Shīʿa Literature in Indonesia: A Historical Account

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Abstract	This study aims to trace the development and characteristics of various shīʿa literature in Indonesia from a historical perspective. This study uses library research, which allows for integrative and connective tracing of various literature as the primary source of data, which is analyzed through a descriptive approach considering historical dimensions. The findings reveal that the existence and development of shīʿa literature in Indonesia are not merely a historical reflection of the diversity of Islamic sects, but also a manifestation of intellectual dynamics that continue to transform within local and global contexts. The shīʿa tradition, which the majority has long overshadowed, has played a vital role in shaping Islamic discourse in Indonesia through institutional contributions, such as educational foundations, publishing, and academic networks spread across various Islamic universities. Amidst stereotypes and narrative challenges, this development reflects an epistemological openness among Indonesian Muslims who are slowly beginning to recognize the importance of inter-sectarian interaction in building a more comprehensive Islamic intellectual horizon. However, limited access to shīʿa literary archives, the dominance of publishing biases, and the lack of representation in mainstream academic discourse serve as reminders that the process of scholarly integration still requires sustainable and inclusive strategies.
Abstrak	Kajian ini bertujuan untuk menelusuri perkembangan dan karakteristik berbagai literatur syiah di Indonesia dari sudut pandang sejarah. Kajian ini menggunakan library research yang memungkinkan penelusuran secara integratif dan konektif terhadap beragam literatur sebagai sumber utama data, yang dianalisis melalui pendekatan deskriptif dengan mempertimbangkan dimensi historis. Hasil kajiannya mengungkapkan bahwa keberadaan dan perkembangan literatur-literatur syiah di Indonesia bukan sekadar refleksi historis dari keberagaman mazhab Islam, melainkan juga manifestasi dari dinamika intelektual yang terus bertransformasi dalam konteks lokal dan global. Tradisi syiah, yang selama ini berada dalam bayang-bayang mayoritas, menunjukkan peran vital dalam membentuk konfigurasi wacana keislaman Indonesia melalui kontribusi institusional, seperti yayasan pendidikan, penerbitan, serta jaringan akademik yang tersebar di berbagai perguruan tinggi Islam. Di tengah stereotip dan tantangan naratif yang dihadapi, perkembangan ini mencerminkan adanya keterbukaan epistemologis di kalangan umat Islam Indonesia yang secara perlahan mulai merekognisi pentingnya interaksi antarmazhab dalam membangun horizon keilmuan Islam yang lebih komprehensif. Namun demikian, keterbatasan akses terhadap arsip literatur syiah, dominasi bias penerbitan, serta kurangnya representasi dalam diskursus akademik arus utama menjadi pengingat bahwa proses integrasi keilmuan masih memerlukan strategi berkelanjutan dan inklusif.
Keywords	Shīʿa Literature; Islamic Intellectual History; Indonesia; Sunni-Shīʿa Relations

Introduction

As a religion that has grown and spread globally, Islam radiates profound intellectual and spiritual diversity, reflected in the formation of various religious schools and traditions. Within this diversity framework, the shīʿa school is an integral part of Islamic history and theology. Its emergence after the death of the Prophet Muhammad was not merely a response to the issue of leadership, but the beginning of the development of complex and layered doctrines, encompassing theological, political, and socio-cultural dimensions that continue to transform in various historical contexts.[1] Shīʿa Imamiyah, believing in imamah as the spiritual and political authority divinely appointed to the Prophet's family, has consolidated its presence in the global Islamic community, particularly in strategic regions such as Iran, Iraq, Bahrain, and Lebanon. Although demographically a minority compared to sunnis, the significance of shīʿa in the geopolitical landscape and religiosity of contemporary Islam cannot be ignored, especially in the context of sectarian tensions and power dynamics in the Middle East.[2]

Recognition of the legitimacy of shīʿa as part of mainstream Islam reached its culmination through the Amman Declaration in 2004, in which more than 200 scholars from 50 countries, under the initiative of King Abdullah II, affirmed the equality of shīʿa with sunni schools of thought within Islam.[3] This statement is not merely a symbol of unity among Muslims but also an official articulation of the theological legitimacy of sectarian pluralism. Similar recognition has also come from Indonesian Islamic figures across religious organizations. From Nahdlatul Ulama, figures such as Hasyim Muzadi and Said Aqil Siradj have emphasized that shīʿa is part of Islam, not a deviant sect as is often misunderstood. From Muhammadiyah, Din Syamsuddin and Amien Rais also stated that the differences between shīʿa and sunni lie within the realm of legitimate differences and do not invalidate each other's Islamic status. Furthermore, Ahmad Syafii Maarif explicitly referred to shīʿa as the fifth school of thought, a statement that, both academically and politically, opens the door to recognition of internal diversity within the Muslim community as part of the dynamic richness of global Islamic discourse.[4]

This recognition shows that, theologically and academically, shīʿa should not be viewed as something foreign or deviant from Islam, but rather as a legitimate component that enriches Islamic discourse itself. However, in reality, this academic and theological recognition often clashes with social

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[1] Seyed Amir Hossein Asghari, "Sufism in the Contemporary Shii Seminary?," *Religions* 14, no. 10 (2023): 1248, https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14101248.

[2] Haseena Sultan, Tajwar Ali, and Tahira Ali, "Sectarianism Begets Diversity; A Study on the Sectoral Divides in Islam in the Middle East," *Pakistan Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 12, no. 2 (2024): 1462–73, https://doi.org/10.52131/pjhss.2024.v12i2.2244.

[3] Thoriq Aziz Jayana, "Studi Syiah: Dalam Tinjauan Historis, Teologis, Hingga Analisis Materi Kesyiahan Di Perguruan Tinggi Islam," *Akademika* 16, no. 1 (2022): 91–100, https://doi.org/10.30736/adk.v16i1.855.

[4] Husein Ja'far Al Hadar, "Sunni-Syiah Di Indonesia: Jejak Dan Peluang Rekonsiliasi," *Jurnal Maarif* 10, no. 2 (2015): 106–29.

perceptions that are full of negative stigma towards shīʿa.[5] Many people in the Islamic world, especially in sunni communities, are influenced by the negative narratives that continue to circulate about shīʿa.[6] Various factors have caused this stigmatization to emerge and persist, such as a lack of deep and objective understanding of shīʿa, limited access to authentic shīʿa literature, and anti-shīʿa propaganda spread by certain groups.[7]

Given the reality of negative stigma and sectarian propaganda, the role of shīʿa literature has become crucial to examine more deeply and critically. However, in-depth academic studies on shīʿa literature, especially in Indonesia, are still minimal to date. Most existing studies focus on significant issues such as ideology, general shīʿa history, political relations between sunnis and shīʿas, or polemics surrounding specific religious practices.

Studies on shīʿa ideology have been carried out by many world researchers, including researchers from Indonesia. Among these are Deeb's ,[8] Vaezi's ,[9] Latief's,[10] Saat's,[11] Isa's,[12] and Iqbal's [13] studies. Many researchers focus more on their studies on the relationship between sunni and shīʿa, for example, the study conducted by Siradj,[14] or the history of shīʿa in Indonesia, such as the Bustamam Ahmad [15] study or the shīʿa dilemma in Indonesia such as the study of Sofjan,[16] Al-Makin,[17] Rokhmad,[18] and the study of the development of its interpretation. For example, the study of Iqbal & Ja'far.[19] Research on the history of shīʿa in Indonesia and especially in Aceh has been carried out by Hilmy Bakar

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[5] Zulkifli Zulkifli, "What Drives Anti-Shia Framing in Indonesia?," *Studia Islamika* 31, no. 1 (2024): 1–29, https://doi.org/10.36712/sdi.v31i1.27713.

[6] Bekir Kuzudişli, "Sunnī-Shīʿī Interaction in the Early Period–The Transition of the Chains of Ahl Al-Sunna to the Shīʿa–," *Ilahiyat Studies* 6, no. 1 (2015): 7–45, https://doi.org/10.12730/13091719.2015.61.122.

[7] Rachmah Ida, "Cyberculture and Sectarianism in Indonesia: The Rise of Shia Media and Anti-Shia Online Movements," *Jurnal Komunikasi Islam* 6, no. 2 (2016): 1–19, https://doi.org/10.15642/jki.2016.6.2.1-19.

[8] Marius Deeb, "Shia Movements in Lebanon: Their Formation, Ideology, Social Basis, and Links with Iran and Syria," *Third World Quarterly* 10, no. 2 (1988): 683–98, https://doi.org/10.1080/01436598808420077.

[9] Ahmad Vaezi, *Shia Political Thought* (London: Islamic Centre of England London, 2004).

[10] Hilman Latief, "The Identity of Shi 'a Sympathizers in Contemporary Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 2, no. 2 (2008): 300–335, https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2008.2.2.300-335.

[11] Norshahril Saat, "'Deviant'Muslims: The Plight of Shias in Contemporary Malaysia," *Religious Diversity in Muslim-Majority States in Southeast Asia: Areas of Toleration and Conflict*, 2014, 359–78.

[12] Kabiru Haruna Isa, "Sunni Literary Responses to the Spread of Shia Ideology in Northern Nigeria," *Studies In African Languages And Cultures*, no. 52 (2018): 113–30, https://www.ceeol.com/search/article-detail?id=841384.

[13] Muhammad Iqbal, "Perspektif Syiah Imamiyah Tentang Dimensi Tauhid," *Islamijah: Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 1, no. 2 (2020): 162–76, https://doi.org/10.30821/islamijah.v1i2.7226.

[14] Said Agil Siradj, "The Sunni-Shi'ah Conflict and the Search for Peace in Indonesia," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 7, no. 1 (2013): 145–64, https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2013.7.1.145-164.

[15] Kamaruzzaman Bustamam-Ahmad, "FROM POWER TO CULTURAL LANDSCAPES: Rewriting History of Shi'ah in Aceh," *Journal of Indonesian Islam* 11, no. 2 (2017): 509–30, https://doi.org/10.15642/JIIS.2017.11.2.509-530.

[16] Dicky Sofjan, "Minoritization & Criminalization of Shia Islam in Indonesia," *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies* 39, no. 2 (2016): 29–44, https://doi.org/10.1353/jsa.2016.0002.

[17] Al Makin, "Homogenizing Indonesian Islam: Persecution of the Shia Group in Yogyakarta," *Studia Islamika* 24, no. 1 (2017): 1–32, https://doi.org/10.15408/sdi.v24i1.3354.

[18] Abu Rokhmad, "The Sunni-Shia Conflict in Madura Indonesia: Judging Individual Faith as Blasphemy.," *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* 27, no. 2 (2019).

[19] Muhammad Iqbal and Ja'far Ja'far, "Contemporary Development of Qur'anic Exegesis in Indonesia and Iran," *Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies* 3, no. 1 (2019): 83–103, https://doi.org/10.30821/jcims.v3i1.4144.

Almascaty,[20] Fakhriati,[21] Apridar, Abidin Nurdin, and Muhammad Abubakar.[22] Previously, similar studies on history were also present in references to the history of shīʻism and its distribution, which were examined by Tabataba'i & Husayn,[23] Brunner, Rainer & Werner Ende,[24] Hasyim,[25] and Ja'fari.[26] The study of Almascaty looks more at Persian civilization and its influence on customs in Aceh.[27]

From a series of studies conducted by various researchers, it is still very rare to find an in-depth study of the fundamental aspects of Islamic literature, which forms the theological and epistemological basis of the shīʻa community. Literature such as the main shīʻa hadith books or treatises on fiqh, philosophy, and theology written by shīʻa scholars has had a significant influence in shaping the views, religious attitudes, and social practices of the shīʻa community in Indonesia and the world in general. Furthermore, critical studies of shīʻa literature can also provide a deeper understanding of how this Islamic intellectual tradition grew and developed historically and how this literature interacted with various socio-cultural dynamics in Indonesian society. This gap in research is an academic void that must be filled immediately so that the narrative about shīʻa can be more objective, comprehensive, and enrich our understanding of Islamic traditions in general.

Considering this reality, this study aims to explore in depth the development and characteristics of shīʻa literature by identifying various types of shīʻa religious literature that have been present and developed in Indonesia, both in the form of classical texts, local scholars' treatises, and contemporary publications used by the Indonesian shīʻa community. This study also highlights how shīʻa literature is distributed, consumed, and perceived by the Indonesian public. Thus, academically, this study will contribute significantly to filling the gap in studies on shīʻa in Indonesia, particularly regarding aspects of literature that have been relatively unexplored by previous researchers. More broadly, this study will enrich the discourse on Islam by presenting a more objective perspective, avoiding stigma, and opening space for constructive and harmonious dialogue between schools of thought.

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[20] Hilmy Bakar Almascaty, "Relasi Persia Dan Nusantara Pada Awal Islamisasi: Sebuah Kajian Awal Pengaruh Persia Dalam Politik Aceh," *Media Syari'ah: Wahana Kajian Hukum Islam Dan Pranata Sosial* 15, no. 1 (2013): 53–58, https://doi.org/10.22373/jms.v15i1.1764.

[21] Fakhriati Fakhriati, "Refleksi Pengamalan Tasawuf Di Aceh Pada Abad Ke-19M Dalam Kitab Dia'ul Wara'," *Jurnal Lektur Keagamaan* 12, no. 2 (2014): 319–44, https://doi.org/10.31291/jlk.v12i2.38.

[22] Apridar Apridar, Abidin Nurdin, and Muhammad Abubakar, "Syiah Di Aceh: Studi Tentang Pengaruh Syiah Dalam Tradisi Keislaman-Kelilmuan Dan Pemetaan Gerakan Sosial Keagamaan," *Jurnal Konfrontasi*, no. 2 (2016): 106–26.

[23] Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Tabataba'i, Jassim M Hussaini, and Abdulaziz A Sachedina, *Messianism and the Mahdi, Expectation of the Millennium: Shi'ism in History* (Albany, NY: Suny Press, 1989).

[24] Rainer Brunner and Werner Ende, *The Twelver Shia in Modern Times: Religious Culture and Political History*, vol. 72 (Bonton: Brill, 2001).

[25] Moh Hasyim, "Shia: Its History and Development In Indonesia," *Analisa Journal of Social Science and Religion* 19, no. 2 (2012): 147–58, https://doi.org/10.18784/analisa.v19i2.162.

[26] Sayyid Husayn Muhammad Ja'fari, *The Origins and Early Development of Shia Islam* (Lulu Press, Inc, 2014).

[27] Almascaty, "Relasi Persia Dan Nusantara Pada Awal Islamisasi: Sebuah Kajian Awal Pengaruh Persia Dalam Politik Aceh."

This study uses a library research method that allows for integrative and connective exploration of various literature as the primary source of data, which is analyzed through a descriptive approach that seriously considers historical dimensions. The data collection process was carried out by systematically exploring various relevant written sources, including academic books, scientific journals, monographs, previous research reports, and national and international media publications with high credibility. The data obtained is classified thematically and critically described within its historical context, enabling the identification of intertextual relationships, shifts in meaning, and accompanying social transformations.

This approach aims to comprehensively unravel how shīʿa literature grew and shaped discourse dynamics within Indonesian Muslim society, including how these texts reflect ideological, cultural, and spiritual positions within the local Islamic configuration. Through historical mapping and contextual reflection on the texts, this study not only presents a portrait of the development of shīʿa literature but also opens up possibilities for strengthening the tradition of tolerance, discourse reconciliation, and the development of inter-sectarian dialogue as an essential foundation for maintaining social cohesion and internal diversity within Islam in Indonesia.

History of The Founding of Shīʿa

Understanding shīʿa as an integral part of Islam requires a comprehensive discussion, involving historical, etymological, terminological, and sectarian aspects. At the most fundamental level, the etymological meaning provides a basis for understanding this group's emergence and historical development. The term *"Shīʿa"* comes from the Arabic root *"sha>ʾa-yashi>ʾu-shi>ʾatan,"* which means supporter, defender, follower, or lover. The word shīʿa is a label for individuals or groups who fully support a particular person or idea. In the context of Islam, specifically, this term refers to the loyal supporters of Ali bin Abi Talib, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him).

From this etymological meaning, shīʿa is a term that describes religious and political loyalty to Ali, who is considered to have strong spiritual and temporal legitimacy among his followers. Furthermore, the term *"tashayyuʾ"* signifies a level of loyalty and devotion that is total, sincere, and without doubt, is also attached to it.[28] Thus, it can be said that shīʿa, at its inception, was merely an expression of spiritual and political love and obedience to Ali and his descendants. From this meaning, the origins of shīʿa can already be found during the time of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him) himself, among individuals who demonstrated high loyalty and respect

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[28] M. Quraish Shihab, *Sunnah-Syiah Bergandengan Tangan! Mungkinkah: Kajian Atas Konsep Ajaran Dan Pemikiran* (Tangerang: Lentera Hati Group, 2007).

toward the Prophet's family, known as "*Ahl al-Bayt*." However, the meaning of shīʿa in terminological terms is not limited to its literal etymological meaning. Terminologically, this word has become much more complex and has shifted meaning in line with historical and theological developments within Islam.

The most dominant terminological definition is that shīʿa is a group within Islam that believes in leadership (imamah) as a special right inherited by Ali bin Abi Thalib and his descendants through the Ahlulbait line. Muhammad Husain Thabathaba'i, in his book "Shīʿa Islam," specifically emphasizes that Shīʿa is not merely about loving Ali, but specifically regards Ali and his descendants as having divine authority to lead the Muslim community after the death of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him).[29]

Syahrastani expresses a similar view in *"Al-Mila>l wa al-Nih}al,"* stating that according to shīʿa, imamate is not merely political power but the central pillar of faith that must be fulfilled and fully believed in.[30] This view contrasts with the understanding that imamate is a matter of political expediency, as most Sunnis understand. This terminology is further clarified in the Encyclopedia of Islam, where shīʿa are described as a sect that idolizes Ali and believes in the leadership of his descendants. However, this definition has often been criticized by some non-shīʿa scholars, such as Sirojudin Abbas, who argues that love for Ali and his descendants is not exclusive to shīʿa but a typical attitude among all Muslims. Such criticism indicates that the terminological definition of shīʿa is highly complex and open to multiple interpretations.

This terminological complexity led to the historical-sectarian development of shīʿa, resulting in the emergence of various internal shīʿa sects with differing doctrines regarding imamate. The historical dynamics experienced by Muslims since the emergence of shi'ism have led to divisions that resulted in the various main shī'ite sects today, namely Zaidiyah, Ismailiyah, and Itsna Asyariyah (twelver shī'ism). These three major sects have fundamental doctrinal differences regarding the issue of imamate. The Zaidiyah, the most moderate branch among the shīʿa sects, only recognizes imamate in a limited sense for the descendants of Ali who meet specific criteria, such as justice and the ability to fight to defend the religion.[31]

The Ismailiyah, on the other hand, have a more complex and mystical understanding of imamate, believing that it is the right of the descendants of Ismail bin Ja'far in an unbroken line and that

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[29] Muhammad Husain Thabathaba'i, *Islam Syiah: Asal-Usul Dan Perkembangannya. Diterjemahkan Dari Syi'ir Islam. Penerjemah: Djohan Effendi* (Jakarta: Pustaka Utama Grafiti, 1989).

[30] Asy-Syahrastani, *Al Milal Wa Anihal,* Terj. Asywadie Syukur (Surabaya: Bina Ilmu, 2005).

[31] Resti Novita Dewi, Deni Maulana, and Oznur Tasdoken, "Shia Is One Of the Sects in Islam," *Al-Mubin: Islamic Scientific Journal* 7, no. 2 (2024): 100–112, https://doi.org/10.51192/almubin.v7i2.756.

they possess a special spiritual authority that is passed down esoterically from imam to imam.[32] Meanwhile, Itsna Asyariyah or Shī'a Imamiyah believe that the imam is limited to twelve imams, from Ali bin Abi Thalib to Muhammad al-Mahdi, believed to be the hidden imam.[33] These doctrinal differences have led to diversity in worship practices, political patterns, and approaches to socio-cultural issues within each group.

This complexity shows that shī'a is not a monolithic entity but a community full of internal dynamics and doctrinal and historical complexity. Historians and researchers differ regarding the historical study of the emergence of shī'a, including the view that shī'a was formed after the death of the Prophet Muhammad.

Those who support this view include Ibn Khaldun,[34] Ahmad Amin,[35] Hasan Ibrahim,[36] Ahmad Bin Ya'qub,[37] and Ahmad Subhi.[38] Second, the view that shī'a was formed during the leadership of Uthman bin Affan. This view is held by historians and researchers, one of whom is Ibn Hazm.[39] Third, the view that Shi'ism was formed during the caliphate of Ali bin Abi Talib. Some proponents of this view are Naubakhti[40] and Ibn Nadim.[41] Fourth, the view that shī'ism was formed after the tragedy of Thaff (Karbala). Proponents of this view differ on the chronology of its formation. According to some of them, the shī'a, which is indicated to have existed before the tragedy of Thaff, did not meet the requirements for forming a distinctive school of thought regarding its character and characteristics. Thus, the school of thought was only formed after the tragedy of Thaff. Others argue that the existence of the shī'a school of thought before the tragedy of Thaff was nothing more than a spiritual phenomenon and tendency after the tragedy of Thaff, the shī'a school of thought began to find its political character and its roots deeply embedded in the souls of its followers while also creating various dimensions within its structure.[42]

The four views above are certainly not without criticism. With that in mind, a fifth view will clarify that the previous four views are based on events that led to the rise of the shī'a school of thought due to its interaction with various factors in historical moments claimed to be the beginning of the emergence of shī'a. Therefore, they consider this moment to be the date of birth of shī'a. The shī'a school

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[32] Arif A Jamal, "Authority and Plurality in Muslim Legal Traditions: The Case of Ismaili Law," *The American Journal of Comparative Law* 67, no. 3 (2019): 491–514, https://doi.org/10.1093/ajcl/avz023.

[33] Muhammad Kholid Muslih, "A Critical Study On Ghaybah Of Imām Mahdi Concept In Shī'ah Imāmiyyah Ithnā 'Ashariyya," *USHULUDDIN* 29, no. 2 (2021): 1–21, https://doi.org/10.24014/jush.v29i2.13981.

[34] Ibnu Khaldun, *Târîkh Ibn Khaldûn* (Bairut: Dar-Fikr, 1988).

[35] Ahmad Amin, *Fajr Al-Islâm* (Beirut: Dar-Kitab Al-'Arabi, 1969).

[36] Hasan Ibrahim, *Târîkh Al-Islâm* (Kairo: T.P, 1957).

[37] Ahmad Bin Ya'qub, *Târîkh Al-Ya'qûbî* (Libanon: Muassasah 'Ilmi, 1998).

[38] Ahmad Shubhi, *Nazdariyyah Al-Imâmah* (Kairo: Dar-Nadhoh Al-'Arabiyyah, 1991).

[39] Hasyim Farghal, *'Awâmil Wa Ahdâf Nasy'Ah Ilm Al-Kalâm* (Beirut: Dar Al-Afaq Al-'Arabiyyah, 2013).

[40] Naubakhti, *Firoq Al-Syî'ah* (Beirut: Mansyuraat Al-Ridha, 1998).

[41] Ibn Nadim, *Al-Fihrist Li Ibn Al-Nadim* (Kairo: Mathba'ah Ar-Rahmaniyah, 1990).

[42] Kamil Mushtafa Al-Syaiby, *Al-Shilah Bayn Al-Tashawwuf Wa Al-Tasyayyu'* (Kuwait: Maktabah Ibnu Taimiyyah, 1886).

of thought and community had already existed since the beginning of Islam.[43] Fifth, the shīʿa and researchers from various schools of thought believe that the shīʿa were born during the lifetime of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of God be on him). According to them, he planted the seeds of shīʿism in the hearts of his followers through prophetic hadiths, while revealing the position of Ali bin Thalib on various occasions. These prophetic hadiths were not only narrated by the shīʿa, but also by reliable narrators according to the Sunni (*Ahl Sunnah wa al-Jamaah*) school of thought.

Shīʿa Literature in Islamic Science

Shīʿa, as a school of thought with unique characteristics within the Islamic tradition, presents a highly complex intellectual nuance manifested in various types of Islamic literature. Fundamentally, the intellectual tradition of shīʿa is rooted in the concept of spiritual leadership that has been passed down from generation to generation among the family of the Prophet Muhammad, which is known as imamah. This paradigm has produced various theological, interpretive, hadith, historical, and jurisprudential literature with distinctive characteristics and approaches. The complexity of this literature results from a long historical journey influenced by political, social, cultural, and theological aspects in the Islamic world in general and in the Indonesian context in particular.

At the level of theological literature, shīʿa has produced monumental works that serve as rational foundations for understanding Islam philosophically. For example, the book *Iʿtiqādāt al-Imāmiyya* by Shaykh al-Ṣadūq in the 10th century provides a crucial conceptual foundation in affirming the Shīʿa Imamiyah doctrine of imamah and divine justice, which lays the logical foundations of Shīʿa theology. The influence of this book is not limited to the Middle East but extends to Indonesia through various networks of shīʿa knowledge transmission. Other shīʿa theological works, such as *Tajrīd al-Iʿtiqād* by Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, are also widely known among Indonesian Muslim academics for their sharp logical and philosophical arguments, especially in modern Islamic boarding schools that have begun to open up to inter-sectarian discourse, such as the Al-Hadi Islamic Boarding School in Pekalongan or the Hauzah Ilmiah YAPI Bangil. Such theological literature serves as an intellectual bridge for dialogue between shīʿa and sunni groups in Indonesia and provides a rational framework for discussing religious issues.

Meanwhile, exegetical literature produced by shīʿa scholars also has its characteristics in Islamic hermeneutics.[44] *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* by ʿAllāmah Ṭabāṭabāʾī is a clear example of how shīʿa exegesis has been accepted and developed in Indonesia. In the 1990s, YAPI Bangil translated *Tafsīr al-Mīzān* into

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[43] Ahmad Waʾili, *Identitas Syiah* (Lembaga Internasional Ahlul Bait, 2012).

[44] Alī Rād, "Orientalists and the Evolution of Shī ʿa Exegesis Hermeneutic: A Case Study of Todd Lawson," *Classical and Contemporary Islamic Studies (Formerly Known as Journal of Contemporary Islamic Studies)* 2, no. 1 (2020): 105–24, https://doi.org/20.1001.1.27834808.2020.2.1.7.8.

Indonesian, quickly becoming an essential reference in Islamic studies at universities such as Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta and Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Sunan Ampel Surabaya. This exegesis offers an advanced intertextual and philosophical approach, enriching the discourse on Quranic exegesis in Indonesia by introducing different perspectives, particularly in understanding verses related to imamate, justice, and Islamic spirituality. Not only *al-Mīzān*, other shīʿa tafsir literature such as *Majmaʿ al-Bayān fī Tafsīr al-Qurʾān* by Shaykh al-Ṭabarsī has also gradually entered scholarly discussions in Indonesia, expanding the intellectual discourse and creating a critical and open religious discourse.

In the hadith field, shīʿa literature's contributions are no less significant. Kutub al-Arba'ah, the four main hadith books in Shīʿa—*al-Kāfī* by Kulaini, *Man Lā Yahduruh al-Faqīh* by Sheikh Saduk, *Tahdzib al-Ahkām*, and *al-Istibsār* by Sheikh Ṭūsī—provide authoritative collections of hadith that serve as guidelines on various religious issues. In Indonesia, these hadiths are not entirely accepted among the Sunni mainstream. Still, they are an essential subject of study among the shīʿa community and academics who study plurality in Islam. Books such as *al-Kāfī*, which contains thousands of hadiths on law, ethics, spirituality, and leadership, have become a reference in discussing Islamic political ethics among Indonesian academics. Thus, although not widely accepted by the mainstream, these hadith works play an essential role as alternative references that enrich the hadith tradition in Indonesia.

Shi'a historical literature also contributes significantly to the understanding of alternative Islamic history. The book *Nahj al-Balāghah* by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī in the 4th century AH is one example. This book contains sermons, letters, and sayings of Imam Ali that present strong views on justice, government, and leadership ethics. In Indonesia, this work has significantly influenced political and leadership concepts in the Islamic scholarly tradition of the archipelago. For example, the Sufi thinker Hamzah Fansuri was explicitly inspired by the concept of leadership developed in *Nahj al-Balāghah*, which was later reflected in his philosophical poems on just spiritual leadership. Similarly, other historical works, such as *Kitāb al-Irshād fī Maʿrifat Ḥujaj Allāh ʿalā al-ʿIbād* by Shaykh al-Mufīd, which contains biographies and life histories of shīʿa imams, also provide a new perspective in understanding the political and theological dynamics in the Islamic world, which then gave a special flavor to Islamic historiography taught in universities in Indonesia.

In fiqh or Islamic law, the shīʿa tradition produced monumental works that conceptually provided alternatives in understanding Islamic law. The book *Jawāhir al-Kalām* by Muhammad Hasan al-Najafī and *al-ʿUrwah al-Wuthqā* by Ayatullah Muhammad Kazim al-Yazdī are the most important works of fiqh in the Imamiyah school, with a careful deductive approach to the primary sources of Islamic law. Modern fiqh works such as *Tawdīh al-Masā'il*, written by contemporary marjai such as Ayatullah Ali al-Sīstānī and Ayatullah Husain Wahid Kharasānī, also serve as primary guides for the

shīʿa community in practicing their religion on a daily basis. These books provide clear practical guidance for the shīʿa community in implementing Islamic law daily. Although they are not generally considered the primary legal guides in Indonesia, where the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence dominates,[45] some concepts from shīʿa fiqh, particularly in the areas of Islamic economics and family law, have begun to be introduced through open academic discussions at various Islamic universities in Indonesia. This openness to discussion demonstrates how shīʿa fiqh literature is beginning to serve as a serious comparative reference in inter-school dialogue in Indonesia.

Through these essential works, the shīʿa intellectual tradition has successfully built a complex and rich Islamic scholarly heritage, covering a wide range of fields from hadith, tafsir, history, to fiqh. This literary heritage is of high academic and spiritual value for the shīʿa community and enriches the global Islamic scholarly discourse. In Indonesia, the presence and translation of a number of these works, particularly exegetical works such as *Tafsir al-Mīzān*, have become an essential part of inter-sectarian dialogue, broadening the intellectual horizons of Muslims and encouraging the formation of constructive, inclusive, and harmonious inter-sectarian intellectual communities in the context of contemporary Islamic society. Thus, this shīʿa literary heritage constitutes a crucial intellectual asset that contributes to advancing a comprehensive, academic, and profound understanding of Islam across various Muslim communities worldwide, including in Indonesia.

The Development of Shīʿa Literature in Indonesia

The development of shīʿa teachings in Indonesia cannot be separated from the broader global historical context, where cultural interactions and intellectual exchanges between the Middle East and the Indonesian archipelago have been taking place intensively for hundreds of years. In the pre-modern phase, the presence of shīʿa teachings in Indonesia is believed to have begun with the arrival of Islam in the archipelago around the 8th century CE, particularly in Aceh and North Sumatra.[46] According to Hasjmy and Zainuddin, early evidence of Islam in Aceh around 800 CE also indicates a substantial contribution of shīʿa in shaping local Islamic culture.[47] Concrete manifestations of these early traces are reflected in various local cultural expressions, religious rituals, and traditional practices exhibiting shīʿa doctrine's distinctive characteristics. Examples include deep reverence for the family of the Prophet Muhammad (*ahl al-bait*), various commemorative rituals such as the remembrance of the tragedy of Karbala on the 10th of Muharram, and various classical Malay literature.

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[45] Suud Sarim Karimullah, "Shāfiʿī Literature in Indonesia: A Historical Account," *Islamica: Jurnal Studi Keislaman* 17, no. 1 (2022): 1–19, https://doi.org/10.15642/islamica.2022.17.1.1-19.

[46] Majid Daneshgar, "Persianate Aspects of the Malay-Indonesian World: Some Rare Manuscripts in the Leiden University Library," *Digital Archive of Brief Notes & Iran Review* 8 (2021): 51–78.

[47] A. Hasjmy and Zainuddin, *Syiah Dan Ahlussunnah; Saling Rebut Pengaruh Dan Kekuasaan Sejak Awal Sejarah Islam Di Kepulauan Nusantara* (Surabaya: PT. Bina Ilmu, 1983).

This pre-modern phase was strengthened by the presence of several prominent shīʿa scholars who actively contributed to the spread of Islam through various literary works and Sufi movements. One of the most representative figures was Hamzah Fansuri, who lived in the 16th century. Through his works, Fansuri explicitly and implicitly demonstrated the strong influence of shīʿa literary works such as *Nahj al-Balāghah*, a famous book containing the speeches and advice of Imam Ali bin Abi Thalib. Hamzah Fansuri's works, which combine Sufism, philosophy, and literature, have contributed significantly to developing Islamic thought in Indonesia.[48] Thus, since the pre-modern period, intellectual interaction between the Nusantara community and shīʿa literature has been intense, shaping a unique pattern of thinking and culture.

In the modern era, particularly after the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979, the development of shīʿa teachings in Indonesia entered a new phase that was more dynamic and controversial. The revolution had far-reaching global implications, not only in the realm of international politics but also influencing the development of Islamic thought worldwide, including in Indonesia. The victory of the Islamic Revolution in Iran, which successfully overthrew a secular and pro-Western authoritarian regime, provided great inspiration for some Muslim intellectuals and activists in Indonesia.[49] They began seeking alternative models deemed more authentic to represent Islam in political and social life. As a result, there was a significant increase in interest in shīʿa thought literature written by revolutionary figures such as Imam Khomeini, Ali Shariati, Murtadha Muthahhari, and Allamah Thabathaba'i. These works began to be translated into Indonesian, including through foundations such as Mizan, the Muthahhari Foundation, and the publisher Lentera.

Translating and disseminating this literature indirectly created a new discourse in Indonesia, creating a highly dynamic and polemical intellectual space. Intellectuals such as Jalaluddin Rahmat, who founded the Muthahhari Foundation in Bandung, became central figures in disseminating shīʿa thought in Indonesia through books, seminars, regular studies, and various other forms of public communication. Muhammadiyah figures such as Amien Rais even experienced stigmatization due to his intellectual openness towards Ali Shariati's ideas. However, along with the growing influence of shīʿa literature in intellectual circles, various negative sentiments and resistance also developed among specific groups in Indonesia who viewed this dissemination as a threat to social stability and Sunni religious identity. This tension was exacerbated by widespread adverse reporting about shīʿa through various online media outlets such as *arrahmah.com, hidayatullah.com, voa-islam.com*, and others, which

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[48] Miswari Miswari, "Reconstruction of the History of Hamzah Fansuri's Life and Recognition of His Works," *Kanz Philosophia: A Journal for Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism* 9, no. 2 (2023): 195–214, https://doi.org/10.20871/kpjipm.v9i2.267.

[49] Husain Heriyanto, "The Role and Contribution of Iranian Scholars to the Islamic Intellectual Tradition in Indonesia from the Past to the Present," *The Civilisational and Cultural Heritage of Iran and the Malay World: A Cultural Discourse, Edited by Syed Farid Alatas and Abdolreza Alami*, 2018, 39–57.

massively disseminated various negative narratives about shīʿa with an approach that was often simplistic and biased.

During the reform era, namely after the fall of the New Order regime in 1998, the development of shīʿa in Indonesia experienced significant acceleration in both institutional and literary aspects. The atmosphere of political democratization in Indonesia provided much greater freedom for the shīʿa community to express themselves openly in public life. During this period, many formal and informal shīʿa-affiliated educational institutions were established, such as YAPI in Bangil, Yayasan Al-Jawad in Bandung, Pesantren al-Muthahhari in Bandung and Yogyakarta, Islamic College for Advanced Studies in Jakarta, and various other institutions spread widely from Aceh to Papua. These institutions functioned as centers for Islamic education and served as active agents in sending Indonesian students to Iran to pursue shīʿa-based Islamic studies in Qum.[50]

At the academic level of Islamic universities such as UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta, and UIN Maulana Malik Ibrahim Malang, as well as various other Islamic universities, there has been an integration of shīʿa literature into the academic curriculum, marked by the presence of Iranian Corners that house books donated by Iran.[51] This demonstrates growing academic recognition of the presence of shīʿa Islamic thought in Indonesian Islamic academic discourse. The role of literary media has also expanded with the emergence of various publishers that regularly print and publish books on shīʿa themes, including theological, philosophical, and socio-political works.

Publishers such as Mizan, Lentera, Rosdakarya, and YAPI Bangil have succeeded in making shīʿa literature part of the increasingly influential contemporary Islamic discourse. In addition, the penetration of shīʿa literature into the Indonesian public sphere has been strengthened by the presence of digital platforms and online media, effectively conveying shīʿa Islamic views to a broader audience.

Websites such as Ahlul Bait Indonesia (ABI), Islamic Cultural Center Jakarta, IJABI, Muslimedianews, and Liputan Islam have emerged as a response to negative narratives and offer more balanced and comprehensive information about shīʿa Islamic thought. The presence of these media outlets is informative, educational, and clarifying, providing a more open space for dialogue for the Indonesian public to learn about shīʿa directly from its sources. Thus, from the pre-modern period, through the post-Iranian Revolution era, to the reform era, the development of shīʿa literature in Indonesia demonstrates a complex dynamic rooted in historical interactions, intellectual transformations, and evolving political circumstances. This complexity reveals that shīʿa is not merely a static religious entity but an integral part of the intellectual and cultural dynamics of Islam in

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[50] Dahlia Lubis and Syarifah Rahmah, "Education Movement of Shia Group in Contemporary Indonesia," *Journal of Contemporary Islam and Muslim Societies* 5, no. 2 (2022): 224–49, https://doi.org/10.30821/jcims.v5i2.9654.

[51] Labibah Zain et al., "The Implementation of Digital Humanities in the State Islamic University Libraries in Indonesia," *Khizanah Al-Hikmah: Jurnal Ilmu Perpustakaan, Informasi, Dan Kearsipan* 12, no. 1 (2024): 39–48, https://doi.org/10.24252/kah.v12i1a4.

Indonesia, continuing to enrich discourse and expand the horizons of Islamic thought within Indonesia's pluralistic and multicultural society.

Conclusion

Shīʿa literature in Indonesia has developed not merely as a reflection of the plurality of Islamic schools of thought, but more importantly as an essential indicator of the intellectual dynamics in the context of social, political, and cultural transformation among Indonesian Muslims. Its existence indicates that Indonesian Islam is not static, but instead continues to expand its epistemological horizons, where Islamic discourse is no longer monopolized by the majority, but is beginning to open up to alternative contributions, including those from the shīʿa intellectual tradition. In this landscape, institutions such as the Islamic Boarding School Foundation (YAPI), an academic network involving lecturers and students from various Islamic universities, as well as publishers such as Mizan and Lentera, play a strategic role in disseminating shīʿa religious thought and texts to the public sphere. However, the acceptance of this literature is not without obstacles.

Amidst efforts to build healthy inter-sectarian interaction, there are still structural biases in the publication and distribution of discourses and limited access to essential archives that hold a wealth of classical and contemporary shīʿa literature. Even in mainstream academic discourse, the representation of shīʿa literature is often marginalized or read within a narrow framework, not infrequently with polemical content that obscures the potential for constructive scholarly dialogue. However, this development also reflects a new awareness among some Indonesian Muslims to acknowledge the existence of other schools of thought and embrace them as intellectual partners in building a more inclusive and reflective Islamic discourse responsive to the times' complexities. In this context, shīʿa literature is no longer merely a document of sectarian identity, but an alternative window to re-read Islamic tradition in a more critical, historical, and multidimensional way. The challenge is expanding this epistemological space so that it does not remain merely symbolic but becomes part of the mainstream introduction of Islamic knowledge in Indonesia. Therefore, future studies need to explore further the acceptance of shīʿa literature in sunni institutions and map out intersectional discourses comprehensively to nurture diversity within the Islamic scholarly tradition in Indonesia.

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