to provide religious instruction and guidance to the jama’a. The ustadh becomes a muballigh (preacher) or da’i (propagandist, evangelist) in the broad meaning of these terms. As mentioned before, in some cases, the ustadh is a co-founder or owner of the institution. In other cases, while not being a co-founder, the ustadh occupies an influential position within the organisational structure of the institution. This concurs with the fact that ustadhs have a prestigious status within the Shi’i community. In this respect, the term pembina (adviser) - a position usually regarded as being higher than the head of the institution – is sometimes used. The position is comparable to that of the kyai, or learned man in the pesantren tradition. With this high status, the ustadh is an influential agent in the development of the institution. In many cases, the ustadhs, particularly prominent ones, such as Othman Omar Shihab, Umar Shahab and Husein Shahab are not affiliated to any specific institution but are hired by a range of institutions throughout the country. As mentioned earlier, as a larger number of Qum alumni become ustadhs, they too are gaining influence within the Shi’i institutions in Indonesia.

The position of ustadh, as one considered to have thorough religious knowledge and whose guidance and advice are to be followed, is crucial for the existence and development of Shi’i institutions. The ustadhs are influential in planning and realising programmes, as well as in establishing connections with other institutions. The main duties of the ustadh include: providing religious instruction and guidance, preaching, leading rites and ceremonies and giving advice on the direction of the institution. To carry out these duties, the ustadh must possess qualifications such as a thorough religious comprehension and skill in leading religious ritual, as well as in preaching. It is not surprising that the position of ustadh in most Shi’i institutions is now filled by a Qum graduate.

The second institutional element is the jama’a, the congregation. The jama’a commonly consists of adult Muslims, male and female, who are motivated to follow the religious, educational and social programmes provided by the foundation. In return, the programmes themselves may be tailored specifically to the demands and interests of the congregation. Sometimes members of the jama’a also serve as executive personnel of the institution and are involved in the organisation of the programmes. To a certain extent, this characteristic of the jama’a distinguishes the Shi’i foundations as institutions of da’wa from the Shi’i institutions of learning such as pesantren. There are no formal rules regarding becoming a member of the jama’a, except where some programmes demand specific requirements of participants, such as paying expenses. Shi’i
foundations commonly attract people living in areas close by. In Jakarta, for example, the Fatimah Foundation has members of jama’a from areas of South and East Jakarta while Al-Muntazar attracts its members from areas in West Jakarta.

Motivations for members of the jama’a to join da’wa programmes are complex and various, from religious to secular reasons. A motivation to seek religious instruction and guidance cannot be neglected, especially in view of the fact that most members of the jama’a do not have a deep religious educational background. Furthermore, most of the Shi’is in Indonesia today have converted from Sunnism as adults. In this regard, I often heard ustadhs claiming that Indonesia’s Shi’is are in the process of becoming ‘ideal’ Shi’is. “The Shi’is in Indonesia are still immature”, said Husen Shahab.16 This suggests that they do not yet understand and practice all of the teachings of Shi’ism and that they still need instruction and guidance. Converts are considered to be influenced by the Sunni teachings and traditions to which they once held. Converted Shi’is who are still ‘new’ and ‘young’, who do not follow all Shi’i traditions, are called tashayyu’.17 A second motivation is a religious one, in that most Shi’i rituals must be carried out in Shi’i institutions, spaces which allow members to express their religiosity. This also gives rise to an expression of identity distinct from the majority Sunnis. The social and psychological benefits of being active in a congregation also form a motivation. Abaza’s explanation is particularly relevant to female participants.

The importance of time spent collectively in ‘social gatherings’, exchanging information, along with tangential activities, such as selling and buying, takes prevalence. The more I interviewed da’is, the more I found that they rely on repetitive sermons and a stylised habitus for performance purposes. Indeed, for many housewives, the Majlis could be a pleasant way of spending time. Perhaps they thus found comfort in consulting religious lecturers.18

The same social and psychological motivation among women to engage in a religious gathering can be seen in other places in the world such as Hyderabad, India, as shown by Howarth, who observed that Muslim women’s gatherings are “important opportunities for women to meet and to form friendships outside their family homes”.19

All such motivations are interconnected and whatever their individual interests, members of the Shi’i jama’a contribute to the realisation of da’wa programmes.

Moreover, richer members frequently provide fundamental economic patronage for the activities. In return for their contributions, they are given important positions within the community and the ustadh and intellectuals are expected to show them respect. In this way, close relationships among members of the institution and between religious teachers and the jama’a are formed. Members of the jama’a not only expect to acquire religious knowledge from the teachers but also to make them their spiritual guide and counsellor to provide solutions to a wide range of problems, including family-related problems. Close relationships between certain ustadhs and intellectuals with members of jama’a are a predictable consequence of the intensive interactions between them. The other side to this is that competition and tension are also inevitable in the relationships between ustadhs, intellectuals and the jama’a.

The relationships between ustadhs as individuals, foundations as institutions and among the members of the jama’a is mutually beneficial to all parties. There is an exchange of ‘goods’ in the field of religion – the one material and the other symbolic. Frequently, ustadhs in Indonesia earn their living from the money paid by the jama’a, who may be charged for participation in da’wa activities, or through endowments given for certain programmes or religious occasions. In some cases, da’wa activities depend heavily on the material support of a number of rich members of jama’a. These rich jama’a usually have a strong religious and missionary zeal. They may even make their houses centres for regular da’wa activities or provide yet other houses for ustadhs to live in. So competition among the ustadhs and intellectuals to establish good connections with rich members of the jama’a has been a characteristic of the development of Shi’ism in Indonesia. Bourdieu\(^\text{20}\) theorises that it is an attempt to accumulate economic capital, alongside the struggle to maintain or improve cultural and social capital. Most institutions depend on the jama’a for their economic resources. In return, the jama’a receive religious instruction and guidance, as well as entertainment, cultural goods and the social and psychological benefits of being part of a congregation. This interrelation clearly indicates the important position of the jama’a, which tends to be overlooked in da’wa studies so far.

The third important element of a Shi’i institution is the programmes and activities it provides. These vary in terms of field, approach and orientation and depend on several factors. Some institutions tend to place emphasis on one kind of programme while others focus on another, contributing to the significant differences found in the main attributes of certain institutions. For instance, although the Muthahhari Foundation carries out a wide range of programmes, its image is frequently recognised on the strength of its senior high school.

\(^{\text{20}}\) Bourdieu (1986).
Religious programmes basically comprise Shi’i religious rituals, both obligatory and recommended, and ceremonies. The most famous weekly prayer, the *kumayl* prayer mentioned in Chapter Three, is held in nearly every Shi’i institution in Indonesia. Other religious rituals take place on an annual basis, including those related to the commemoration of the births or deaths of the Fourteen Infallibles and other prominent religious leaders, as well as other important historical events in Shi’i tradition. Some institutions, such as IPABI in Bogor, also conduct the celebration of the two great Islamic festivals of *‘Id al-Fitr* (the close the fasting month) and *‘Id al-Adha* (the Day of Sacrifice) separately from the Sunnis. Because of the large number of Shi’i commemorations there has been co-operation and co-ordination among certain larger institutions in the organisation of certain festivals. ICC of Al-Huda, in co-operation with others, usually organises the national commemoration of such great events as *‘Ashura* and *Mawlid* in Jakarta. The essential dimension of the Shi’i institution, then, is its function to provide all members of the Shi’i community in Indonesia with the space to express their religiosity.

The field of Shi’i education will be discussed in the following chapter; however, it is important to note here that the establishment of TK/TPA (*Taman Kanak-kanak/Taman Pendidikan Al-Quran*, Qur’an kindergartens) has become a very popular programme of Shi’i institutions. This pre-school education provides very young students with some basic teachings of Islam, including using the so-called *iqro’* method which teaches children to recite the Holy Qur’an in Arabic. The *iqro’* is considered by many in Indonesia to be the easiest way of learning Qur’anic recitation, and with its instruction and material (six volumes of *iqro’* and *tajwid*), the students are able to recite the Qur’an in a short space of time. This ‘modern’ method has replaced the traditional style, known to Muslims in Indonesia as the *Baghdadi* method. Gade describes that while the *iqro’* method is *lebih cepat* (faster), the ‘*Baghdadi*’ method is *lebih dalam* (deeper) in terms of acquisition. She then writes:

> The key practical contrast is that with the ‘traditional’ method, students learned the names of letters along with their sound qualities and ‘spelled out’ words with the named letters according to set formulae before vocalising them. With the ‘modern’ method, students vocalised the letters without first going through the process of parsing the word by spelling. The primary difference Indonesians emphasised between the methods was precisely the practice of ‘spelling out’ (*ejaan*) within the traditional method, which was judged by many to be too time-consuming.\(^1\)

\(^1\) Gade (2004:147).
The popularity of this programme may result from its relatively simple requirements in terms of educational facilities and management. Just two or more teachers, usually female, may establish the pre-school institution and meets with the increasing motivation of Indonesian parents to send their children to Islamic educational institutions. A knowledge of Qur’anic recitation is a crucial basic religious skill in observing the obligatory Islamic rituals. This might be the rationale for the leaders of Shi’i institutions to undertake such programmes.

In cultural fields, a number of Shi’i institutions in Indonesia are engaged in publishing. Some institutions, such as IPABI and the Fatimah Foundation, have established a separate publishing arm under a different name, while others including those of Muthahhari, Al-Jawad and ICC of Al-Huda use the same name as their institution. These institutions organise the publication of periodicals and books, both translated texts and Indonesian originals. In addition, large Shi’i institutions such as Muthahhari, Al-Jawad, Fatimah and ICC of Al-Huda have opened libraries providing books in Indonesian, Arabic and Persian to meet the demands of the Shi’is in the country. Observing these libraries, I found that they hold a large number of Shi’i books, on a variety of subjects, which cannot be found in other libraries in Indonesia, including the libraries of Islamic higher educational institutions. Compared with the existing Sunni institutions, this is a unique trait of Shi’i institutions. It is important to note that all these fields, and in particular education and culture, may be included in the realm of da’wa in its most general sense, namely, they are all missionary efforts to achieve the ultimate goal of realising an Islamic society.

The fourth element of a Shi’i institution is the physical centre of activity. The majority of foundations are small and use their founders’ residences as centres for their activities. However, the big foundations have their own buildings and facilities. There is usually a specific room at the centre for the activities, commonly called the husainiyya, a term derived from the name of the third Imam, Husayn, whose death ritual forms a focus in Shi’ism. Husainiyya originally means “forum or courtyard where Muharram passion plays and mourning for Imam Husayn is done”. Usually, the husainiyya, office, library and other facilities are located in one complex. A few husainiyyas are big while others are small, depending upon the size of the jama’a attending the activities organised by the institution. It is in the husainiyya that Shi’is gather to observe prayers, to perform religious rituals and ceremonies, to study religion or to engage in social activities. In my observation, they seldom practice the obligatory daily prayers collectively at the husainiyya. (Shi’is place less emphasis on congregational prayers five times a day than their fellow Sunnis). On the whole, weekly, monthly and yearly da’wa activities are carried out in the husainiyya. For foundations with their own

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22 This topic is to be discussed in detail in Chapter Six.
23 Fischer and Abedi (1990:511).
mosque, such as Muthahhari and Al-Jawad, routine *da‘wa* activities are centred around the mosque. By and large, the *husainiyya* functions like a mosque, with the exception that it is not the venue for Friday prayers.

The four basic elements outlined above, combined with the written ideals, make up the characteristics of a Shi‘i institution, from which we may uncover certain elements that are similar to or distinct from Sunni institutions of *da‘wa*. The dynamic nature of the Shi‘i institution can be understood through a discussion of the various types of *da‘wa* activity espoused by it.

**D. Types of Shi‘i *Da‘wa* Activity**

In order to achieve their ideals, all Shi‘i institutions in Indonesia undertake broadly similar patterns of activities, which are nevertheless individually distinguishable in terms of approach and orientation. Since the concept of *da‘wa* includes all missionary activities aimed at realising an Islamic society, *da‘wa* activities provided by the institutions vary considerably. They can be classified into three types: *tabligh* (preaching), *ta‘lim* (teaching, training and courses) and social *da‘wa*. All three types of activity are interconnected and they may be directed towards either internal or external orientations. The three types of *da‘wa* may take the form of either regular or incidental programmes.

*Tabligh* activities among the Shi‘is in Indonesia, as in the Sunni community, go under the name of *pengajian*, or religious gatherings, sometimes also known as *majlis ta‘lim*, or councils for learning. Both terms refer to preaching and learning. Mona Abaza has provided us with an interesting analysis of *da‘wa* styles among gentrified urbanites in Jakarta (even though her article contains several factual mistakes). The *majlis ta‘lim* is not “a typical urban phenomenon that only exists in Jakarta”;24 instead, it is a phenomenon of both rural and urban settings in Indonesia, although it is clearly flourishing in urban areas.

With respect to religious gatherings, Shi‘i institutions hold both regular and irregular gatherings for their *jama‘a*. The regular type includes weekly and annual gatherings related to the relevant Shi‘i rituals. The best known and most widespread weekly religious gathering within the Shi‘i community in Indonesia follows the recommendation for Shi‘is to recite the *kumayl* prayer, mentioned in the previous chapter. The *majlis kumayl*, in which the *kumayl* prayer is uttered and a sermon is delivered, is held on Thursday evenings. For those foundations with a mosque, such as Muthahhari and Al-Jawad, this takes place in the mosque (*Al-Munawwarah* and *Nurul Falah* respectively) while for others the gathering takes place in the *husainiyya* or in the leader’s residence.

Other weekly gatherings are based on agreement between the jama’a, teacher and foundation, so that the form, time and place can vary. In Muthahhari and Al-Jawad, for example, the weekly religious gathering is held on Sundays, so it is known as Pengajian Ahad (Sunday religious gathering). The core of the pengajian is the ceramah agama, a sermon or lecture delivered by a teacher and followed by a discussion or a question and answer session. The topic of the sermon varies, and is decided upon by the preacher. It is likely that the selection of topic is related to historical events and rituals prescribed by Islamic, and in particular Shi’i, teachings, or it may be in response to events occurring within the community. Sometimes it is purely a matter of the preference of the preacher. Similar sermons may be delivered on different occasions and in different places. The weekly pengajian in Shi’i institutions cover a variety of aspects of Shi’ism, particularly doctrine, morality and thought.

The regular annual religious gatherings are linked to the relatively large number of rites and ceremonies within the Shi’i tradition. They are commonly associated with the so-called PHBI (Peringatan Hari-hari Besar Islam, Commemoration of Islamic Holy Days), a well-known programme run by all Shi’i institutions in Indonesia. Besides the Islamic festivals shared by the Sunnis, many other important events are commemorated which are distinctively Shi’i. In most of these congregational rituals, the sermon is an essential element, without which the worship is invalid. Here one can see an aspect of da’wa and tabligh naturally inherent in Islam. At such great events as the ‘Ashura, Arba’in, and Mawlid, which are celebrated on a national level in Jakarta, it is common for a famous da’i, or preacher to be invited to deliver a sermon.

In a number of the religious ceremonies, ‘ulama or intellectuals from Iran may be invited to attend. For example, the committee of ICC of Al-Huda invited Ayatollah Ali Taskhiri to deliver a sermon to celebrate the New Year of the Muslim calendar of 1425, on 20 February 2004. At this event, he spoke about the struggle of Imam Husayn in the maintenance of Islam Muhammadi, or ‘Muhammadist Islam’ in the period when it had been corrupted by the tyranny of the Ummayad dynasty. The Ayatollah suggested that in all ages there are tyrants present against whom Muslims are obliged to fight. At this annual religious gathering, for which there is always a large number of participants, every effort is made to maximise the effectiveness of da’wa. This includes a book fair, to which Shi’i publishers from all over Indonesia are invited.

Regarding the topic of sermons delivered in the various types of da’wa, on the whole, the topic chosen is put into a context with today’s Muslim umma in mind. For example, sermons delivered on the occasion of ‘Ashura must deal with the sacrifice of Imam Husayn, his family and his loyal followers. In the commemoration of ‘Ashura held in Jakarta on 2 March 2004, Hasan Daliel Al-Aydrus delivered a sermon about the rising of the oppressed, as exemplified
by Imam Husayn and its significance in the current struggle of the Muslim umma. Similarly, on the occasion of Mawlid, the Prophet’s birthday, the sermon usually deals with loving devotion to him. At the Mawlid celebration held in the Munawwarah Mosque (every year since the establishment of the Mutahhari Foundation) Jalaluddin Rakhmat usually emphasises the importance of reciting the salawat, or invocation to Muhammad. On 19 May 2003, Rakhmat provided his jama’a with a sermon entitled “The Presence of the Messenger of God among us”, affirming that the spirit of the Prophet would be present under two conditions: first, when salawat to him is uttered in prayer and second, in any place where orphans and the poor gather in a pleasant atmosphere. Rakhmat relates this topic to his previous preaching among the poor of North Jakarta.25 Such examples illustrate the close relationship between the topic of sermons, the events commemorated and the preacher’s efforts to contextualise them.

Specific religious ideologies are promoted in the sermons delivered by Shi’i preachers at weekly and annual activities, or at other events. Scrutinising various recorded sermons, we find two different tendencies that are congruent with the divide between the ustadh and intellectual groups: the political tendencies of the ustadhs versus the moral or spiritual tendencies of the intellectuals. These are clearly distinguishable in terms of the topics of the sermons they deliver. More specifically, topics related to wilayat al-faqih, the mandate of the jurists, are numerous among the ustadhs whilst barely present in sermons given by intellectuals. The ustadhs emphasise the necessity for Shi’is in Indonesia to adhere to the doctrine of wilayat al-faqih and to make a prominent place for jurists in politics, as well as their preaching and teaching. Thus does da’wa become an expression of the religious ideology of the preachers and the institutions that they guide.

In addition to tabligh, da’wa activities among the Shi’is include the delivery of courses and training, in which participants receive intensive instruction and guidance in the teachings of Shi’ism. This type of da’wa is congruent with the meaning of ta’lim, that is, teaching to increase the knowledge of the participants.26 Ta’lim is different from tabligh in a number of aspects: first, ta’lim may require more than one ustadh or intellectual instructor; second, it requires the participants to involve themselves in more intensive learning so that they can understand topics offered in depth by the programme.

The Shi’i institutions in Indonesia have organised a large number of training programmes, commonly called Paket Kajian, ‘packets of courses’. These consist of a series of courses on a certain subject, organised over a certain number of meetings, either regular or incidental, so that the participants may gain deeper

understanding of certain aspects of Islam and Shi’ism in particular. Names given
to the programmes generally depend on subject or topic offered. This type of
training is familiar to Muslims in Indonesia, particularly those living in the big
cities. Large Shi’i institutions such as Muthahhari, Al-Jawad, Fatimah and ICC
of Al-Huda have been active in holding a variety of courses. Some programmes
are offered to both Shi’is and Sunnis, while others are open only to Shi’is.

Many institutions provide courses aimed specifically at strengthening the
internal Shi’i community, even though the activity itself may be open to both
Muslim denominations. The Al-Jawad Foundation, for example, tends to
organise courses which are specifically Shi’i in nature and which on the whole
are only followed by Shi’is. Their best known programme includes a one-year
integrated Ja’fari course on aspects of ‘aqida (doctrine), fiqh (jurisprudence)
and tafsir (Qur’an exegesis) within Shi’ism, in addition to courses on logic and
the Arabic language. ICC of Al-Huda has also participated in offering such
courses as Persian, Arabic, tafsir and logic. IPABI has conducted a series of
training programmes on the principal aspects of Shi’ism, which are structured
in elementary, intermediate and advanced levels, and on special topics like
wilayat al-faqih, all of which are followed by Shi’is from a number of areas
in Indonesia.\(^\text{27}\) IPABI has also conducted an important national
da’wa activity
in Puncak, Bogor, known as Training and Silaturrahmi (Friendship). It was
held from 24-27 July 1997 for men and from 26-29 November 1999 for women
participants. Ustadhs such as Ahmad Baragbah and Husein Al-Kaf were invited
to participate and these activities were considered instrumental, not only in
improving levels of religious knowledge but also in establishing close relations
among the Shi’i adherents, as well as the ustadhs, within a framework of Islamic
brotherhood.\(^\text{28}\)

This ta’lim type of da’wa activity is aimed at meeting the needs of the Shi’i
community rather than those of wider Muslim society. Shi’is in Indonesia, who
are by and large considered ‘immature’ in their religion, need education of at
least two types: first, a thorough grasp of the basic teachings of Shi’ism and
Shi’i traditions. This includes the practical knowledge required to perform the
prescribed and recommended prayers, and other religious rituals, in accordance
with Ja’fari jurisprudence. Second, subjects of Islamic knowledge such as
tafsir, Hadith, logic and Arabic are important for members of the community so
that they understand the doctrinal and historical bases of the madhhab which
they follow.

The ta’lim type of da’wa activity, which is aimed at attracting both Shi’i and
Sunni groups, is also undertaken. Two goals are achieved by ta’lim: a deeper and

\(^\text{27}\) Syi’ar (Ramadan 1423:47).
\(^\text{28}\) An-Nashr (7/July-August 1997, 14/1999).
stronger understanding of Shi’ism by its followers as a result of its comparison with Sunnism, and the acknowledgement and recognition of Shi’ism by the Sunni. Since the establishment of the Muthahhari Foundation, for example, this body has organised a number of programmes directed towards attracting both Muslim denominations. The field of Islamic knowledge on offer includes Arabic language, ‘ulum al-Qur’an (the Qur’anic sciences), ‘ulum al-Hadith (sciences of the Traditions), Islamic history, usul al-fiqh (principles of jurisprudence), ‘ilm al-Qira’a (the science of Qur’anic recitation), Sufism, kalam (theology) and Islamic philosophy. Other options include logic, Western philosophy, journalism, research methodology, management and organisation, entrepreneurship and communication technology.29 In accordance with Muthahhari’s goal of establishing brotherhood between Shi’is and Sunnis, a comparative perspective on both branches of Islam is provided, so that Sunnis may come to acknowledge Shi’i views. Furthermore, during this programme, leading Shi’i figures take the opportunity to explain the correct teachings of Shi’ism to Sunnis, while describing misconceptions about Shi’i teachings and addressing stereotypes widely held by Sunnis. In this way, the real teachings of Shi’ism may be well understood by Sunnis.

Included in the ta’lim is da’wa through Sufism, which is also aimed at both Sunni and Shi’i groups: “Sufism is the inner and esoteric dimension of Islam”.30 Given an increasing interest in Sufism among upper-middle class urbanites in Indonesia,31 foundations such as Tazkiya Sejati in Jakarta and its branch in Bandung, the IIMaN Centre for Positive Sufism and the Fitrah Foundation have organised courses on various aspects of mystical practice. Tazkiya Sejati is the most famous. From 1997 to 2003, it organised more than 20 courses on Sufism, attracting participants from the upper-middle class in Jakarta, including businessmen, executives and retired functionaries. The courses were usually conducted during the weekends, to make them more convenient for participants to attend. Since the field of Sufism transcends the borderline between Shi’ism and Sunnism, this course was open to all Muslims and were taught and guided by both Sunni and Shi’i teachers. Besides Jalaluddin Rakhmat, the director of Tazkiya Sejati himself, prominent Muslim intellectuals and ustads such as Haidar Bagir, Zen Al-Hadi,32 Othman Omar Shihab,33 Muchtar Adam,34 Abdul

31 Two indications of the great interest in Sufism among urbanites are first, courses on Sufism have attracted a large number of participants; second, huge sales of books on Sufism have been recorded.
32 Zen Al-Hadi completed his MA at Al-Azhar University in Cairo. Besides being an ustadh, he is known as a spiritual healer in Jakarta.
33 Othman Omar Shihab graduated from Al-Azhar University in Cairo and is currently a famous da’i who often appears as a preacher on religious television programmes. He is a descendant of the great learned man Sayyid Uthman bin Yahya (d. 1914).
34 Muchtar Adam is the head of the Babussalam Pesantren in Bandung. A more detailed discussion of him can be found in Chapter Seven.
Qadir al-Habsyi\textsuperscript{35} and Said Agiel Siradj\textsuperscript{36} have been invited to teach. In accordance with the Sufi mission of the purification of soul and the belief in siding with the oppressed, the theoretical aspects of Sufism taught at this institution are those of the teachings contained in the Sufi manuals. However, certain religious rituals, such as the recommended prayers and \textit{do’a}, or supplications, follow the rules and procedures of the Shi’i tradition and as are prescribed in famous Shi’i books such as \textit{Mafatih al-Jinan} (Keys to the Gardens of Paradise).\textsuperscript{37} Another interesting and related activity held by the foundation in Puncak near Bogor, West Java has been the practice of \textit{’uzla}, or meditation, in which a number of participants perform Sufi rituals, as well as listening to religious sermons delivered by \textit{ustadhs}. The courses on Sufism are aimed at bringing the participants to a spiritual enlightenment which will maintain the balance between life in the here-and-now and in the hereafter.\textsuperscript{38}

The courses offered at \textit{Tazkiya Sejati} differ from the courses on Sufism organised by Nurcholish Madjid’s \textit{Paramadina} in terms of topics and contents. The main characteristic of the programme at \textit{Tazkiya Sejati} was that it provided participants not only with the theoretical aspects of Sufism but also with everyday rituals observed under Sufism, such as \textit{dhikr}, or the remembrance of God, and guidance from teachers in the correct performance of the prayers. In this regard, one commentator, Sila considers \textit{Tazkiya Sejati} to be the most significant institution of Sufism for upper segments of Indonesian society, because in his experience, he found that many participants at \textit{Tazkiya Sejati} had earlier followed courses at other institutions like \textit{Paramadina}. Sila argues that they moved to \textit{Tazkiya Sejati} because the previous institutions had only dealt with the intellectual aspects of Sufism and not its spiritual dimension. In \textit{Tazkiya Sejati}, he says, “besides receiving contemporary topics of Sufism from Islamic scholars through discussions and seminars, they were taught ways of practicing certain \textit{wirid} and acts of worship”.\textsuperscript{39} Further research by Zubaidah shows that most \textit{jama’a} responded positively to the courses on Sufism held at \textit{Tazkiya Sejati} and felt that they had transformed them, sending them into a positive direction in terms of knowledge and religiosity.\textsuperscript{40}

An increased interest in Sufism among urbanites in Indonesia has been the reason for other Shi’i institutions to offer the same kinds of courses. When, in 2003, because of conflict between Jalaluddin Rakhmat and the children of the co-founder Sudharmono, \textit{Tazkiya Sejati} stopped operating, other institutions such as the \textit{Fitrah} Foundation, run by prominent Shi’i \textit{ustadhs} in Jakarta, continued

\begin{itemize}
\item Sayyid Abdul Qadir al-Habsyi is a lecturer at the State Islamic University in Jakarta.
\item Said Agiel Siradj is a Nahdlatul Ulama leader.
\item This is a standard collection of Shi’i prayers compiled by Abbas Muhammad Rida al-Qummi (1877-1941).
\item \textit{Syar’}i (October/2002:50-51).
\item Sila (2002:7).
\item Zubaidah, cited in Rosyidi (2004:122-123).
\end{itemize}
to offer courses on Sufism. (The *Fitrah* Islamic Spiritual Centre was established by Husein Shahab and Othman Omar Shihab.) Popular Shi’ī ustadhs such as Othman Omar Shihab and Zen al-Hadi, who used to teach at *Tazkiya Sejati* are now active with the Fitrah Foundation and are involved in the instruction of Sufism. Similarly, iIiMaN, led by Haidar Bagir, continues to organise a number of activities connected with the teaching of Sufism. Apart from motivating numerous debates on the relationship between Sufism and Shi’ism, Sufism seems to have united Sunnis and Shi’īs because participants tend to set aside their differences. With respect to the propagation of Shi’ism in Indonesia, this approach seems to have been effective in introducing certain aspects of Shi’ism to the Sunnis.

Another important type of *da’wa* organised by the Shi’īs through their institutions are social work activities, or *social da’wa*. This is an implementation of the Shi’ī teaching promoting the necessity to side with the *Mustad’afin* (‘the Oppressed’), a famous concept frequently found in religious sermons and Shi’ī sources. In Indonesia, this type of *da’wa* falls within the concept of *da’wa bi al-hal*, or mission by deeds, in which emphasis is put on the noble moral character, *akhlaq* of preachers to give an example to the community by showing good behaviour, *amal salih*. This is frequently considered to be more important than preaching and teaching, or *da’wa bi al-lisan* (‘propagation by the tongue’). Rakhmat, for instance, emphasises that *da’wa* through *tabligh* and *ta’lim*, as taught in the Qur’an and Traditions of the Prophet, is insufficient in terms of the realisation of the Muslim umma. In practice, however, the activities of social *da’wa* necessarily also involve *tabligh* as well.

Several Shi’ī institutions have participated in the organisation of various social activities for the lower classes in Indonesian society. Since the very beginning, the Muthahhari Foundation has devoted great attention to the empowerment of the Oppressed through programmes structurally organised under a division called *Imdad Mustad’afin*, which means ‘to give assistance and pay attention to the dispossessed and oppressed’. In practice, this provides educational, social and economic assistance to orphans and the poor. It is done by the Foundation for two reasons: first, it aims to generate and improve the self-respect of the poor and other segments of the lower classes. Second, it is intended to provide guidance to children of the oppressed, in order that they may compete in education. To realise these programmes, *Imdad Mustad’afin* collects and distributes donations to its members, which in 2000 numbered at least 200 children. An interesting creative project of this division has been the establishment of the Islamic music
group known as *Cinta Rasul*, ‘Love of the Prophet’. Under the leadership of Abu Ali, who also heads the division of *Imdad Mustad’afin*, the group’s 20 members have produced their own albums. With a variety of musical *salawat*, or invocations to the Prophet Muhammad as expressions of loving devotion, the group has performed in public, including in religious programmes broadcast on national television.\(^45\)

Within the same category of *da’wa*, important contributions made by the Indonesian Shi’i women’s institution, OASE (*Organisation of Ahlulbayt for Social Support and Education*) are worthy of mention. Aside from this organisation’s involvement in religious education for the poor, by providing so-called ‘*kelas akhlaq*’, ‘classes in morality’ in several schools in Jakarta, the institution has also awarded scholarships to the children of poor families. It has also provided other forms of training for the poor in Jakarta and other places, in West, Central and East Java. With its logo ‘an eye and tear’ OASE aims to assist the lower classes, regardless of their *madhhab*.\(^46\)

Social *da’wa* is also undertaken today by the *Lembaga Dakwah Ukhuwah Al-Husainy* (*Da’wa Institute of the Al-Husainy Brotherhood*), an institution newly formed by the alumni of KKM (*Kuliah Kader Muballigh*, Course for Preacher Cadres). This new institution focuses on *da’wa* among the lower classes in urban and rural areas and provides not only religious instruction but also various programmes of social and economic aid. For example, through its monthly programme of *Jumpa Mustad’afin* (*Meetings with the Oppressed*) it has extended financial assistance to poor families in some slum areas in Jakarta, as well as giving religious instruction and guidance. This type of *da’wa* activity is intended to bring Shi’i *ustadhs* and activists closer to the community. It is also considered to be a manifestation of social responsibility and a way of solving the social and economic problems of the Muslim *umma*.\(^47\)

The social *da’wa* activities described above are regularly undertaken by Shi’i institutions. However, there are others which are conducted alongside the organisation of important religious rituals and ceremonies, such as the annual ‘*Ashura* and *Mawlid*, through which the Shi’is demonstrate social responsibility towards the wider Indonesian community. The commemoration of ‘*Ashura* in Jakarta on 2 March 2004, for instance, incorporated the organisation of blood donation in co-operation with the Indonesian Red Cross. It was reported that some thousand people participated. OASE have also organised similar humanitarian activity under *da’wa*. In its brochure, this women’s association urges Shi’is to side with the oppressed, particularly during ‘*Ashura*. It invites

\(^{45}\) *Siyar* (Ramadan 2004:52-53).
\(^{46}\) *Siyar* (October 2003:54-56).
participants on the occasion to ‘implement their tears of ‘Ashura in an action to help the Oppressed who are suffering and dying’. Again, this activity is inspired by the struggle of Imam Husayn and his followers at Karbala. Similarly, social work activities, including *khitanan massal* (mass circumcision) of poor children - appreciated in Indonesia - are carried out along with the *Mawlid* celebration of the Prophet Muhammad’s birthday. It is no exaggeration to say that Shi’i institutions in Indonesia attempt to give a social significance to their religious rituals. Social *da’wa* is significant in relation to the socio-economic condition of the poor in Indonesian society, which is often lower than the minimum standard of living.

By and large, Shi’i social *da’wa* is directed towards all people, regardless of *madhhab*. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that it is hoped that the recipients of *da’wa* will be converted to Shi’ism. The minimum benefit gained through this type of *da’wa* is that the recipients will not discredit Shi’ism and Shi’is. Recognition of their contribution to the development of Indonesian society creates important symbolic capital. Equally, the close relationship between Shi’is and society can in turn become the social capital needed to maintain their existence. The sermons and writings of Jalaluddin Rakhmat promote the necessity of having good morality and conduct, for such virtues form the basis by which Shi’is may be judged. Simple adherence to a specific *madhhab* does not form any basis for judgement among Muslims.

From the three types of *da’wa* activities conducted by Shi’i institutions, the most popular and frequently observed type is *tabligh*, in the narrowest meaning of the term. Shi’i institutions and associations give special attention to producing *da’i* cadres through training, which will now be considered.

### E. *Da’wa* Training

Although this study did not intend to examine the effectiveness of *da’wa* activity in promoting Shi’ism and in realising an Islamic society in Indonesia, we do suggest that the continued recognition of the Shi’is by the majority Sunni community is due in large part to *da’wa*. Shi’i institutions and organisations have made attempts to provide training for *da’i*, or cadres capable of carrying out appropriate and effective *da’wa* activities. Basing his analysis on Muslim theorists of *da’wa*, Poston names the training of evangelists as the third phase within the *da’wa* ‘realm’, coming after the phase of conversion and the phase of

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reinforcing Islam in individuals,\(^4^9\) while in Nagata’s observations, the training of new missionaries is included in all *ta’lim* activities.\(^5^0\) The training of *da’i* cadres is central to the realisation of all *da’wa* goals.

At least three programmes of Shi’i *da’i* training have been conducted. The first was KKM (*Kuliah Kader Muballigh*, Courses for Preacher Cadres), organised by Forum *Al-Husainy*, a Jakarta-based forum of *ustadhs* and activists founded in 2003. Structured in eight sessions, KKM provided its participants (both Sunni and Shi’i) with training on various *da’wa* topics, including the Management and Methodology of *Da’wa*, *Da’wa* Strategy and Challenge, The Sufi Approach to *Da’wa*, Developing *Da’wa* Paradigm and Empowerment, Psychology, *Da’wa* and Communication, the Role of Preachers in Social Change in Indonesia and topics on Islamic doctrine, history, and current movements in Islam. On the surface, this curriculum does not appear to reflect a Shi’i character to the training, but all lectures were conducted by prominent Shi’i intellectuals and *ustadhs* such as Haidar Bagir, Umar Shahab, Husein Shahab, Othman Omar Shihab, Zen Al-Hadi, Abdurrahman Al-‘Aydrus, Agus Abubakar, Muhsin Labieb, and Hasan Daliel. The participants were expected to follow not only theoretical and practical aspects of *da’wa* but also Islamic theology, history, and the development of Muslim society. The programme emphasised the importance of Islamic brotherhood, especially between Sunni and Shi’i preachers. The training attracted great interest from *da’wa* activists and university students in Jakarta and the courses were oversubscribed.\(^5^1\)

The KKM course did not provide either a specific strategy or a manual for missionary activists carrying out *da’wa* activity; however, the participants of KKM have since established the aforementioned *Lembaga Dakwah Ukhuwah*, which has implemented various types of *da’wa* activities and has been involved in social *da’wa*, *tabligh* and *ta’lim*.

The second training activity was organised by the *Muthahhari* Foundation. In fact, this foundation might have been the first Shi’i institution to pay significant attention to the training of *da’i*. Until 1993, the foundation conducted a series of four *Kuliah Muballighin* (Lectures for Preachers)\(^5^2\) which were attended by numerous participants. The training curriculum included such topics as Principles of *Da’wa*, Rhetoric of *Da’wa*, the Psychology of *Da’wa*, Morality and *Da’wa* Strategy, Islam in Indonesia in a Historical Perspective, Development of Islamic Theological Schools, the Development of Islamic Jurisprudential Schools and a Sufi Approach to Islam. The course instructors were drawn from prominent religious teachers in Bandung including K.H. Muchtar Adam,

\(^{49}\) Poston (1992:132).

\(^{50}\) Nagata (1984:82).

\(^{51}\) Suara Ummah (1/1/2004:55-56).

\(^{52}\) Al-Tanwir (29/3/1993:8).
The Struggle of the Shi’is in Indonesia

K.H. A.F. Ghazali, K.H. Abdullaq Gymnastiar, Dedy Djamaluddin Malik, Husein Shahab, Agus Effendi and A. Hajar Sanusi. Like KKM, Kuliah Muballighin was open to both Sunnis and Shi’is, with a view to promoting the recognition of Shi’ism among the Sunnis.

The third da’i training was organised by the national Shi’i organisation, IJABI. In terms of goal, subjects and methods, this training was totally different from those of the Muthahhari Foundation and Al-Husainy. It was confined to members and executives of IJABI. The elementary Pengkaderan Muballigh (Establishing Preacher Cadres) that was conducted over four days (24-27 December 2003) in Bandung warrants special attention here. With about 60 participants from all over Indonesia, from the central board as well as provincial and district branches of IJABI, this programme represented an important step in the development of the organisation. The activities were held in a hostel in Bandung, where all the participants were housed. The goal was to generate a cadre corps of IJABI who, with their knowledge and skill, would: one, be capable of defending the madhhab of ahl al-bayt; two, be capable of enlightening the Muslim umma, and three, be capable of defending Islam in relation to global political developments.

To achieve these goals the participants were instructed in the doctrine of Shi’ism, ‘ulum al-Qur’an, ‘ulum al-Hadith, rhetoric and techniques of argumentation. All the subjects were at an introductory level and presented in lectures. The lectures were given by Jalaluddin Rakhmat and each was followed by a discussion. The main messages of the lectures were as follows: first, that the participants should gain an understanding of the principal teachings of Shi’ism, based on the widespread Sunni material sources and methodology considered authoritative within the Sunni tradition. Second, the participants should apply critical analysis to these Sunni sources, with the purpose of defending and supporting the originality and validity of the Shi’i teachings. By critical study, they should be able to find weaknesses and inconsistencies in the Sunni teachings. Third, they should acquire skills in rhetoric and techniques of argumentation for the times when they discuss or enter into dialogue with Sunni figures. It was emphasised

53 K.H. Abdul Fatah Ghazali was a prominent learned man in Bandung and close friend of Jalaluddin Rakhmat. Rakhmat delivered special sermon at the Munawwarah Mosque in memoriam of this scholar, who passed away on 6 May 2001.
54 Dr. Afif Muhammad is a lecturer at Gunung Djati State Institute for Islamic Studies (now State Islamic University) in Bandung. He has written several articles and translated numerous books from Arabic.
55 K.H. Abdullah Gymnastiar, popularly known as Aa Gym, is a famous da’i in Indonesia today and the head of Pesantren Daarut Tauhid in Bandung.
56 Dedy Djamaluddin Malik is currently a member of parliament of PAN. He was an activist at and secretary of the Muthahhari Foundation and a former member of the executive board of IJABI. He completed his Masters in Communications at UNPAD with a thesis on the Islamic thought of Abdurrahman Wahid, Nurcholish Madjid, Amien Rais and Jalaluddin Rakhmat.
57 Agus Effendi is an alumnus of Pesantren Gontor. He is a former teacher and executive of the Muthahhari Foundation.
58 A. Hajar Sanusi was an activist and executive of the Muthahhari Foundation.
that the lack of accurate techniques of rhetoric and argumentation would not only contribute to the failure of achieving the goal of da‘wa, but would also destroy the originality and holiness of Shi‘i Islam. These introductory lectures were very significant in the da‘i training programme.

In addition to the lectures, all participants were required to join an entire programme outlined by the committee. Included in the programme was a working group and library study, for which participants were divided into several groups. Each group was given a certain topic, including the sources of polemics between Sunnis and Shi‘is. In the subject of doctrine, for instance, the topics included ‘why do I choose Shi‘ism (from both Shi‘i and Sunni sources)’, tawhid (the unity of God), al-Mahdi (the Guided One), al-raj‘a (return), al-bada’ (alteration in God’s will), tabarruk (seeking blessings through persons or things) and tawassul (prayers through mediators). Each group studied the topic in the Muthahhari library, wrote a paper on it and presented it to the class. All the topics were then discussed and debated, and all the papers were digitalised and submitted to the committee.

The atmosphere of this activity was interesting to observe. In general, the training was academic and intellectual. It was free from indoctrination. It provided a space for open and liberal thought, and for discussion and debate. The participants were free to question and criticise aspects of Shi‘i teachings. This atmosphere suggested that the organisers were prepared to defend the originality and validity of Shi‘ism as a branch of Islam, based on both Sunni and Shi‘i sources, and yet to engage in various forms of dialogue with their Sunni brothers.

Interestingly, there was a final examination for all the participants. However, participants’ success in this da‘i training schedule was based not on the examination results alone but also on the implementation of a da‘wa programme upon their return home. They were obliged to formulate their own programme in the community where they lived, to implement it and to report back to the committee on its results.

The three da‘i trainings are very important in the development of Shi‘i da‘wa in Indonesia, even though their impact on the realisation of goals of da‘wa remains unknown. Not only have the three training courses provided important knowledge and skills for the participants, but they have also motivated and affirmed their missionary zeal. This in turn contributes to the strengthening of the position of the Shi‘is and the image of their faith within the community. The aim of all the above activities is to achieve recognition from the Sunni majority.
This recognition is an evolving process that takes time, and the da'wa process continues. The organisation of da'i trainings reflects a strong missionary zeal among the organisers, the Shi'i ustads, intellectuals and institutions. In this regard, Shi'ism, as much as Sunnism, is a missionary brand of Islam.