6. Publishing

Publishing has been another important means for Indonesian Shi‘is to spread their teachings, and has gone hand in hand with the development of the madhhab in Indonesia. The publication of books and periodicals can, to a certain extent, be considered to be a form of da‘wa, but it is also a contribution to the intellectual and cultural life of the country. The discussion in this chapter is divided into five parts: first, I give a brief description of the general characteristics of Shi‘i publishers in Indonesia. The second and third parts deal with translations of Shi‘i books and books written by local Shi‘i figures. Fourth, I describe Islamic periodicals published by Shi‘i institutions of learning and da‘wa and finally, I explain the internal impact of publishing on the Shi‘i community and the relationship with religious authorities in Indonesia.

A. The Shi‘is Publishers

Over the past two decades, in congruence with the increasing number of followers of Shi‘ism in Indonesia, there have been more than sixty publishers producing hundreds of Shi‘i titles and publications. Shi‘i books, in a broad sense, are any books written by Shi‘i ‘ulama or intellectuals containing the teachings of Shi‘ism and Shi‘i thought. This steady growth in the number of publishers and of Shi‘i literature is a new and striking phenomenon in the history of Islam in Sunni-dominated Indonesia, and it has to some extent taken Muslim scholars and the country’s religious and political authorities unaware. In response to the proliferation of Islamic literature and the Muslim population’s thirst for this material, the late liberal Muslim thinker, Harun Nasution (1919-1998) wrote an article for Tempo, possibly the best-known Indonesian magazine, on its 60th anniversary in 1987 with a discussion of Islamic literature. Nasution’s essay deals with the origins, doctrines and development of Shi‘ism, and its inclusion in this special edition of Tempo indicates the significance of Shi‘i publications. Similarly, about a decade later, Azra noted the growth of Shi‘i publishers and literature as an unusual phenomenon in Islamic discourse in Indonesia.²

That said, the vast majority of these Shi‘is’ publishers are little or even completely unknown to the community of mainstream publishers, IKAPI (Ikatan Penerbit Indonesia, the Association of Indonesian Publishers).³ Most small publishing

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1 This figure is derived from catalogues of the libraries of the Muthahhari Foundation, the Fatimah Foundation, the RaasyunFikr Foundation, the Al-Jawad Foundation, and the ICC of Al-Huda.
2 Azra (1999).
3 Iwan Setiawan, the deputy head of IKAPI, quoted in Republika (28/3/2004:5) gives the total number of Islamic publishers as 50. Watson (2005:179) shows that this is an underestimation and the total number is in fact much greater.
houses are not registered with this professional organisation and they do not take part in the book fairs attended by the mainstream publishers. It is also the case that many of these Shi‘i’ publishers appear on the market with a number of books and then disappear, usually because their businesses cannot compete and survive in the open market.

There are two types of Shi‘i publishers in Indonesia. The first is purely commercial, publishers whose core activity since establishment has been publishing and marketing. This category includes Shi‘i-owned firms which produce both Shi‘i and non- Shi‘i books. The three most important in this category are Mizan, Pustaka Hidayah and Lentera. All have become well-established publishing houses and are registered members of IKAPI. There are numerous others in this category, some of them no longer active. The second type includes Shi‘i institutions that undertake publishing as part of their wider activities, including da‘wa and education. Several big institutions such as ICC of Al-Huda, Muthahhari, Al-Jawad, Y API (Yayasan Penyiaran Islam), YAPI (Yayasan Pesantren Islam) of Bangil and Al-Baqir of Bangil fall into this category. Other Shi‘i institutions have set up separate publishing houses, such as Pustaka Zahra, belonging to the Fatimah Foundation and Cahaya, belonging to IPABI.

Quantitative data illustrates the popularity of the established Shi‘i publishing houses. In terms of quantity, figures provided by RaushanFikr, a Shi‘i foundation based in Yogyakarta, show that until 2001 the top four publishers were Pustaka Hidayah with 60 titles, Mizan with 56 titles, Lentera with 50 titles and YAPI (Yayasan Penyiaran Islam) of Jakarta with 31 titles. It is interesting to note that although Mizan is one of the largest and even enjoys the reputation of being the most popular Shi‘i publisher, its output is below that of Pustaka Hidayah. These rankings may change with the appearance of new firms such as Pustaka Zahra and Cahaya, which have been very active in recent years: figures up to March 2004 show that Pustaka Zahra produced more than 50 titles and Cahaya more than 40.

The most active Shi‘i institution engaged in producing cultural material is the Iranian-sponsored Islamic Cultural Centre of Al-Huda (ICC). Figures up to March 2004 show that ICC of Al-Huda has published more than 30 books, including an imprint of the Qur’an. This act of publishing the Holy Book may have been an attempt to deny the accusation made in many Sunni polemical writings that the Shi‘is have their own Qur’an and that it is very different to that used by Sunni Muslims. (In fact, the contents do not differ at all from the copies printed by other publishers in Indonesia.) Other Shi‘i institutions also engaged in publishing but on a smaller scale are the Muthahhari Press, Al-Jawad, YAPI of Bangil, Al-Baqir of Bangil and Al-Kautsar of Jakarta, producing

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4 Shafwan (http://rausyanfikr.tripod.com/makatul/sosio-agama.htm).
fewer than 20 titles each. These numbers illustrate the limitations of the Shi‘i institutions in the field of publishing, which is not altogether surprising when one considers that for most of them publishing serves as an adjunct to their missionary activity.

There is a stark contrast between the two types of publishers in terms of their orientation and management. The firms we have classified as purely commercial have a strong business orientation, while those which fall into the second category can be said to be da‘wa oriented, only interested in undertaking publishing as a part of their da‘wa programmes. The management of the ‘commercial’ publishers tends to be rational and modern, while that of those in the second group can be described as traditional. Both categories are distinguished by the types of books they publish. While the commercial firms produce only a small proportion of Shi‘ite literature compared to their total number of publications, the Shi‘i da‘wa institutions tend to confine themselves to the production of Shi‘i works alone. Furthermore, the books put out by the commercial publishing houses tend to be directed towards attracting a wider readership than those of the Shi‘i da‘wa foundations. The latter are only likely to publish Shi‘i work of interest to the Shi‘i community in Indonesia, or works relevant to their current da‘wa programmes. This also corresponds to the non-profit purpose of da‘wa.

In order that we may fully understand the two categories of publishers, profiles of Mizan and YAPI (Yayasan Penyiaran Islam) now follow. Mizan is one of the biggest and most dynamic publishers of Islamic books in Indonesia today and it has played a great role in the development of Islamic intellectual life in the country. In 1982, Haidar Bagir, together with his friends Zainal Abidin and Ali Abdullah graduated from the Industrial Arts Department of ITB. With financial support from Bagir’s maternal uncle, Abdillah Toha and Toha’s associate, Anis Hadi the three established a publishing business in Bandung. Mizan has emerged with a distinctive product range, in striking contrast to the great Islamic publishers such as Al-Ma‘arif of Bandung. Its distinctiveness is the Shi‘i identity of its books, something that has both popularised and stigmatised it. The popularity of Mizan goes hand in hand with the popularity of its co-founder and chief director, Haidar Bagir.

Though Mizan cannot be formally classified as a Shi‘i publisher, since its foundation it has been closely associated with Shi‘ism and is regarded as having made a significant contribution to its development in Indonesia on several counts: first, Mizan has published a number of Shi‘i works, although these are only a fraction of the Sunni works it has produced. Second, Mizan has published works written by Shi‘i ‘ulama and scholars, providing a platform for the teachings of Shi‘ism in Indonesia. This was a controversial step given that to the majority Muslim population, the name ‘Shi‘ism’ had - and still has - negative connotations and is regarded as heterodoxy. Such brave efforts were clearly
counter to the long-running tradition of Sunni Islam in the country. What is more, Mizan’s first book and one of its bestsellers, *Dialog Sunni Syi’ah* (A Sunni-Shi’i Dialogue), translated from *al-Muraja’at* “summed up the purpose of Mizan […] and intended to present a more ‘balanced’ view of Shi’ism”.5 Haidar Bagir admits that one rationale for publishing this book was the fact that his *madhhab* is so often misunderstood by large numbers of Muslims in Indonesia.6 Mizan went on to publish numerous works by Shi’i scholars, including Ali Shari’ati, Mutahhari, Khomeini and Husayn Tabataba’i. Today, Mizan is still regarded by many Indonesian Muslims as a Shi’i publisher and in fact some Islamic *da’wa* and educational institutions, such as *Pondok Gontor* in Ponorogo, East Java actually forbid their students to read its publications, despite the fact that it has become a well-developed publishing house whose leaders are determined to promote its inclusive philosophical principles.

The stated goal of Mizan is very broad, to provide information on Islamic thought and the Islamic world in a balanced way and from a variety of standpoints. Haidar Bagir explains that books published by this firm have to fulfil at least two criteria: first, the research contained within the book has to be both scientific and verifiable; second, it has to contribute to developing the role of Muslims as *rahmatan li al-’alamin* (‘a mercy to all inhabitants of the world’). Mizan’s writers are not all Muslim and include authors from various religious backgrounds, even Western scholars. Bagir bases this principle on the Traditions of the Prophet Muhammad and Imam ‘Ali that urge man to take *hikma* (wisdom) from any source available. Bagir quotes the saying of the Prophet Muhammad “Wisdom is a loose thing belonging to Muslims. Collect it, wherever you find it”. He quotes Imam ‘Ali: “Look at what is said, not who says it”7 and goes on

Because for us Islam is a universal religion, but its universality can only be obtained if it is seen to be an inclusive, open religion. On the other hand, we believe that openness can be embraced wholeheartedly without the obligation to sacrifice Islam on the surface. Universality should certainly mean that the teachings of Islam must be understood coherently, so that they do not lose their basic principles. Well, if there is something that is said to be authenticity in a religion, what is meant is coherency. Of course, included here is the coherency in the literal meanings of the Islamic texts. For us, this means that the openness should be ‘guarded’ – a term which, because I fail to find a substitute, I

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am forced to use with a heavy heart – by our belief in a responsible and reliable interpretation of the principles of the Islamic teachings of the Qur’an and Sunna of the Prophet.⁸

On the strength of this principle, Mizan can be seen as promoting religious pluralism in Indonesia. Its publications reflect its vision of religion and human civilisation. It is a publishing house that produces not only the scholarly works of non-Muslim writers but also those of thinkers from different Islamic orientations. As Haidar Bagir suggests, all civilisations and religions in world history interact with one another and they develop in historical contexts, within which certain elements are adopted. Mizan rejects ‘exclusivity’ on the grounds that it is “the same as an ahistorical and unrealistic attitude”.⁹ These ideas form the basis of Islamic thought that might be called ‘the Madhhab of Mizan’, a ‘mazhab tengah’ (madhhab of the middle way) always open to development and revision.

With this inclusive and realistic religious attitude, the last twenty years have seen Mizan develop enormously in terms of both quality and quantity. It publishes titles in nearly all fields of knowledge and has established several offshoot subsidiaries as a way of attracting a wider readership. Each of the subsidiaries specialises in a particular genre. The subsidiary Hikmah, for example, publishes books on religiosity and Sufism, Misykat on supplications and Harakah on Islamic movements; Kaifa publishes ‘how-to’ books; Arasy offers titles on fiqh; Qanita is for women’s issues and Teraju publishes academic books. In addition, Mizan has pioneered the e-book and direct selling through ekuator.com. Hernowo, who has worked for Mizan since 1984 attests to the rapid development of the publishing house, which he believes is the result of attempts to apply a Hadith commanding Muslims to seek wisdom everywhere.¹⁰ This also corresponds with Haidar Bagir’s statement above.

I now turn to YAPI, which is the oldest of all the Indonesian publishers mentioned. YAPI, a Shi’i foundation established in Surabaya in 1962, long before the Iranian revolution, is first and foremost a publishing house.¹¹ Its goals include the organisation of intellectual and religious activities and the publication and distribution of Islamic works. YAPI’s co-founders, who still lead the foundation today, are two brothers from a Sayyid family, Omar Hashem (b. 1935) and his elder brother, Muhammad Hashem. Husein Al-Habsyi, who later established Yayasan Pesantren Islam (also abbreviated YAPI – refer to Chapter Five) was also one of the sponsors. The Hashem brothers are renowned translators and writers. M. Hashem, who formerly worked at the Iranian Embassy in Jakarta

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is a prominent translator of a large number of English originals. His younger brother, O. Hashem, is probably the most famous polemical Shi’i writer in Indonesia today. For many years, YAPI had its centre in Bandar Lampung where O. Hashem, a medical doctor worked for a local government clinic. Currently the institution and its leaders’ residence are located in Jakarta.

In terms of YAPI’s Shi‘i character, there is a clear distinction between its products of the pre-Iranian revolution era and those produced afterwards. No Shi‘i work appeared from YAPI during the pre-Iranian revolution period. (However, YAPI had established connections with Muslim world leaders and scholars, including the Grand Ayatollah Muhsin al-Hakim, who sent the institution a printing machine in 1970). Figures up to 1970 put the intellectual products of YAPI at more than 43 books and brochures, including translations and original writings. During the pre-revolutionary period, YAPI was known for a series of polemical pamphlets against Christianity written by the institution’s founders, O. Hashem and Muhammad Hashem. This series included titles such as M. Hashem’s Tantangan dari Gua Qumran (The Challenge from the Cave of Qumran, 1965), Darah dan Penebusan Dosa (Blood and Absolution, 1965), Jesus dan Paulus (Jesus and Paul) and O. Hashem’s Keesaan Tuhan: Sebuah Pembahasan Ilmiah (The Oneness of God, A Scientific Discussion, 1962) and Djawaban Lengkap kepada Pendeta Dr. J. Verkuyl (Complete Answers to the Priest Dr. J. Verkuyl). Closely related to these works was the publication of the translation of the Gospel of Barnabas by Husein Al-Habsyi. Both M. and O. Hashem wrote and translated works on other topics for YAPI, including O. Hashem’s Marxisme dan Agama (Marxism and Religion, 1963) and Menaklukkan Dunia Islam (Conquering the Islamic World, 1968) and M. Hashem’s translation of the words of ‘Ali bin Abi Talib entitled Pedoman Pemimpin (Guidance for Leaders, 1968).

Aside from the fact that YAPI tended only to publish the works of its owners, since its earliest days it has proved itself to be a dynamic institution in the field of cultural production.

The shift in the character of YAPI’s publications after 1979 reveals not only the individual conversion of both M. Hashem and O. Hashem to Shi‘ism but the conversion of YAPI as an institution as well. Most of the Shi‘i works published by YAPI are translations from English, beside several original books written by the brothers. Their close relationship (and that of the foundation) with the Iranian Embassy in Jakarta gave them access to Shi‘i materials requiring translation into the vernacular. Like the cultural products of Mizan, some of the Shi‘i books published by YAPI have caused controversy. O. Hashem’s Saqifah, for instance,

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12 Pembina (16/1/1970).
received bitter criticism from anti-Shi‘i groups.\textsuperscript{14} Since YAPI is a non-profit institution with limited material and human resources, its products are less attractive in presentation and style compared to those of Mizan. In addition, in contrast to Mizan’s professional modern management, YAPI is a family-run business. It is not surprising that a number of its titles were republished by the established Shi‘i publishing houses in the hope of gaining wider circulation and to increase the chances of cultural and economic success. That said, YAPI has made an enormous contribution to the development of the religious life of the Shi‘i community in Indonesia.

It is an important point to note that all the publishers and individuals involved in this field of cultural production are connected and it is through these networks of individuals and institutions that their products have been able to reach members of Indonesia’s Muslim society. Included in this process is the circulation of books and periodicals through the network of existing Shi‘i institutions scattered throughout the country, even more significant due to the fact that many of the cultural products of Shi‘i institutions cannot be found in the mainstream bookstores. The larger Shi‘i institutions such as ICC of Al-Huda, Fatimah, Muthahhari and Al-Jawad have opened their own bookstores, located within their complexes, to distribute and sell Shi‘i works. Another channel for reaching readers is through the libraries which most of the big Shi‘i institutions provide for the public. These are filled with collections of books and periodicals put out by the aforementioned publishers, in addition imported books in English, Arabic and Persian.

It is clear that both types of publishers profit from networking for their existence and development. With regard to the publication of Shi‘i works, an international network - through which material can be produced and distributed - is a necessary element, given that many Shi‘i works are translations of foreign originals. This international network is vital for accessing foreign books to be translated into Indonesian. The Iranian connection, through which foreign Shi‘i books are imported, is a necessary part of this international network. In the content, message and style of the cultural products produced by the Indonesian publishers their overseas provenance remains clear.

B. The Translation of Shi‘i Books

The translation of Shi‘i literature into the Indonesian language has become an important dimension in the intellectual and missionary development of Shi‘is in the country. Tamara has observed the proliferation of translations of works

\textsuperscript{14} Further on this matter, see Chapter Eight.
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by Middle Eastern authors. This is a new phenomenon in Indonesian Islam, first seen in the 1980s as a consequence of the Iranian revolution.\(^ {15}\) What is obvious is the Shi’i nature of the content and message of these translations. Scholars such as Von der Mehden and Meuleman also note the increase in translations of Shi’i texts in the country.\(^ {16}\) Azra describes the phenomenon as a dramatic development, because it “has never taken place in Islamic discourse in Indonesia before”.\(^ {17}\) Most books published by the Shi’i publishing houses in Indonesia have been translated from English, Arabic or Persian originals, with English books constituting the greatest number (even though originally these books were written in Arabic or Persian). In general, the authoritative Shi’i texts are still written in foreign languages inaccessible to most Indonesians, so translation is the most effective way for the publishing houses to produce Shi’i works.

It is impossible to recount all the translated books produced by Shi’i publishing houses in Indonesia, but in order to demonstrate the unique characteristics of the Shi’i works it is necessary to pay attention to their authors. On the whole, the authors whose works are translated are modern Shi’i ‘ulama or intellectuals of Iran or other Middle Eastern countries. Most are ‘ulama who hold the title Ayatollah (Ayat Allah, ‘Sign of God’), or Grand Ayatollah, educated in the traditional hauza system. These authors include ‘Abd al-Husayn Sharaf al-Din al-Musawi (1873-1957), Ruhullah Khomeini (1902-1989), ‘Allama Muhammad Husayn Tabataba’i (1903-1981), Murtada Mutahhari (1920-1979), Muhammad Baqir Sadr (1935-1980), ‘Ali Khamene’i, Nasir Makarim Shirazi (b. 1924), Ja’far Subhani (b. 1922) and Ibrahim Amini (b. 1925). All of these men are authoritative ‘ulama whose devotion to their madhhab and to religious scholarship are recognised throughout the Shi’i world. There are also authors who are scholars with both a traditional and a modern education, the most popular being ‘Ali Shari’ati (1933-1977) who gained a PhD in France and Seyyed Hossein Nasr (b. 1933) who earned his doctorate in the United States. This group of authors is known as ‘the intellectuals’.

The author with the most works translated into Indonesian is Mutahhari, with no less than 50 titles, followed by Shari’ati, with 25 titles. Then we find the works of Ruhullah Khomeini, ‘Allama Tabataba’i, Muhammad Baqir Sadr and Hossein Nasr, each of whom have between 10 and 15 titles. As for other Shi’i scholars, their works are still limited in number but are likely to increase.\(^ {18}\) It should also be noted that in many cases there is more than one translation of a certain work in circulation. The six most popular authors, in a quantitative sense, represent

\(^{15}\) Tamara (1986:24).
\(^{16}\) Von der Mehden (1993); Meuleman (n.d).
\(^{17}\) Azra (1999:223).
\(^{18}\) This is based on catalogues from the publishers Mizan and Lentera and the libraries of the Muthahhari Foundation, Fatimah Foundation, RausyanFikr Foundation, Al-Jawad Foundation and ICC of Al-Huda.
not only the rank of the ‘ulama and intellectuals but also the importance of their revolutionary or moderate religious and political thought. The works of Khomeini, Sadr, Shari’ati and Mutahhari, for example, are revolutionary, while the works of Tabataba’i and Nasr can be classified as moderate and sober. With the exception of Sadr, all the abovementioned scholars are Iranian. Other Shi’i ‘ulama, including the Lebanese ‘Abd al-Husayn Sharaf al-Din and the Tunisian Muhammad Tijani al-Samawi have produced works that have been significant in the dissemination of Shi’ism in Indonesia.

Taking into consideration the above estimates, it is clear that Mutahhari and Shari’ati - who were said to have worked together in the establishment of the Husainiyya-yi Irshad, a religious institution set up to attract educated Iranian youth,¹⁹ have been very influential in Indonesia. (Both of these men, together with the abovementioned Iraqi, Muhammad Baqir Sadr, are considered to be martyrs.) It appears that the position of Mutahhari is more important to Shi’is in Indonesia than that of Shari’ati, in all likelihood because Mutahhari was an Ayatollah and a model for the ‘ulama’-intellectual in combination. Shari’ati, however, is considered to be an intellectual, but he is a special case, namely a rawshanfikr, or ‘reformed intellectual’. Mutahhari’s status is also indicated by the fact that a Shi’i institution in Indonesia was established under his name, and one of the reasons for establishing Yayasan Muthahhari was to publish a series of his works via the institution’s journal al-Hikmah. This has contributed to increasing Mutahhari’s popularity in Indonesia. Nearly all of his works, which reach more than 50 titles, have been translated into Indonesian. These cover most fields of Islamic knowledge: doctrine, Qur’an exegesis, morality, jurisprudence, history, Sufism and philosophy (in which there are the most titles). A circle of Shi’i intellectuals is responsible for introducing Mutahhari’s thoughts to an Indonesian audience; for instance, Haidar Bagir has provided us with a short intellectual biography of Mutahhari and Jalaluddin Rakhmat, in lengthy introductory notes to a translation of one of Mutahhari’s works, supplies a short biography and details his principal thought. These intellectuals consider Mutahhari to be a model ‘ulama.²²

However, it is Shari’ati who seems to have had the greater impact on Muslims in Indonesia, both Sunni and Shi’i. Mutahhari’s thought simply has not gained

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¹⁹ Mutahhari was one of the founding members of this institution in 1965 and invited Shari’ati to join in 1968. By 1969-70, Shari’ati’s lectures were becoming increasingly revolutionary and attracting unfavourable attention from ‘ulama and the state. Mutahhari accused Shari’ati of being a Wahhabi and tried to persuade him to moderate his position. In 1971 Mutahhari withdrew from the Husainiyya-yi Irshad and even after the death of Shari’ati in 1977 he wrote to Khomeini about him, “complaining of his dishonesty, slander of the clergy and deviation, and requesting a ban on his works until they have been revised or corrected” (Martin 2000:79).


the same level of appreciation as Shari’ati’s. As Madrid has shown, Shari’ati occupies the second position after Nurcholish Madjid as most cited author among students in the Central Javanese university city of Yogyakarta.23 “I was surprised that Shari’ati would be more frequently cited and with more fervour than Mawdudi”, says Madrid.24 The broad influence of Shari’ati’s books is also illustrated by the fact that, unlike Mutahhari, Shari’ati has attracted the interest of Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia, both Sunni and Shi’i. Amien Rais, Dawam Rahardjo, Jalaluddin Rakhmat, Muchtar Probotinggi, Hadimulyo and Haidar Bagir have made appreciative and critical analyses of Shari’ati’s thought.25 Aspects of his thought have also been thoroughly analysed by Azyumardi Azra.26 Mutahhari’s writings have yet to attract the same level of interest. Von der Mehden attributes the influence of Shari’ati on the circle of intellectuals to “Shari’ati’s views of an egalitarian Muslim society and attacks on corrupt religious leadership”.27 Furthermore, Shari’ati provides his readers with a self-portrait and puts himself in the role of a rawshanfikr, the very role that Indonesian Muslims intellectuals wish to imitate in their own Indonesian social, political and religious contexts.

Iran’s Ruhullah Khomeini and Iraq’s Muhammad Baqir Sadr, whose intellectual works have been translated into Indonesian, were maraji’ al-taqlid (‘sources of emulation’), philosophers and leaders of Islamic movements. Whilst Khomeini succeeded in his revolution, Sadr’s brief rise in 1979-1980 resulted in his execution in April 1980. Books by Khomeini translated into Indonesian include work in the field of Qur’an exegesis and Hadith, including the four volumes of 40 Hadis Nabi SAW (Forty Prophetic Traditions), published by Mizan and Rahasia Basmallah dan Hamdallah (Secrets of Basmallah [the first verse of the first chapter of the Qur’an] and Hamdallah [the second verse of the first chapter of the Qur’an]) also published by Mizan in 1994. In relation to his position as a marja’ al-taqlid to Indonesian Shi’is, several jurisprudential texts by Khomeini are available in Indonesian, including the two volumes, Mi’raj Ruhani (The Spiritual Journey) and Puasa dan Zakat Fitrah (Fasting and the Fitra Alms28) and Fiqih Praktis Menurut Mazhab Ahlul Bayt (Practical Jurisprudence According to the Madhhab of Ahl al-Bayt) in three volumes, published by the Al-Jawad Foundation in Bandung and Al-Huda in Pekalongan respectively. The last two books also incorporate some fatwas of ‘Ali Khamene’i, who is currently a marja’ al-taqlid to many of Indonesia’s Shi’is. ‘Ali Khamene’i’s book entitled Fatwa-fatwa Ayatullah Al-Uzhma Imam Ali Khamenei (Fatwas of the Grand Ayatollah ‘Ali Khamene’i) was published in Indonesian by Al-Huda in Jakarta at the end of

26 Ridwan (1999).
27 Von der Mehden (1993:89).
28 Fitra alms are the obligatory alms paid at the end of the fasting month of Ramadan.
2004. The translations of these books are instrumental in the religious practice of Indonesian Shi‘is because they help them fulfil the obligation to follow a living mujtahid. Khomeini’s political thought, which has made a contribution to the political history of Islam, was later translated into Indonesian under the title Sistem Pemerintahan Islam (The System of Islamic Government) and published in 2002 by Pustaka Zahra. This significant work was originally a series of lectures delivered by Khomeini in Najaf in 1969-1970. It was published in Persian in the autumn of 1970 and then in Arabic in 1976 in Beirut as part of a five-volume fiqh book entitled Kitab al-Ba‘i (The Book of Purchases).

Khomeini argues that Islam is capable of establishing laws for the government and administration of a just society and that since the occultation of the Imam Mahdi, a cleric is responsible for justice and ruling over an Islamic society, based on the shari‘a. Khomeini’s political concept of wilayat al-faqih, as set out in this book, has become the main ideological foundation of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Despite the fact that Khomeini, as a scholar and Islamic leader, was - and still is - the ideal figure for Shi‘is in Indonesia, there has so far been no fully comprehensive study of him in Indonesian, nor of his religious and political thought. To fill this gap, as previously described, Haidar Bagir - under the pseudonym of Yamani - has written two books, the first on Sufi aspects of Khomeini’s thought and the second on Khomeini’s political philosophy, in a comparison with that of al-Farabi. In addition, Sihbudi has written a political biography of Khomeini.

Khomeini’s political thought is paralleled by Sadr’s similarly titled Sistem Politik Islam (The Political System of Islam) published in Indonesian in 2001 by Lentera in Jakarta. The subjects covered in Sadr’s work are broader than Khomeini’s since they include doctrine, Qur’an exegesis, economy, philosophy and jurisprudence as well as politics. Furthermore, Sadr’s works, particularly those on philosophy and economics seem to have attracted a wide readership in Indonesia, both Sunni and Shi‘i. Unlike Khomeini, who was renowned as a Shi‘i leader, not all Indonesian Muslims recognise Sadr as a Shi‘i thinker. To date, no serious study of Sadr has been conducted in Indonesian, in spite of the fact that he was a prominent scholar, influential among both Sunni and Shi‘i Muslims throughout the world.

From these four radical and revolutionary figures we move to the ‘perennial’ traditional philosopher, Seyyed Hossein Nasr, who migrated to America in 1979, where he served as professor of Islamic studies at Temple University in

31 Yamani (2002).
33 ‘Perennial’ philosophy (Latin, philosophia perennis) can be understood as knowledge based on universal principles and gained through tradition. It exists at the heart of all religions. It aims to return the human being to its genuine nature - the primordial self (Nasr 1992).
Philadelphia until 1984 and today holds the same position at George Washington University. Nasr’s works attract a wide readership among Muslims in Indonesia. With his focus on Sufism and Islamic philosophy, he appears to have had more influence within the Sunni community of the country. His perennialist and universalist ideas are particularly influential among the circle of Indonesian Muslim neo-modernist intellectuals, who discuss his ideas in their meetings and writings. In June 1993 Nasr was invited to Indonesia to participate in a series of seminars, which were reported in the national media, including Republika, Tempo and Panji Masyarakat and reviewed by Azra. Several articles and theses on aspects of Nasr’s thought have been published. It should be noted that many of Nasr’s books are published by Sunni-owned publishing houses, something which can perhaps be explained by his close relations with the Shah of Iran before the outbreak of revolution. However, this does not mean that appreciation of Nasr’s scholarly works is absent in Shi’i circles. In fact, several Indonesian translations of his works are published by the Shi’i publishing house Mizan and can be found in the journal Al-Hikmah of the Mutahhari Foundation. Sunni appreciation and acceptance of Nasr’s ideas can be explained by the fact that in most of his works he adopts a ‘perennial’ approach to Islam - and to its philosophical and spiritual aspects in particular - accounting for his appeal to readers interested in Islamic philosophy and Sufism. This approach also reveals a striking contrast between Nasr and Iranian revolutionary thinkers such as Khomeini, Shari’ati and Mutahhari. Given this information, we can conclude that there is little connection between the publication of Nasr’s works and the spread of Shi’ism in Indonesia, even though his philosophical thought belongs to the Shi’i intellectual tradition.

It is noteworthy that Nasr’s teacher of Islamic philosophy was ‘Allama Muhammad Husayn Tabataba’i, one of the foremost philosophers and scholars among the 20th century Shi’i ‘ulama, some of whose works (including aspects of doctrine and Qur’an exegesis) have been translated into Indonesian. Tabataba’i’s comprehensive introduction to Shi’i Islam entitled Islam Syi’ah (Shi’i Islam) was translated into Indonesian from an English version, which had been translated from the original by Nasr himself. It was published by Grafiti Press in 1989; however, this translation was not done by a Shi’i scholar nor produced by a

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34 Two reports were titled “Prof. Seyyed Hossein Nasr: Agama Masa Depan Peduli Lingkungan” (Prof. Seyyed Hossein Nasr: the Religion of the Future, Caring about the Environment) (Republika 29/6/1993) and “Seyyed Hossein Nasr: Juru Bicara Islam di Barat” (Seyyed Hossein Nasr: A Spokesman of Islam in the West) (Republika 20/8/1993).
35 Tempo presented an interview with Nasr in “Kembali ke Tradisi yang Utuh” (Return to the Complete Tradition) (Tempo 10/7/1993).
36 “Nasr Menegur Manusia Modern” (Nasr Admonishes Modern Man) (Panji Masyarakat 761/1993).
38 The first translation of Nasr’s books into Indonesian was done by the prominent Muslim intellectual, Abdurrahman Wahid and his brother Hasyim Wahid under the title Islam dalam Cita dan Fakta (Ideals and Realities of Islam) published by Lembaga Penunjang Pembangunan Nasional (LEPPENAS), Jakarta (1981).
In my opinion, Tabataba’i’s greatest contribution to the development of Islamic discourse in Indonesia has been in the field of Qur’anic exegesis. In addition to several related books and articles, his single most important work is the monumental commentary on the Qur’an, al-Mizan (The Balance). However, only certain aspects of the Shi’i teachings contained in the exegesis have been translated into Indonesian. This commentary has become an important source for the most prominent Indonesian exegete, Quraish Shihab and his tafsir books, including his magnum opus, al-Mishbah (The Light, 2000). The publication of this work led anti-Shi’i groups in Indonesia to declare Quraish Shihab, at the time Suharto’s Minister for Religious Affairs, a Shi’i and to castigate him. Tabataba’i’s influence can also be found in Jalaluddin Rakhmat’s books. In the introduction to his Tafsir Sufi Al-Fatihah (Sufi Commentary of the First Chapter of the Qur’an) Rakhmat - who had studied in Qum with Tabataba’i’s student, Muhammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi - writes of his admiration for Tabataba’i “In the Islamic world today, particularly among lovers of the ahl al-Bayt, no one studies tafsir without being influenced by his writings.”

Yet although Tabataba’i was a great philosopher, there is no Indonesian translation of his philosophical works, with the exception of a popular booklet on philosophy and Sufism, Hikmah Islam (Islamic Philosophy) published by Mizan in 1984.

From the works of the six most prolific Shi’i authors, we discover that they have written about all fields of Islamic knowledge, including Qur’anic exegesis, Hadith, jurisprudence, doctrine, history, philosophy, ethics, Sufism, politics and economics. The conception of Shi’ism as a distinct madhab is affirmed in Indonesia by the distribution of the translated works, which are read, cited and discussed by Sunni and Shi’i scholars alike. Such works, then, are effective instruments for the dissemination of Shi’i Islam in the country.

The transmission of Shi’i doctrine and thought via publications becomes a much more complex matter when the translation of books from the wider range of Arabic, Persian or English originals is taken into account. In order to explain the book as a means of disseminating ideas and its benefits to Shi’is in Indonesia we can classify existing Shi’i books into three categories: doctrinal, intellectual and spiritual. These categories are not distinct from each other but are integrated. The first category, the ‘doctrinal’ books, is the most important. These concern the Shi’i madhab and are intended to provide readers with a correct understanding of its teachings. Anti-Shi’i groups often consider these books to be tools for converting Indonesian Sunnis to Shi’ism. They recognise a missionary motive in their publication. The ‘doctrinal’ category ranges from books giving a general introduction to Shi’i Islam to deep analysis of doctrines

39 Translated into Indonesian by Djohan Effendi.
40 This can be seen in notes, Chapter Nine.
41 Rakhmat (1999:xii).
and teachings. In addition to the aforementioned *Islam Syiah* (Shi’i Islam) and *Inilah Islam* (This is Islam), both written by Tabataba’i, this category includes the work of the late Lebanese scholar Abd al-Husayn Sharaf al-Din al-Musawi, *Shi’i-Sunni Dialogue* which proved so popular in Indonesia that by 2001 it had been reprinted nine times.

It is important to restate that this work was the first book published by Mizan and led to its stigmatisation as a Shi’i publishing house. Its translation into Indonesian was only undertaken nearly half a century after the publication of the original, *al-Muraja’at* in 1936 by al-‘Irfan of Beirut, the oldest Islamic publishing house in Lebanon. The original, however, had already circulated widely among a number of Indonesian Muslims, particularly the Hadhrami Sayyids, who had been sent free copies by Shi’i institutions in the Middle East. Islamic institutions, such as the Islamic Research Institute in Jakarta also kept the book in their libraries. In fact, it was the Islamic Research Institute’s copy which Abubakar Aceh borrowed when he wrote his sympathetic work, *Sjiah, Rasionalisme dalam Islam* (Shi’ism, Rationalism in Islam), first published in 1965, in which he acknowledged Shi’ism as a valid *madhhab* in Islam.42 Muhammad al-Baqir, the translator of *al-Muraja’at*, received his original copy directly from the Middle East.43

The translation into Indonesian of al-Musawi’s *title* *al-Muraja’at* (‘Consultations’)44 as *Shi’i-Sunni Dialogue* is not entirely correct. The book merely uses the literary frame of a dialogue between two ‘ulama to instruct on Shi’i Islam. The first ‘ulama - the author, al-Muzawi - takes the role of Shi’i teacher while the second - the then Shaykh al-Azhar Salim al-Bisri - is a Sunni and takes the role of the student. The ‘consultations’ between the Sunni scholar and the Shi’i *marja’* al-taqlid which follow are about Shi’i Islam, in which al-Bisri tends to accept all of al-Musawi’s arguments. So the dialogue affirms the validity of Shi’ism through a Sunni religious authority. The image conveyed and the contents of the book were of course viewed as provocative by much of the Sunni world.

In the published Indonesian translation, Muhammad al-Baqir (Haidar Bagir’s father) provides us with a long and interesting introductory note, which also became the subject of criticism by anti-Shi’i figures in Indonesia.45 For al-Baqir, the translation was intended to provide Indonesian readers with an ‘insider’s’ perspective on Shi’ism.46 The publication of the Indonesian edition became a

42 The book was published by Islamic Research Institute of Jakarta and then republished in 1972 and 1980 by Ramadhani of Solo.
best seller, in turn contributing to the success of Mizan as a newly-established Islamic publishing house. At least two sympathetic reviews of the book have been written, one by the moderate Muslim intellectual Djohan Effendi, the other by the journalist Syu’bah Asa, who 24 years after the book’s publication felt the need to demonstrate a strongly pro-Shi‘i stance.\(^47\) Controversial as this book may be in some quarters, it is clearly one of the most important works on Shi‘i Islam available in Indonesian.

Most books in the ‘doctrinal’ category deal with the teachings that constitute the core of Shi‘i Islam. A distinct characteristic of these books is that many of them include both doctrinal and philosophical reasoning, which distinguishes them from Sunni books on the same topics, Shi‘ism paying much greater attention to the use of ‘\(\text{aql}\) (reason) than Sunnism. As an example, each of the five principles of Shi‘i faith - \(\text{tawhid}\) (divine unity), \(\text{nubuwwa}\) (prophecy), \(\text{ma’ad}\) (resurrection), the imamate and ‘\(\text{adl}\) (divine justice) - for instance, have been analysed in this way by prominent Shi‘i figures, including Murtada Mutahhari, Ja‘far Subhani, Nasir Makarim Shirazi and Mujtaba Musawi Lari, translations of which are freely available in Indonesia. Some works by these scholars deal with the fundamentals of Shi‘ism and constitute the most important tenets of the \(\text{madhhab}\). Other aspects of Shi‘i teachings and tradition are closely related to the central religious dogma of \(\text{tawhid}\), or the essential oneness of God. Mention should also be made of Shi‘i books approving of practices such as \(\text{ziyara}\) (the visitation of graves), \(\text{tawassul}\) (uttering the names of Sufi saints or Imams in supplication) and the celebration of the Prophet’s birthday. Such practices have also been the province of traditionalist Sunni Muslims and are strongly opposed by the Wahhabis and reformist groups.\(^48\) Subhani’s \(\text{Tauhid and Syirik}\) (Divine Unity and Polytheism), published in 1987 by Mizan affirms that such practices have sound religious foundations; he is highly critical of the challenges of Wahhabism.

We now turn to the second category of Shi‘i translations, the intellectual books. Such books are designed to meet the intellectual demands of both Sunni and Shi‘i Muslims in Indonesia. This category includes books that are not directly connected to specific Shi‘i beliefs and practices, so we cannot consider the

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\(^{47}\) The writings are “\(\text{Dialog Sunnah Syi’ah}\)” (Panji Masyarakat 11/7/1983) and “\(\text{Siy’ah: Bayangan Sebuah Jembatan}\)” (Shi‘ism: Shadow of a Dialogue) (Tempo 11/6/1983). For Syu’bah Asa’s attitude see Chapter Eight and his writings [1998].

\(^{48}\) The most significant of these books are Ja‘far Subhani’s \(\text{Studi Kritis Faham Wahabi: Tauhid and Syirik}\) (Critical Study of Wahhabism: Tawhid and Polytheism, 1987), \(\text{Tawassul, Tabarruk, Ziarah Kubur, Karamah Wali Termasuk Ajaran Islam: Kritik Atas Faham Wahabi}\) (Solicitation, Taking of Blessings, Visitation of Tombs, Miracles of the Saints are Included in Islamic Teachings: A Criticism of Wahhabism, 1989) and his \(\text{Tentang Dibenarkannya Syafaat dalam Islam Menurut al-Qur’an dan Sunnah}\) (About the Recommendation of Intercessions in Islam According to the Qur’an and Sunna, 1992), and Ja’far Murtada al-Amili’s \(\text{Perayaan Maulid, Khaul dan Hari-Hari Besar Islam Bukan Sesuatu Yang Haram}\) (The Celebration of the Prophet’s Birthday, The Commemoration of Dates of Death and Great Islamic Festivals is not Forbidden, 1990).
translation and publication of this genre as a specific vehicle for the spread of Shi’i Islam. The publications in this category reflect the interest among Shi’is in Indonesia in Islamic philosophy. They generally deal with aspects of philosophy and Islamic thought that might influence the Weltanschauung of their readers. Most of the works by the scholars mentioned earlier in this chapter, some being critical of Western philosophies pertaining to society and history, can be included in this group. They tend to promote Islam as a distinct worldview - the adverse of all other worldviews – and a blueprint for humanity, capable of solving the problems facing mankind. This is demonstrated in works such as Sadr’s *Falsafatuna* (Our Philosophy) published in 1991 by Mizan; Mutahhari’s *Masyarakat dan Sejarah* (Society and History) published by Mizan in 1986 and Shari’ati’s *Kritik Islam atas Marxisme dan Sesat-Pikir Barat Lainnya* (Islamic Criticism of Marxism and Other Western Fallacies), also published by Mizan in 1983. In addition, great Shi’i thinkers such as ‘Allama Tabataba’i have made their contribution to the field of traditional Islamic philosophy. An example of note is the book *Ilmu Hudhuri* (Knowledge by Presence) by the contemporary Iranian philosopher, Mehdi Hairi Yazdi, published in 1994 by Mizan. Yazdi, the son of the reformer of the hawza ‘ilmiiyya of Qum, Abd al-Karim Ha’iri, studied Islamic philosophy with Tabataba’i. Such works can be categorised as both intellectual and influential in terms of the religious life of Indonesian Muslims.

Books within the third category, the spiritual, deal with the spiritual life of the Shi’i community. Most of them contain the sayings attributed to the Imams (as well as their hagiographies) whose words and deeds are considered within the Shi’i tradition to be part of Hadith, and therefore extremely important to the madhhab. These works are principal sources of Shi’i Islam after the Qur’an and are used as a reference for understanding all fields of Islamic knowledge. The most important book in this category has been *Nahj al-Balagha* (The Summit of Eloquence) various versions of which are available in Indonesian. It contains collections of sermons, sayings and letters attributed to Imam ‘Ali bin Abi Talib, the first Imam. It was assembled and systematised by the 10th century Shi’i scholar Sayyid Sharif al-Radi.49 Among the Indonesian versions available are a 1990 edition by O. Hashem and M. Hashem, translated from an English version and published under the title, *Nahjul Balaghah* by YAPI; *Puncak Kepasihan* (The Peak of Eloquence) published in 1997 by Lentera and Muhammad al-Baqir’s selective translation from Arabic of Abduh’s explanation, *Mutiara Nahjul Balaghah* (Pearls of the Nahj al-Balagha), published in 1990 by Mizan. In addition, there are translations of studies of the *Nahj al-Balagha*, including Arif Mulyadi’s translation from English of Mutahhari’s commentary, *Tema-tema Pokok Nahj al-Balaghah* (Major Themes of the Nahj al-Balagha) which was published in 2002 by Al-Huda and a translation of Muhammad

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49 Nasr (1989:8).
Muhammad’s work, *Kisah-kisah Bertabur Hikmah Nahjul Balaghah* (Stories Scattered with Wisdom of *Nahj al-Balagha*) published by Cahaya in Bogor. There are also translations of *Sahifa* (The Scroll) containing the sayings, supplications, stories and even poems attributed to Fatima and the other Imams. Examples are *Sahifa Fatimiyaa, Sahifa Husayniyya, Sahifa Sayyadiyya* and *Sahifa Sadiqiyya*, attributed to Fatima, Husayn (the third Imam), ‘Ali Zayn al-Abidin al-Sajjad (the fourth Imam) and Ja’far al-Sadiq (the sixth Imam) respectively. The most famous of these is *al-Sahifa al-Sajjadiyya*, which is “the oldest prayer manual in Islamic sources and one of the most seminal works of Islamic spirituality of the early period.” Aside from being important reference works, these books are functional instruments in the religious and spiritual life of the Shi’is in Indonesia, particularly in the expression of loving devotion to the Prophet’s *ahl al-bayt* and the Imams. It should be noted that these works are specifically Shi’i in nature and that there is nothing comparable in the Sunni intellectual heritage.

Also related to the religious and spiritual life is the publication of large numbers of books on *do’a*, or supplications, frequently compiled from Shi’i works. The most famous of these is *Mafatih al-Jinan* (Keys to the Gardens of Paradise) by Abbas al-Qummi (d. 1941). They are usually selective supplications, followed by their Indonesian translation, and the explanations of certain religious rituals and occasions. There is a great demand for this type of book, a demand well met by the Shi’i publishing houses and Shi’i foundations. Some of the books have become best sellers. One, *Doa Kumail, Doa Thaif, Doa Keselamatan, Doa Tawassul, Doa Ziarah* published by the Fatimah Foundation, was reprinted six times between 1998 and 2002. The growth in demand for such books is directly related to the regular performance of religious rituals and the growing number of *pengajian* and other *da’wa* activities carried out by Shi’i institutions and Shi’i communities throughout Indonesia. It is common for leaders of *pengajian* meetings and managers of foundations to order large numbers of these books for individual members or for the institutions’ collections.

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52 For instance, Mizan has a branch called *Penerbit Misykat* for publishing books on *do’a*, whilst *Pustaka Zahra* has published *Seri Doa Mustajab*, containing not less than ten books, three of which are best sellers. Some of the supplications are supplemented with cassettes of recordings of supplications provided by Ahmad Muhajir al-Muhdar.
The above descriptions reveal the general characteristics of the translated works, in particular those written by the most prolific Shi‘i authors. They generally encompass all fields of Islamic knowledge, as well as all aspects of Shi‘ism. We can deduce that they have been an effective vehicle for the transmission of Shi‘i Islam into Indonesia from Iran, Iraq and other Middle Eastern countries. This migration of Shi‘ism and Shi‘i thought underscores Coser’s statement: “Books are the carriers and disseminators of ideas”.53

C. Works by Indonesian Shi‘is

Shi‘i figures within Indonesia have also concentrated their attention and energies on the production and dissemination of religious thought through original works, although thus far I have not found any truly systematic work presenting Shi‘ism as a distinct Islamic madhhab. It is clear that the translated works continue to dominate in meeting the religious and intellectual demands of the Shi‘i individual, group and community. We can identify a number of Indonesian Shi‘i intellectuals and ustadhs who have published essays and articles in periodicals; however, I intend to focus on those who have written books dealing with the main body of the Shi‘i madhhab. To mention but a few, the late Husein Al-Habsyi, Jalaluddin Rakhmat, Haidar Bagir, Muhammad Hashem and Omar Hashem have disseminated their religious ideas through their books. Quantitatively, Rakhmat is the most prolific, with more than 20 books (including textbooks), followed by Al-Habsyi with about ten titles (including his Al-Kaustar Arabic-Indonesian dictionary) and then the brothers, M. Hashem and O. Hashem, also with around ten. Other writers have produced less than ten titles. It should be kept in mind, however, that while some ustadhs have begun to produce scholarly works, most Indonesian Shi‘i scholarship remains the product of the Shi‘i intellectuals.

The books written by the Indonesian Shi‘i ustadhs and intellectuals, taken together, cover aspects of doctrine, fiqh, tafsir, history and Sufism. In relation to doctrine, we can mention several books dealing with the central concept of the ahl al-bayt (referring to the twelve Imams. There are at least three works which urge Muslim believers to uphold the Qur’an and the ahl al-bayt of the Prophet Muhammad: Ali Umar Al-Habsyi’s Dua Pusaka Nabi, al-Qur’an dan Ahlulbait (Two Prophetic Heritages: the Qur’an and Ahl al-Bayt. 2002. Pustaka Zahra); Heru Elryco’s Ahlul Bait dan al-Qur’an, Peninggalan Yang Terlupakan (Ahl al-Bayt and the Qur’an: the Forgotten Inheritance. 2002. Rosda) and Alwi Husen’s Keluarga Yang Disucikan Allah (The Family Purified by God. 1998. Lentera). Following Shi‘i ‘ulama, the authors affirm that this obligation is based

on the Qur’an and the sayings of the Prophet that are recognised in both Sunni and Shi’i collections of Hadith. At the same time, this can be seen as a Shi’i rejection of a number of Sunni sayings which are considered to be the Prophet’s Hadith, commanding Muslims to follow the Qur’an and his Sunna, or exemplary practice. According to Shi’i beliefs, both the transmitters and contents of these Hadith are unreliable.54

The most important book on Shi’i doctrine is Hasan Abu Amar’s Akidah Syi’ah (The Doctrine of Shi’ism). Its full title is Akidah Syi’ah, Seri Tawhid: Rasionalisme dan Alam Pemikiran Filsafat dalam Islam (Shi’i Doctrine, Series on Tawhid: Rationalism and the Nature of Philosophical Thought in Islam) published by Yayasan Mulla Shadra, Jakarta, in 1992 and reprinted in 2002. The book consists of three parts - usul al-din (the fundamentals of religion), doctrine and the unity of God – and its writer, a Qum alumnus, known among Shi’i adherents in Indonesia as a literalist ustadh, uses logic rather than Qur’anic verses to prove the existence, unity, attributes and actions of God. Abu Amar emphasises the significance of reason in the Shi’i belief system, stating that in Shi’i Islam, the fundamentals of religion must be understood by every Shi’i through logical evidence. Even textual proofs are secondary to logical proofs. In his words, “al-Qur’an and Hadith occupy a position only to support or endorse the logical proofs.”55 Abu Amar’s book contains several references to Qur’anic verses and Hadith; however, with the exception of Bidayat al-Hikma (The Beginnings of Philosophy) and Nihayat al-Hikma (The Results of Philosophy) - two famous philosophical works by Tabataba’i not yet translated into Indonesian - he refers to no other authoritative Shi’i books on this most essential aspect of religion.

Abu Amar’s book on Imam Mahdi, the twelfth Shi’i Imam, published by the Mulla Shadra Foundation in 2000 should also be included in the field of doctrine, because it deals with aspects of the imamate, one of the five fundamentals of Shi’ism. However, it should be noted that the belief in the Mahdi is complex matter and worthy of a separate study. In his Imam Mahdi Menurut Ahdussunnah waljama’ah (Imam Mahdi According to the Followers of the Sunna and the Community) Amar admits he relies purely on Sunni sources, namely the Sunni Hadith collections and the views of Sunni ‘ulama. Another book which deals with Imam Mahdi as a bringer of justice, Imam Mahdi: Figur Keadilan (Imam Mahdi, Figure of Justice) was written by Jaffar Al-Jufri and published in 2001 by Lentera. Both these books emphasise the importance of belief in the existence of Imam Mahdi and his invincibility; yet one author claims the belief has a valid religious foundation in Shi’i sources, while the other claims that the belief is validated by the Sunnis.

While every Shi’i is required to understand the logical and textual proofs of the fundamentals of religion in which taqlid, or unquestioning emulation is prohibited in the field of jurisprudence, lay Shi‘is are required to follow the fatwa of a marja’ al-taqlid who assumes the authority of reinterpreting it. So the aforementioned translations of books on fiqh are important manuals for performing religious duties. Alongside these translations, Indonesian Shi‘i figures have also authored several books on aspects of jurisprudence in order to meet local demands of the Shi‘i community. Worthy of mention is a booklet entitled Taqlid dalam Ajaran Syiah Imamiyah (Emulation in the Teachings of Imamiyya Shi‘ism. Fathu Makkah. 2003) by Abu Qurba (possibly a pseudonym). In this booklet the author deals with the obligation of taqlid for the laity and supports his arguments with logical and textual proofs. Abu Qurba, who lives in Qum, also includes proof of the validity of those who take ‘Ali Khamene‘i as marja’ al-taqlid. That evidence involves the declarations of Iranian ‘ulama of Khamene‘i’s ‘alamiyyat (superiority in religious knowledge) which is a requirement for assuming the position of marja’ al-taqlid.

In terms of ritual observance, most jurisprudential books deal with prayers and the hajj. There have been two books about prayers: first, Abu Zahra’s Shalat Nabi saw Menurut Ahlul Bait (Prayers of the Prophet According to the Ahl al-Bayt), published in 2001 by Kota Ilmu in Bandung; and second, Hidayatullah Husein’s Shalat dalam Madzhab Ahlul Bait (Prayers in the Madhhab of Ahl al-Bayt), published by the Abna’ Al-Husayn Foundation in Solo. In addition, a manual on ablutions and prayers, supplemented by a VCD, has been produced by Yayasan Muhibbin in Probolinggo, East Java. These works illustrate a number of minor differences between Shi‘ism and Sunnism with regard to certain bodily movements and verbal incantations in the prayers. In respect of the hajj, we find several books written by Indonesian Shi‘i figures, including O. Hashem’s Berhaji Mengikuti Jalur Para Nabi (Performing Hajj Following the Line of Prophets, 2001), Muchtar Adam’s Tafsir Ayat-ayat Haji (Commentary on Qur’anic Verses on the Hajj, 1993), Cara Mudah Naik Haji (An Easy Way to Perform the Hajj, 1993) and Husein Shahab’s Cara Memperoleh Haji Mabrur (Methods of Achieving A Beneficent Pilgrimage, 1995). With the exception of Husein Shahab’s book published by Pustaka Pelita, the others were published by Mizan. All these works illustrate the distinctive aspects of Shi‘i teachings on specific ritual observance. Some writers may use their works to make statements about Sunni-Shi‘i relations. Hidayatullah Husein, for instance, appeals for respect and tolerance among Muslims in cases of difference of opinion. The introduction to Al-Habsyi’s book was motivated by the fact that some people regard the Shi‘is as infidels; the book sets out to explain that Shi‘i jurisprudence is based on authoritative religious arguments.56

On the matter of *mu’amalat*, or social transactions in Islam, there is a Shi‘i book about *mut’a* (*temporary marriage*), a controversial issue used by anti-Shi‘i groups to attack the *madhhab*. This book was written by Ibnu Mustafa, who used Tabataba‘i’s *al-Mizan* and Mutahhari’s *Hak-hak Wanita Dalam Islam* (*The Rights of Women in Islam*) as its sources.\(^{57}\) There is also an Indonesian version of Ja‘far Murtada al-‘Amili’s *Nikah Mut’ah dalam Islam* (*Temporary Marriage in Islam*) translated by Hidayatullah Al-Habsyi, son of the late Husein Al-Habsyi. Interestingly, Hidayatullah Al-Habsyi, supplements this work with a long chapter of his own on ‘*Sakralisasi Sebuah Perkawinan*’ (*Making a Marriage Sacred*).\(^{58}\) These books are intended to explain the permissibility of *mut’a* in Shi‘i Islam as an alternative to fornication and prostitution, a point dealt with in Chapter Three of this thesis.

Some Shi‘i figures have also authored books in the field of *tafsir*, although these are somewhat limited in quantity and quality. In addition to Husein Al-Habsyi’s two polemical works on the commentary of Surah ‘Abasa, Jalaluddin Rakhmat supplies two books in this field, *Tafsir Bil Ma’tsur* (*Qur’anic Commentary by Narrated Sources*) and *Tafsir Surah Al-Fatihah* (*Commentary of the First Chapter of the Qur’an*, 1999), both published by Rosda in Bandung. Ali Umar Al-Habsyi, an *ustadh* at YAPI in Bangil and Husein Al-Habsyi’s grandson-in-law also wrote two books: *Tafsir Nuur Tsagalain* (*Commentary on The Light of Thaqalayn Al-Baqir Foundation, Bangil, 1994*) and *Nabi Tersihir?* (*Was The Prophet Bewitched? As-Sajjad, Jakarta, 1998*). A large number of Shi‘i sources, particularly books of *tafsir* and Hadith are referred to in these works. Ali Umar Al-Habsyi’s *Nabi Tersihir?* for instance, criticises the Sunni commentary that the Prophet Muhammad was bewitched.\(^{59}\) For Shi‘is like Ali Umar Al-Habsyi, the idea that the Prophet Muhammad came under any spell is inconceivable, because he is held to be the most perfect human being, immune to harm or the danger of evil-doing. This is a widely held view contained in the works of Shi‘i scholars.

Also related to the issue of sources cited, Rakhmat is correct in his statement that Shi‘i authors in this particular field - he includes himself - cannot neglect the influence of Tabataba‘i and his work *al-Mizan* in particular, in the implementation of *tafsir bi al-ma‘thur* or the *tafsir al-Qur’an bi al-Qur’an*, literally, using the Qur’an to interpret itself. These *tafsir* works by Indonesian authors only deal with a selection of verses, so they cannot be compared with Quraish Shihab’s grand masterpiece, *al-Misbah*. Mention should also be made of the collaborative work on the sciences of the Qur’an, *Belajar Mudah ‘Ulam*

\(^{57}\) Mustafa (1999).


\(^{59}\) A widely held view among Sunnis, based on the revelation in Qur’an - namely QS: 113 and 114 - that the Prophet Muhammad was put under a spell by a sorcerer called Labid bin al-A’sam (Ali Umar al-Habsyi 1998: 21).
al-Qur’an (Easy Learning of the Sciences of the Qur’an) edited by Sukardi, a librarian at SMU Muthahhari in Bandung. It is a collection of articles by Middle Eastern ‘ulama and Indonesian intellectuals and ustadhs, including Jalaluddin Rakhmat, Muchtar Adam, Haidar Bagir and Husein Shahab. Its editor says that it should be seen as an introduction for those interested in the meanings and commentaries of verses of the Qur’an. All of these works illustrate attempts by Shi’i figures in Indonesia to produce and disseminate literature on Qur’anic exegesis and its sciences.

The field of Sufism is dominated by the work of Jalaluddin Rakhmat. As described in a previous chapter, Husein Shahab and Haidar Bagir also provide works on Sufism. The many works on Sufism available to Indonesian Muslims reflect the great interest in it, particularly among the urbanites and upper-middle class. Such an interest goes hand-in-hand with the Sufi approach to da’wa activities undertaken by Shi’is in the country. They hope that books on Sufism will contribute not only to the enrichment of the Sufi tradition but also to the recognition of Shi’i teachings and traditions among the wider Indonesian Muslim population.

In the field of Islamic history, we have previously described an introduction to the critical study of the history of the Prophet Muhammad by Jalaluddin Rakhmat. Controversial works in the field have included O. Hashem’s Saqifah: Awal Perselisihan Umat (Saqifa: the Origin of Conflict in the Umma, 1987) and M. Hashem’s Abdullah bin Saba: Benih Fitnah (Abdullah bin Saba: the Seeds of Trouble, 1987), both published by YAPI. Criticising the Sunni interpretation of the election of Abu Bakr as the first caliph to succeed the Prophet Muhammad in the Saqifa (Hall) of Bani Sa’ida, O. Hashem suggests that the election was a conspiracy among Abu Bakr, ‘Umar and Abu Ubayda, and as a result is the original source of division within the Muslim umma. This conspiracy went against the Prophet Muhammad’s dying designation of Ali as his immediate successor. In Abdullah bin Saba: Benih fitnah, M. Hashem bases his defence of Shi’ism against Murtada al-Askari’s belief that Abdullah bin Saba - considered by Sunnis to be the figure responsible for the founding of Shi’ism - was a fictional character. These two books have provoked bitter reactions from anti-Shi’i groups. M. Hashem answers his critics in his book, Abdullah bin Saba dalam Polemik (Abdullah bin Saba in Polemics) by simply reiterating the validity of the Shi’i version of the history of Abdullah bin Saba.'
response\textsuperscript{65} can be found in his provocative work, \textit{Syi’ah Ditolak Syi’ah Dicari} (Shi’ism Rejected, Shi’ism Sought, 2002). All these historical works provide a common Shi’i interpretation of early Islamic history and are fundamental to the legitimation of Shi’ism as a \textit{madhhab} of Islam. Included in the category of historical books are biographies of the imams, such as Imam Husayn, which recount his martyrdom at Karbala. In this theme, O. Hashem writes \textit{Darah dan Air Mata} (Blood and Tears) which re-iterates the historical evidence for this event, namely the testimony of figures who witnessed the tragedy. Muhsin Labib, Husein Al-Habsyi’s stepson and Qum alumnus, has also supplied a series of works on this subject, the latest being \textit{Husain Sang Ksatria Langit} (Husayn, Knight of Heaven, 2004, Lentera.) in the form of an historical novel. In view of the fact that the history of the murder of Husayn in Karbala is deliberately downplayed in Sunni literature, Labib maintains that the historical reality should be highlighted, even though it might undermine the foundation of a certain \textit{madhhab}. Labib claims that his book portrays the reality of Husayn’s martyrdom. “In this novel, there is dripping of tears, there is also squirting of blood. There is a big party, there is also a moan tearing one’s inner self. Once more, this is a real history!”\textsuperscript{66} The writing of this story can be seen as a vehicle for transmitting what Fischer calls the ‘Karbala paradigm’, the most emotionally intense episode in Shi’i history.\textsuperscript{67} Along with the yearly commemoration of ‘Ashura, these texts can be seen as maintaining this deeply embedded emotional paradigm within the heart of Indonesia’s Shi’i community.

All the abovementioned works follow the interpretations and arguments of Islamic teachings and history provided in the works of Shi’i ‘ulama. Unlike translations, original works clearly represent the most obvious interpretation of Shi’i tenets by Indonesian Shi’i intellectuals and \textit{ustadhs}. However, as far as the content of these works is understood, we do not find significantly differing views between the religious elites of the Shi’i community with regard to the principal aspects of Shi’i teachings. Suffice it to say that the attention, energy and creativity of Shi’i figures in the field of religio-intellectual life play an important role in the dissemination of Shi’i teachings in the country.

**D. Shi’i Periodicals**

In the framework of the dissemination of the teachings of Shi’ism to the Shi’i community in particular, and Indonesian Muslims in general, a number of

\textsuperscript{65} In addition to Abu Hanifah’s article “\textit{Koreksi atas Buku Saqifah}” (Correction to the \textit{Saqifah} Book) serialised in \textit{Al-Muslimun} (monthly from 213/12/1987 to 221/8/1988). Saleh Nahdi wrote \textit{Saqifah, Awal Persatuan Ummat} (Saqifa: the Beginning of Unity of Umma) that strongly rejects Hashem’s interpretation.

\textsuperscript{66} Labib (2004:11).

\textsuperscript{67} Fischer (1980:13).
periodicals are put out by Shi‘i institutions. In these publications translated articles by Shi‘i scholars and by Indonesian ustadhs and intellectuals can be found. Cultural production of this kind comprises various journals, bulletins and magazines.68 Two important scientific journals should be mentioned, the contents of which are serious articles dealing with various aspects of Islamic studies. The first periodical was Al-Hikmah (Wisdom), subtitled Jurnal Studi-Studi Islam (Journal of Islamic Studies) 17 issues of which were published by the Muthahhari Foundation between 1990 and 1997. In accordance with the foundation’s mission, this journal was meant to present scholarly works within the fields of traditional Islamic knowledge, including the Qur’an, Hadith, fiqh, philosophy and knowledge. It also featured translated works by Mutahhari and studies of his works, in order to help readers comprehend his ideas. Such content reflected the journal’s stated aim “to combine all meanings of wisdom given by Qur’an commentators and Islamic thinkers: the Qur’an, Hadith, philosophy, Sufism, science and other Islamic thought”.69 The mission of Al-Hikmah was similar to that of the publisher Mizan. As one reviewer suggests, Al-Hikmah contributed to enriching the development of Islamic thought in Indonesia. Its existence seems to have inspired Rakhmat’s statement “…we want it to stir you”.70 The reviewer goes on to emphasise the connection between Jalaluddin Rakhmat and the Muthahhari foundation with Shi‘ism and Shi‘i thought, suggesting, “AH [Al-Hikmah] is issued to distribute Islamic aspirations from a background of Shi‘i thought”.71 But as a matter of fact, analysis of all the issues of the journal suggests that it provided readers with the thought of both Shi‘i and Sunni scholars.

The second important scientific journal is Al-Huda (The Guidance) which began in 2000 and is published by ICC of Al-Huda. As its title suggests, this journal expects to provide “guidance for readers entering the gate of religious consciousness and religiosity through the discourse of the ahl al-bayt discourse, in order to be able to distinguish which is true or false”.72 Unlike Al-Hikmah, this journal is quite open about its Shi‘i nature. “The Journal of Islamic Studies, in the hands of readers and in accordance with its title Al-Huda, makes the Prophet Muhammad (May God Grant Him Peace and Salvation) and the ahl al-bayt (Upon Whom be Peace) their reference because they are the key holders of the original Guidance”.73 The style of presentation and theme of Al-Huda very

68 In Indonesia, particularly among Shi’is, the term ‘journal’ is used to refer to scientific periodicals containing serious articles, while the term ‘bulletin’ is used for periodicals which are limited in page and rubric. Magazines contain various rubrics.
69 Rakhmat (1990:4).
70 The review was published in the daily Pikiran Rakyat (27/5/1990) and then included in a brochure of the foundation (Yayasan Muthahhari 1993).
71 Rakhmat (1990:4).
72 Yayasan Muthahhari (1993:64).
much resemble those of *Al-Hikmah*, except that *Al-Hikmah* also contained the specific rubric of Muthahhari. The similarities between these publications can be attributed to the fact that Jalaluddin Rakhmat and Haidar Bagir were the co-founders of both the institutions producing the journals. In terms of content, both journals contain relatively serious articles (translations and originals) covering various aspects of Islamic knowledge, including Qur’an exegesis, Hadith, history, philosophy, Sufism and morality. However, unlike *Al-Hikmah*, *Al-Huda* also provides a number of essays written by Indonesian *ustadhs*.

It is generally accepted that magazines and bulletins are significant means of disseminating the teachings of Shi’ism. Many Shi’i institutions publish some form of periodical. Two other publications of note are *Yaumul Quds*, which at the time of my fieldwork in 2004 had ceased to exist and *Waris* (abbreviation of *Warta Republik Islam* (News of the Islamic Republic) published by the Iranian Embassy in Jakarta and widely read by Shi’is in Indonesia. Notwithstanding the fact that they have a limited circulation, these two publications are instrumental in providing Indonesia’s Shi’is with knowledge and information on Shi’ism and the Shi’i world. It is unsurprising then, that in its examination of *Yaumul Quds*, the Body of Research and Development of the Department of Religious Affairs (DEPAG) warned of the potential dangers of these publications to the state, citing the possibility of the embassy using them to spread Shi’i teachings and Iranian revolutionary ideas in Indonesia.

The most regular Islamic bulletin owned by a Shi’i institution has been *Al-Tanwir* (The Enlightenment) published by the Muthahhari Foundation. This bi-weekly bulletin, which has been issued since January 1991, is seen not only as a way for the foundation to communicate with its members but also as a conduit for *da’wa* between the Muthahhari Foundation and Muslim society at large. Its full title is the *Da’wa* Bulletin of Al-Munawwarah Mosque and its offices are located behind Jalaluddin Rakhmat’s house. It is issued in cooperation with the Muthahhari Foundation. In fact, most of the articles in the bulletin are derived from transcriptions of Jalaluddin Rakhmat’s sermons, delivered at the mosque every Sunday morning. The bulletin also includes articles considered important for Muslim society and reports on the activities of the foundation. In step with the philosophical values of the Muthahhari Foundation, the bulletin provides a moderate view of various aspects of Islam, and in particular regarding the differences between Shi’ism and Sunnism. *Al-Tanwir* is widely distributed and to date boasts more than 250 editions; consequently, it can be seen as instrumental in the spread of the teachings of Shi’ism in Indonesia.

*Bahtera* (The Ark) is another publication created by Jalaluddin Rakhmat’s circle as a collaborative product of the Muthahhari Foundation and the Shi’i

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organisation IJABI. The magazine, which published its first issue in December 2003, is designed to be a vehicle of communication for the array of leaders and members of IJABI. Bahtera communicates and explains the ideas of the organisation’s intellectuals to its members, although it is also of interest to a wider readership. Its contents include topics in religious knowledge, as well as social and educational problems. As its subtitle suggests - *Pencerahan dan Pemberdayaan* (Enlightenment and Empowerment) - this periodical represents the ideology of IJABI.

In Bandung a monthly bulletin, *Al-Jawad* is produced by the Al-Jawad Foundation. It is a combination of three bulletins that the institution once used to publish: *Al-Jawad*, dealing with spiritual guidance, *Risalatuna* (Our Message) dealing with themes related to the unity of God and *Al-Ghadir*, dealing with information about Shi’ism. Historically, *Al-Ghadir* was the first bulletin produced by the institution, published between 1994 and 1997, and carried the writings of Indonesian students in Qum. *Risalatuna* was briefly published in 1997.\(^76\) Now the eight-page *Al-Jawad* attempts to cover all three themes. In practice, like *Al-Tanwir*, each edition usually contains an article derived from a sermon recorded at the Nurul Falah Mosque. It also includes information from the *wali faqih* (Supreme Leader) ‘Ali Khamene’i, or an exhortation from other Shi’i Imams, plus certain aspects of jurisprudence and prayers. *Al-Jawad’s* content is distinct from that of *Al-Tanwir* in that it is committed to follow the instructions and advice of Khamene’i, Iran’s foremost Shi’i leader. It also pays attention to aspects of jurisprudence, an issue not covered by *Al-Tanwir*. Despite a limited circulation, *Al-Jawad* has clearly participated in the dissemination of the teachings of Shi’ism in Indonesia.

In the same vein as *Al-Jawad* there is a magazine (a genre of generally more than 50 pages) entitled *An-Nashr* (the Victory) published by IPABI of Bogor. This magazine provides several rubrics including doctrine, politics, history, morality and reports on the work of the foundation. Some articles are original, while others are translations. Like *Al-Tanwir* and *Al-Jawad*, *An-Nashr* provides a large number of articles based on sermons, in this case by its leader, Abdullah Assegaff, an *ustadh* and Qum graduate who sometimes uses the pseudonym Abu Sukainah. In several respects, the contents of *An-Nashr* resemble that of *Al-Jawad*, reflecting the similar religious orientation, ideology, da’wa strategy and close connection between the two institutions, as well as on a broader level, among members of the *ustadh* group in Indonesia.

Several periodicals have also emerged from YAPI of Bangil. The first was *Al-Isyraq* (The Sunrise) which issued only nine editions from 1996 to 1998 and was then succeeded by *Islamuna* (Our Islam) from 1424/2003 to date. YAPI also produced

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one edition of KSAF, a journal of a study group for religion and philosophy which was meant to include scientific and popular writings on aspects of Islamic knowledge. The goal of Al-Isyraq was “to invite all Muslims to enlighten their thought with original and argumentative Islamic views”.\textsuperscript{77} Compared to the abovementioned bulletins and magazines, these magazines featured more varied topics, albeit in less detail, including articles on doctrine, the Qur’an, history, philosophy, morality, education, contemporary development of Islamic world and a report on the institution’s activities. Aside from being a platform for the strategy of the institution and an outlet for articles from the Shi’i perspective, which constituted the largest proportion of their content, both Al-Isyraq and Islamuna also published the thought of a number of Sunni leaders in the country.

The Friday bulletin of Al-Huda and the magazine Syi’ar (Magnificence) are both produced by ICC of Al-Huda. Al-Huda’s weekly four-page bulletin presents an article, mainly dealing with aspects of Sufism. Most of its articles were later republished in two volumes of a book entitled Renungan Jum’at (Friday Reflections) by Suharto in 2002. Appearing monthly, the glossy Syi’ar carries articles on diverse topics of Islamic interest, making it by far the most varied among the existing Shi’i periodicals. Although it mostly deals with Shi’i thought, both translations and originals, each edition also publishes interviews with Sunni scholars or leaders in Indonesia. However, a noticeable absence from Syi’ar are articles on political issues, including political developments in Iran. Despite requests by some readers to include politics, the editorial board remains reluctant to do so. This reflects the stated philosophical basis of ICC as an apolitical organisation. Of note is that Syi’ar is well-known for providing opportunities for young Shi’i writers to get into print.

The latest magazine to emerge is Suara Ummah (the Voice of the Ummat) published by Forum Al-Husainy of Jakarta. The first edition of this monthly came out in February 2004. According to the editorial board, the publication was the product of a series of meetings and discussions among ustadhs and intellectuals. Their aim was to demonstrate the great potential of Muslim society and to encourage its resurgence. “Unity is the key word for resurgence because in it God’s mercy awaits”.\textsuperscript{78} Under the slogan ‘Assemble brotherhood, Side with the Oppressed’, the magazine presents events, thoughts and aspects of Islamic teachings within a framework of Islamic brotherhood. Unlike other Shi’i periodicals, Suara Ummah hopes to attract a wider readership in the country, and it is sold at a number of street kiosks in Jakarta. To reflect its vision of inclusiveness, the opinions of both Sunni scholars and Shi’i intellectuals and ustadhs are given space in the magazine, although the Shi’i inclinations of the publication cannot be disguised. For example, one reader named Nurhidayah

\textsuperscript{77} Al-Isyraq (1/1/1417).

\textsuperscript{78} Suara Ummah (1/1/2004:4).
wrote to the editorial board asking whether Suara Ummah was in fact a Shi’i publication. In response to her letter, the editorial board did not deny the Shi’i nature of the magazine, but emphasised the importance of its contribution to the community, rather than asking questions about madhhab.

Miss Nurhidayah, history will show that in the future issues of khilafiyah [disputed matters] and conflicts of aliran [streams] in Islam will be considered out-of-date. Muslims will become more enlightened so that they will be more interested in talking about movements beneficial to empowerment, education and the support of the Muslims based on the principle of justice. One day Muslim society will see the contribution of a movement or the contribution given by a group to the Muslim community and mankind in general, without noticing its madhhab. As for madhhab, let it be our own business before God. A Muslim has to be able to understand and respect others. Then, he will make efforts to become the supporter of others. Dialogue is still needed and in the end, the freedom to choose the madhhab which one believes to be true is needed, without necessarily regarding others infidels. It is then valid if there is group thinking towards excellence, as long as it can be explained with rational arguments or can be proved intellectually.

We may glean several points from the above survey: first, the periodicals produced by Shi’i institutions are of various kinds. Second, these publications are designed to be a means of da’wa, communication and education for members of the institutions and organisations and of the Shi’i community. Third, the content, style and presentation of the periodicals reflect the religious ideology of the parent institutions or associations.

E. The Impact of Shi’i Publishing

Without question, Shi’i publishing has had a considerable impact on the lives of Shi’is in Indonesia. Atiyeh has made the observation that “People’s lives are definitely influenced by this old and basic vehicle of communication”. By exploiting the community’s various networks, Shi’i works are readily available to followers. This corresponds to the fact that the majority of Shi’is in Indonesia are literate. Given what we have learned, we can conclude that there are three functions of publishing in the Shi’i context: religious change, education and communication. One of the most remarkable influences of publishing has been in conversion to the madhhab. There is no doubt that publishing functions

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80 Suara Ummah (3/1/2004: 2).
as conduit for religious change. Most Shi’i converts in Indonesia admit the significance of books in their conversion process (although it will be appreciated that religious conversion is always a complex psychological and sociological process). It frequently happens that certain Shi’i books are cited as the catalyst for readers to delve more deeply into the Shi’i teachings. A notable example is Jalaluddin Rakhmat’s conversion to Shi’ism, which was greatly influenced by the Shi’i works that he read. Rakhmat admitted that his understanding of the imamate, for instance, was a direct result of his intensive reading of Shi’i books on the subject. By the same token, an event which occurred during my observations at the Al-Jawad Foundation on 19 May 2004 underscores the importance of books in the conversion process:

A man came to the Al-Jawad Foundation in Bandung. In its office he met with Husein Al-Kaff and other staff. In response to a question about his conversion to Shi’ism, the man explained that about four months earlier he had read a book about Imam Ali’s excellent words entitled Mereka Bertanya Ali Menjawab, (They Question, Ali Answers) published by Al-Jawad [1998]. Reading the book reminded him of his father’s advice emphasising the excellence of Ali, something he did not find in his instruction at school. He told how he continued to read Shi’i works in order to understand the teachings. He then converted to Shi’ism, but only through books, since he has not found teachers and had not joined the Shi’i community.

In this example writ large, most people convert from Sunnism to Shi’ism as a consequence of independent study through books, rather than as a result of sermons delivered by Shi’i preachers. While we cannot deduce which book or books are the most influential, we can suggest that it is the category of doctrinal books which attract readers most because they validate the Shi’i teachings with sound proofs. It appears that the more philosophical works, by and large, have very little impact on the conversion process. Many converts have mentioned the influence of al-Musawi’s Dialog Sunnah Syi’ah, while others point to Muhammad Tijani al-Samawi’s works, one of which describes al-Samawi’s own experience of conversion. One interesting point is that the writings of al-Samawi have also had a remarkable impact on the conversion of Sunnis to Shi’ism in the United States, and in particular among the Muslim population of US prisons. In Indonesia, al-Samawi’s books are read widely. A graduate of the Darussalam Institute for Islamic Studies at Gontor in Ponorogo, East Java, told how his Shi’i beliefs and practices still follow those set out in the works

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82 Jalaluddin Rakhmat, interview, (2/1/2003).
The Struggle of the Shi’is in Indonesia

of Tijani al-Samawi. Al-Samawi’s first book, Akhirnya Kutemukan Kebenaran\textsuperscript{84} (Finally, I Found the Truth) published in Malay in 1991 and in Indonesian in 1993 by Pustaka Pelita, Bandung, has been incredibly influential in conversions to Shi’ism. In this book, al-Samawi, who is a prominent Shi’i figure in Tunisia writes of a journey from Cairo to Alexandria and his subsequent meetings with Ayatollah Khu’i (then a prominent marja’ al-taqlid in Iraq) and Muhammad Baqir Sadr in Najaf. Following these meetings, al-Samawi begins to question his faith and undertakes intensive study of the Shi’i doctrines and teachings, from both Sunni and Shi’i sources, for a period of three years. At the end of this, he converts to Shi’ism. The book deals not merely with al-Samawi’s spiritual quest but also his reflections on and interpretations of Shi’i teachings. On his conversion, Al-Samawi writes:

Praise be to God, I have found the alternative. After the Messenger of God, I follow the Master of the faithful ... [and other Imams after him]. I have also exchanged the ‘ulama of my people, who discouraged us from thinking, and the majority of whom always obeyed their rulers, for the devoted Shi’i ‘ulama who never closed the gate of ijtihad, neither submitted to nor sought mercy from the oppressive rulers.

Yes, I have exchanged narrow thoughts and beliefs, full of superstition and contradiction, for new enlightened, open and liberal ones based on logical deduction and reasoning.\textsuperscript{85}

It is important to note that as a direct result of the impact of this book, on 19 November 2002, the mufti of Johor, Malaysia, issued a fatwa declaring it to be a forbidden book. (Books are generally forbidden because they are deemed to be contrary to the true teachings of Islam.)\textsuperscript{86} Yet despite its status in Malaysia, this book is still read and openly distributed among Muslims in Indonesia.

The most significant influence of Shi’i publishing is in the process of education, in the broadest sense of the word. For members of the Shi’i community in Indonesia, publishing, along with preaching, education and training activities, has functioned and continues to function as way to deepen and broaden their religious knowledge. While books and periodicals will never surpass the importance of encounters with religious teachers in the educational and da’wa process, they are instrumental in increasing comprehension and influencing

\textsuperscript{84} As mentioned in Chapter Two, the Indonesian translation of this work from Arabic (Thumma Ihtadaytu) was made by Husein Shahab, a prominent Shi’i ustadh. The English version is entitled Then I was Guided. Both Arabic and English versions are available online (http://www.al-islam.org/guided/21.html).

\textsuperscript{85} Al-Samawi (1993:183).

\textsuperscript{86} (http://islam.gov.my/e-fatwa/mufti/fatwa-warta-view.asp?keyID=327, accessed 18/10/2005). Other forbidden Shi’i works in Indonesian include Tabataba’i’s Tafsir Al-Mizan Mengupas Ayat-ayat Roh dalam Al-Quran (Tafsir al-Mizan Analysing the Verses of Spirit in the Qur’an) and Shari’ati’s Wanita Dimata dan Hati Rasulullah (Women in the Eyes and Heart of Muhammad).
the beliefs and practices of the community. Shi‘i publications serve not only as sources of knowledge but also as patterns of behaviour. The fact that the majority of Indonesian Shi‘is are converts from Sunnism only confirms the influential value of these publications.

Shi‘i publishing also plays an important role in sustaining the Shi‘i community as a minority Muslim group in Indonesia. Living as a minority requires ways of maintaining identity and continuity, in particular in interaction with the Sunni majority. Shi‘i publications are essential tools in the daily struggle within the dominant religious system and culture, providing the community (including new converts) with the religious knowledge to respond to anti-Shi‘i attacks and challenges.

As a vehicle of communication, publishing has served not only to connect the Shi‘i community in Indonesia with other Shi‘i communities in other parts of the world but also to integrate it into the Shi‘i world. The importance of being part of this world is of great concern to Shi‘i ustadhs such as Husein Al-Kaff, who points out that the Shi‘is in Indonesia should practice their traditions in order to avoid isolation from other Shi‘i communities in the world.87 Together with the increasing numbers of Indonesian students studying in Iran, Shi‘i publishing, and in particular the translations of works by mujtahid, has brought the community closer to Iran and increased Indonesia’s status as a centre of Shi’ism. Most Indonesian Shi‘is regard ‘Ali Khamene‘i, the wali faqih, as their marja‘ al-taqlid. This is a result of efforts by teachers, institutions and publications to promote the ‘alamiyyat (superiority in religious knowledge) and leadership of this figure. (Bestowing the ranks of wilayat al-faqih and marja‘ al-taqlid on a single person can be seen as an attempt by Iran to attract as many Shi‘is as possible under its leadership). Shi‘i publishing has been instrumental in forming and sustaining the intense emotional relationship between the Indonesian Shi‘i community and others throughout the world, but in particular with Iran.

The impact of Shi‘i publishing can be seen beyond the boundaries of the Indonesian community. Without doubt, translations and works by Indonesian Shi‘is have been influential on Sunnis in Indonesia, while works of Shi‘i philosophy and thought have exerted an intellectual influence on Indonesian Muslims. Ali Shari‘ati’s socio-philosophical works are widely read, cited and discussed, as are Hussayn Nasr’s works on Islamic thought and Sufism. These works are considered to offer a strong critique of Western philosophy, worldview and modernity in general. Evidence for the impact of this is the fact that many famous Muslim intellectuals and students are influenced by certain Shi‘i teachings and thoughts. Indonesia’s Shi‘is see it as a huge step in their

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87 Al-Jawad (Sha‘ban 1421/2000:2).
struggle for the recognition of their madhhab when Muslim intellectuals in Indonesia express a positive appreciation of the intellectual and philosophical strengths of Shi’ism.

Shi’i doctrinal works have also contributed to the maintenance of traditionalist Islamic practices, which have come under fire from Sunni reformist groups in Indonesia. (The Sunni traditionalist group rarely produces scholarly works to counter reformist criticism.) As a result, there has been an emergence of translations of traditionalist books and in fact Shi’i leaders, such as Jalaluddin Rakhmat suggest that such works serve as an effective tool for defeating reformist arguments. Rakhmat also claims that traditionalist Sunni groups in Indonesia, such as NU directly benefit from the Shi’i works.88

So the impact of books cannot be underestimated. Despite the fact that many anti-Shi’i groups have attempted to fight against the madhhab, Shi’i works have become an integral part of the intellectual and cultural life of Muslims in Indonesia. Books and articles published on the internet have further enhanced the impact of Shi’i publishing. A number of Shi’i foundations in Indonesia now provide websites carrying numerous works on various aspects of Shi’ism. Another result of the emergence and development of Shi’i publishing can be seen to have contributed to the fragmentation of religious authority in Indonesia. On the impact of the media on the Muslim world at large, Eickelman and Anderson point out that the transmission and circulation of Islamic texts through a variety of media “… mark a fragmentation of authority. ‘Islamic’ books set aside the long tradition of authoritative discourse by religious scholars in favour of a direct understanding of texts….”.89 Abdullah also observes that the circulation of religious texts among members of the Indonesian community has expanded the number and scope of its audience. He goes on to suggest that “the spread of literacy and the translation of formerly esoteric texts have terminated the monopoly of the ‘ulama in any religious discourse. Literacy and the growing importance of the print culture have expanded the number of people who can directly conduct a dialogue with the text.” 90

This fragmentation of religious authority in Indonesia takes different forms: first, in the context of the development of the Shi’is, fragmentation has meant the emergence of a religious group distinctive from the majority Sunni community in terms of interpretation of certain tenets of Islam. Second, the rise of a large literate cohort is the product of secular education within the Sunni community, who have the same opportunities to engage in religious interpretation as those religious scholars at the traditional centres of Islamic learning. Unsurprisingly,
this has prompted attacks from militant groups who claim to represent legitimate religious authority. We can conclude that the proliferation of Shi’i publishing, together with other Islamic publications, has been an undermining force against the sway of traditional religious authorities in Indonesia.

However, Indonesia is a Muslim country that has no single religious authority and it recognises various forms of Islamic tradition, two factors which encourage religious pluralism.\(^{91}\) Although there is the Sunni MUI (Majlis Ulama Indonesia, the Indonesian Council of Ulama’) created by former President Suharto, different Muslim groups tend to follow the understanding and fatwas of their own organisations, for example NU, Muhammadiyah or Persis. Such conditions benefit the existence of Shi’is in Indonesia. They have even gained recognition in the eyes of moderate Muslim figures of national standing.

The Indonesian Shi’i organisation, IJABI has also gained official legal recognition from the government. That said, Shi’is continue to struggle for acceptance by wider segments of the Muslim community. In this context, the goal of Shi’i publishing remains the ratification of Shi’ism as a valid Islamic madhhab by the religious authorities. Having demonstrated its extensive influence, we can conclude that publishing is clearly the most effective communicative weapon of struggle for the Shi’is in Indonesia.

In the concluding two chapters we turn to a consideration of the arena of religious politics in Indonesia and strategies adopted by the organisation IJABI.

\(^{91}\) Eickelman and Anderson (1997:52).