



Methods and characteristics of writing the books of shia ulama

Muhammad Hasnan Nahar

Faculty of Islamic Studies, Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, Indonesia

muhammad.nahar@ilha.uad.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

This article has undergone peer review and was presented at the Islam in World Perspectives Symposium 2024 on August 14, 2024

Keywords

method, book, hadith, interpretation, shia

ABSTRACT

Shia is a sect in Islam that emerged after the *tahkim* incident during the companions era. The change in the motivation of Ali bin Talib's supporters from a political movement to a theological movement gave rise to a new teaching, namely imamate or believing that there were twelve caliphs after the Prophet Muhammad. This had an impact on the emergence of a new style in the hadith tradition and interpretation of the Qur'an, through the intermediary of Shia muhadists and their books such as al-Husain ibn Sa'id who wrote the book *Al-Mukmin* and the Shia mufasir and his book Abu Zahrah who wrote the book *Minal I'jaz Al-Balaghy Wal Adady Lil Qur'an*. Even though they have the same background, they both have different methods and characters in writing books and presenting Shia teachings. Like al-Husain ibn Sa'id who does not mention much in his book about Shiite teachings, but rather general discussions that are often encountered by the public. Meanwhile, Abu Zahrah mentions a lot in his book about Shiite teachings, especially those related to the number 12 and the teachings of the Imamate.

This is an open access article under the [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



Introduction

The *tahkim* incident has divided the Islamic world into two regions and a caliphate. Ali bin Abi Talib in the east, covering the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq and Persia. And Muawiyah in the west, covering Syria and Egypt. (Audah, 2003) This had a lasting impact by giving birth to a large group in Islam, namely the Shiite group. Its emergence was a reaction from Ali's supporters to the *tahkim* incident as a political stance, but over time it changed to a theological stance. The influence of Jewish ideology pioneered by Ibn Saba' made support for Ali bin Abi Talib turn into excessive love and even led to the cult of Ali.

Faith is a belief that penetrates into the heart, with full confidence, is not mixed with doubt, and has an influence on outlook on life, behavior and daily actions. (Qardlawy,

1983) In Shia, the pillars of Islam are called *furu'addin* and the pillars of faith are called *ushuluddin*. Belief in Allah in Sunni, in Shia is called *at-tauhid*. Belief in prophets, apostles, books and angels is called *nubuwwah*. Belief in the last day is called *al-maad*. Faith in qadha and qadhar is called Allah's justice, *'adalah*. As well as imamate, believing in the leadership and testament of the Prophet Muhammad to the ahlulbayt. (Sahidin, 2003) Regarding the *ushuluddin* part of the Shi'a, namely the imamate, in this case the Shi'a Itsna Asyariyah believe that there were twelve caliphs after the Prophet Muhammad, namely Ali bin Abi Talib, Hasan bin Ali, Husain bin Ali, Ali bin Husain, Muhammad bin Ali, Ja'far bin Muhammad, Musa bin Ja'far, Ali bin Musa, Muhammad bin Ali, Ali bin Muhammad, Hasan bin Ali and Muhammad bin Hasan or known as Imam Mahdi. (Nusantara, 2014)

In the hadith tradition and the tradition of Qur'an interpretation, the Shiite group also has its own scholars and books, including al-Husain ibn Sa'id who wrote the hadith book *Al-Mukmin* and Abu Zahrah who wrote the book commentary *Minal I'jaz Al-Balaghy Wal Adady Lil Qur'an*. The two books have different methods and characteristics, but have similarities in the content of Shiite teachings in them. Through this research the author will discuss the author's biography, methods, systematics and Shiite understanding of the book *Al-Mukmin* and the book *Minal I'jaz Al-Balaghy Wal Adady Lil Qur'an*.

Discussion

1. Book of *Al-Mukmin*
 - a. Writer biography

His full name is al-Husain ibn Sa'id ibn Hammad ibn Mihran al-Ahwazi and is better known by the nickname Abu Muhammad. He came from Kuffah, but then together with his brother, al-Hasan ibn Sa'id, he headed to the city of Ahwazi, where he later became known as al-Ahwazi. His brother, al-Hasan ibn Sa'id, is also known by the nickname Dandan. And they are both descendants of Ali ibn al-Husain.

Al-Husain ibn Sa'id lived in the same era as Imam al-Ridha, Imam al-Jawad and Imam al-Hadi, and narrated hadith from all of them. It is for this reason that his name is mentioned throughout generations which can be found in biographical books and the names of people who narrated the hadith. He received a lot of praise and praise from his friends and scholars who wrote about him. They praised al-Husain as a trustworthy person.

One example is Sheikh al-Tusi who praised him in two books written by *al-Rijal* and *al-Fihristas* in the form of *al-'Allamah al-Hilli* in his *al-Khulasah* describing al-Husain as "A very trustworthy person and he was very famous about it." Abu Dawud also described him as "Very trustworthy and a very noble person." Meanwhile, Ibn Nadim praised the two brothers by saying "al-Husain and al-Hasan are the two sons of Sa'id

who really understand the science of law, hadith and adhere to some Shi'ite knowledge. (al-Ahwazi, 2002)

b. Method

Al-Husain ibn Sa'id and his brother al-Hasan ibn Sa'id wrote more than 30 books of hadith. Some of these books are: the Book of Ablution, the Book of Prayer, the Book of Zakat, the Book of Fasting, the Book of Hajj, the Book of Marriage, the Book of Talaq, the Book of Oaths, the Book of Trade, the Book of Taxes, the Book of Freeing Slaves, the Book of Creeds, the Book of Animal Slaughter, the Book of Taqiyah, the Book of Hudud and others. (al-Ahwazi, 2002)

The hadith bookkeeping method used by al-Husain was the *Jami'* method. Because the books of hadith cover all religious discussions. Then, if you look at the discussion of each book, it is a thematic method. Because in one book he collects hadiths with the same theme. The hadiths contained in the book *Al-Mukmin* are hadiths taken by al-Husein from several hadith books compiled by Shiite hadith scholars. Such as *Jami' Bihar Al-Anwar* by al-Majlisi, the book *Al-Kafi* by al-Kulaini and *Al-Mustadrak* by al-Thabrasi.

c. Systematics

The following is the systematics used in the book *Al-Mukmin*:

No	Chapter Name	Hadith Number
1	باب شدة ابتلاء المؤمن	1 – 50
2	ما خص اهلل بو المؤمنين من الكرامات واليواب	51 – 83
3	باب ما جعل اهلل بين المؤمنين من الخاء	84 – 92
4	باب حق المؤمن على أخيو	93 – 106
5	باب ثواب قضاء حاجة المؤمن وتنفيس ربو وإدخال الرفق عليو	107 – 145
6	باب زيارة المؤمن وعبادتو	146 – 158
7	باب ثواب من أطعم مؤمنا أو سقاه أو ساه أو قضى دينو	159 – 170

8	باب ما حرم الله (جلّ جلالو) على المؤمن من حرمة أخيو المؤمن	171-201
---	---	---------

d. Hadiths in the Book of *Al-Mukmin*

The author will quote several hadiths from chapters I to chapter VIII:

وعن أبي جعفر (ع) قال: قال رسول الله عجباً للمؤمن، إنّ الله لا يقضي قضاءً إلاّ كن خيراً له، فإن ابْتُلِيَ صَبْرًا، وَإِنْ أُعْطِيَ شُكْرًا

Meaning: *From Abi Ja'far said: The Messenger of Allah said, "How beautiful a believer is, indeed Allah does not make a decree unless it is good for him, if you are given a trial then be patient, if you are given sustenance then be grateful."* (hadith number 46, chapter I) (al-Ahwazi, 2002)

وعن أبي عبد الله (ع) قال إنّ المؤمن ليزهّر نوره لأهل السماء كما تزهر نجوم السماء لأهل الأرض

Meaning: *From Abi Abdullah said: "Indeed, the light of a believer shines on the inhabitants of heaven like a star shines on the inhabitants of the earth."* (hadith number 54, chapter II) (al-Ahwazi, 2002)

وعن أحدما (ع) أنه قال المؤمن أخو المؤمن الجسد الواحد، إذا سقط منه شيءٌ تداعى سائر الجسد

Meaning: *From Ahdama he actually said, "A believer and other believers are one body, if one part is missing, it will have an influence on the other body."* (hadith number 85, chapter III) (al-Ahwazi, 2002)

وعن أبي جعفر (ع) أنه قال من أدخل على رجلٍ من شيعتنا سروراً فقد أدخل على رسول الله (ص)، و كذلك من أدخل عليه أذىً أو غمّاً

Meaning: *From Abi Ja'far, he said: "Whoever can make a Shiite happy will actually make the Messenger of Allah happy, as will those who offend us and make us sad."* (hadith number 189, chapter VIII) (al-Ahwazi, 2002)

2. Book *Minal I'jaz Al-Balaghy Wal Adady Lil Qur'an* book.

a. Writer biography

The author did not find a biography of Abu Zahrah in his translation of the book. However, throughout the study carried out on the book *Minal I'jaz Al-Balaghy Wal Adady Lil Qur'an*, it is known that Abu Zahra was influenced by Ir. Abdur Razaq with his work *Al-I'jaz Al-Adadiy Lil Qur'anul Karim* and Dr. Rosyad Khalifah with *Mu'jizah Al-Qur'anul Karim* to count the words in the Koran. (Al-Najdi, 1990)

Rosyad Khalifah is known for assuming that the Al-Qur'an is organized based on the number 19, as the word from the first verse of the Al-Qur'an, namely *بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ*, namely *بِسْمِ*, is mentioned 19 times. The word *ar-rahman* is repeated 57 times which is the result of multiplying the numbers 3 and 19. The word *ar-rahim* is repeated 114 times which is the result of multiplying the numbers 6 and 19. (Al-Kahil, 2008)

b. Systematics

Abu Zahrah in his book pays great attention to the involvement of numbers to show the miracles of the Qur'an it contains. The number of mentions of a word in the Qur'an is then linked to various facts related to that word.

Some examples are everyday things, such as the number of hours in a day. The word *sa'ah*/hour is mentioned in the Qur'an 24 times, the same as 24 hours in a day, mentioned in *Al-A'raf*: 187, *At-Taubah*: 117, *Yunus*: 45, *Al-Hijr*: 85, *Al-Kahf*: 21, *Maryam*: 75, *Thaha*: 15, *Al-Anbiya*: 49, *Al-Mukminun*: 7, *Al-Furqan*: 11 (twice), *Al-Ahzab*: 23, 63, *Al-Mukmin*: 40, *Ash-Shura*: 17, 18, *Al-Zukhruf*: 43, *Ad-Dukhan*: 32, *Al-Jatsiah*: 32, *Al-Ahqaf*: 35, *Muhammad*: 18, *Al-Qomar*: 46 (twice), *An-Nazi'at*: 42. The verses above contain the word *al-sa'ah*, each of which is preceded by a *harf* and not preceded by *isim* or *fi'il*. (Al-Najdi, 1990)

Or regarding the series of prayers, the first of the words *shalawat* is mentioned five times, equal to the number of obligatory prayers a day and night, found in *Al-Baqarah*: 157, 238, *At-Taubah*: 99, *Al-Hajj*: 40, *Al-Mukminun*: 9. (Al-Najdi, 1990)

The number of rak'ahs of fardhu prayers with the mention of the word *faradha* (obligations that must not be abandoned) is mentioned in the Qur'an 17 times, the same as the number of rak'ahs in fardhu prayers for one day, found in *Al-Baqarah*: 197, 236 (mentioned two times), 237 (mentioned three times), *Al-Qashash*: 85, *Al-Ahzab*: 38, 50, *At-Tahrim*: 2, *An-Nur*: 1, *An-Nisa*: 7 (mentioned twice), 11, 24 (mentioned twice), *At-Taubah*: 60. (Al-Najdi, 1990)

The word *sujud* is found in the Qur'an 34 times, just as the number of prostrations performed in the fardhu prayer is 17 rak'ahs, and two prostrations are performed in each rak'ah so the total is 34 times, found in *Al-Baqarah*: These 34 verses are the thirty-fourth verse in Surah Al-Baqarah, which is the first letter which mentions the word prostration which is the same as the number of daily prostrations, in verse *Al-A'raf*: 11 (mentioned twice), 12, 206, *Al-Isra'*: 11, 61 (mentioned twice), *Al-Kahf*: 50, 61, *Thaha*: 116 (mentioned twice), *Al-Hajj*: 18, 77, *Al-Furqan*: 60 (mentioned twice), *Fushilat*: 37, 47, *An-Najm*: 62, *Ali Imran*: 43, 113, *Al-Hijr*: 30, 33, *Shad*: 73, 75, *Al-Baqarah*: 24, *An-Nisa*: 102, *Ar-Rad*: 15, *An-Nahl*: 49, *An-Naml*: 24, 25, *Al-Insyiqaq*: 21, *Al-Insan*: 26, *Al-Alaq*: 19. (Al-Najdi, 1990)

Down to details such as the wiping done during ablution. The word *imsahu* (plural command for wiping) is mentioned in the Qur'an 3 times, the same as the number of obligatory wipes in ablution, namely wiping the head, wiping the right foot and wiping the left foot, found in *An-Nisa*: 43, *Al-Maidah*: 6 (mentioned twice). (Al-Najdi, 1990)

Findings

1. Shia Understanding and Criticism of the Book

a. Shia understanding in *Minal I'jaz Al-Balaghy Wal Adady Lil Qur'an*

Starting from the number of caliphs after the Prophet, Abu Zahrah said that the Muslims agreed in the authentic book (Bukhari, 1999), the Prophet stated that the number of caliphs after him was 12 people. Their number was the same as the number of the nuqaba of the children of Israel and the same as the number of hawari of Isa. The number of naqaba of the children of Israel is 12 naqib, also mentioned in the twelfth verse of Surah *Al-Maidah*: "And indeed Allah has taken the covenant from the children of Israel and We have appointed among them 12 leaders (naqib)."

In the Qur'an the word imam is mentioned 12 times, located in *Al-Baqarah*: 124, *Hud*: 17, *Al-Furqan*: 74, *Al-Ahqaf*: 12, *Al-Hijr*: 79, *Yasin*: 12, *Al-Isra*': 17, *At-Taubah*: 12, *Al-Anbiya*: 73, *Al-Qashash*: 5, 41, *Al-Sajdah*: 24. (Al-Najdi, 1990)

Just like the words of the Messenger of Allah who gave a testament that the number of imams/caliphs after he died would be 12 priests, this is the same as the number of words of Allah's testament to his creatures as mentioned in *Ash-Shura*: 13 (mentioned twice), *Al-An'am*: 144, 151, 152, 153, *An-Nisa*: 12, 131, *Al-Ankabut*: 8, *Luqman*: 14, *Al-Ahqaf*: 15, *Maryam*: 31. (Al-Najdi, 1990)

Continue with the description of *al-musthafun* (chosen people) after the Prophet. The word *ishthafa* has the meaning that Allah has appointed chosen people "from" "and" for His creatures, mentioned 12 times in *Al-baqarah*: 132, 139, 247, *Ali Imran*: 33, 42 (mentioned twice), *An-Naml*: 59, *Az-Zumar*: 59, *Al-A'raf*: 144, *Fatir*: 32, *Al-Hajj*: 75, *Shad*: 47. (Al-Najdi, 1990)

Abu Zahra connects the word *ya'shimu* which is mentioned 12 times with the many caliphs after the Prophet who were preserved and truly purified by Allah from all sins, which are located in *Al-Ma'idah*: 67, *Al-Ahzab*: 17, *Hud*: 43, *An-Nisa*: 146, 175, *Ali Imran*: 101, 103, *Al-Hajj*: 78, *Yusuf*: 32, *Yunus*: 27, *Hud*: 3, *Ghafir*: 33. (Al-Najdi, 1990)

Abu Zahrah said the verse *Al-Maidah*: 67 was revealed on the Hajj *wada'*, after the Prophet returned from the Hajj, at Ghadir Khum Allah told Muhammad to convey a message to the people that the first caliph after him was Ali bin Abi Talib. Then the Messenger of Allah said: "Don't you prioritize me more than yourself?", then they answered "Of course, Rasulullah", then the Prophet continued his words "Whoever sees

me as their leader, then Ali is the leader. O Allah, lead those who make them leaders, and make enemies of those who are enemies, help those who help them and humiliate those who humiliate them." (Muslim, 1998)

To strengthen his thoughts, Abu Zahrah then raised many words totaling 12 times to support his view of the 12 caliphs who were appointed after the Prophet, such as the word *ali* (family) in *Al-Baqarah*: 248 (mentioned twice), *Ali Imran*: 33 (mentioned twice), *An-Nisa*: 54, *Yusuf*: 6, *Al-Hijr*: 59, 61, *Maryam*: 6, *An-Naml*: 56, *Saba'*: 13, *Al-Qamar*: 34. (Al-Najdi, 1990)

The word *malik* (ruler) in *Yusuf*: 43, 50, 54, 72, 76, *Al-Kahf*: 79, *Al-Baqarah*: 246, *An-Naml*: 34, *Al-Ma'idah*: 20, *Az-Zukhruf*: 77, *Yasin*: 71. (Al-Najdi, 1990) The word *amil* (executor of orders) in *Ali Imran*: 95, 136, *Al-An'am*: 135, *Hud*: 39, *Az-Zumar*: 39, 74, *Hud*: 121, *Al-Mukminun*: 63, *Ash-Shaffat*: 61, *Fushilat*: 5, *At-Taubah*: 60, *Al-Ankabut*: 58. (Al-Najdi, 1990)

The word *ijtaba'* (appointed/chosen) in *Al-Hajj*: 78, *An-Nahl*: 121, *Thaha*: 122, *Al-Qalam*: 50, *Al-Qashash*: 57, *Al-A'raf*: 203, *Maryam*: 58, *Al-An'am*: 87, *Ali Imran*: 179, *Ash-Shura*: 13, *Yusuf*: 6, *Saba'*: 13. And the word *Shi'a* itself, is located in *Ash-Shaffat*: 83, *Al-Qashash*: 4, 15 (mentioned twice), *An-Nur*: 19, *Maryam*: 69, *Al-Hijr*: 10, *Al-An'am*: 65, 159, *Ar-Rum*: 32, *Al-Qamar*: 51, *Saba'*: 54. (Al-Najdi, 1990)

b. Criticism of the Book of *Al-Mukmin*

In each hadith sanad contained in the *Al-Mukmin* book it is not listed in full, only one narrator is mentioned as the source of the hadith. Like Zurarah, Abi Ja'far, Abi Abdullah, Abdullah ibn Sinan and Ya'qub ibn Shu'aib. Several hadiths are listed in the *Al-Mukmin* book. Throughout the author's reading of the book, there are not too many shades of the Shi'ite school of thought listed in the hadiths, although there are some of them.

c. Criticism of the Book *Minal I'jaz Al-Balaghy Wal Adady Lil Qur'an*

Abu Zahrah in determining the relationship between the number of mentions of words in the Al-Qur'an and the explanation seems forced. One example, when searching for the word *sa'ah* (hour), was searched in *mu'jam al-mufahras li al-fadh al-qur'anul karim*, the word *as-sa'ah* was found 48 times, which did not match the number of hours in a day should be 24 hours. Because it did not match the number 24 indicated by the word *al-sa'ah*, Abu Zahrah changed his method. Previously searched using the keyword *sa'ah* alone, it was found 48 times, then the word *sa'ah* was found 24 times when the word was preceded by a letter. What this actually means is that the word *sa'ah*, which means clock, is mentioned 24 times, the same as 24 hours in a day when more specific keywords are used, when looking in general the word *sa'ah* is mentioned, the number 48 is what is found.

The relationship between the mention of the number of words totaling 12 in the Qur'an and the ideology of Imam 12 is mentioned a lot, namely the words *imam*, caliph, *washi* (testament), *al-ashhad* (people who testify), *hum al-muflihun* (people who lucky person), *ashab al-jannah* (inhabitants of heaven), *ishthafa* (choose), *ya'shimu* (maintain purity), *ali* (family), *malik* (ruler), *amil* (executing government), *ijtaba* (appoint/choose), *al-birr* from the words *al-abrar* (good), shi'ah (follower), *nujum* (star), *ruhban* (saint). Of the 34 existing chapters, 17 chapters are mentioned related to the number 12.

And there is no bibliography in it, making it difficult for writers to find other sources.

Conclusion

The Shia Islamic group has its own thinkers and books, including al-Husain ibn Sa'id who wrote the hadith book *Al-Mukmin* and Abu Zahrah who wrote the book of interpretation of *Minal I'jaz Al-Balaghy Wal Adady Lil Qur'an*. Even though they have the same religious background, they both have different methods and characters in writing books. Like al-Husain ibn Sa'id who does not mention much in his book about Shiite teachings, but rather general discussions that are often encountered by the public. Meanwhile, Abu Zahrah mentions a lot in his book about Shiite teachings, especially the words in the verses of the Koran which relate to the number 12 and the teachings of Imamah.

References

- al-Ahwazi, A.-H. I.-K. (2002). *Kitab Al-Mukmin*. Qum: Ansariyan Publications.
- Al-Kahil, A. a.-D. (2008). *Misteri Angka 7*. Jakarta: Sahara.
- Al-Najdi, A. Z. (1990). *Al-Qur'an dan Rahasia Angka-Angka*. Bandung: Pustaka Hidayah.
- Audah, A. (2003). *Ali Bin Abi Thalib*. Jakarta: Litera Antar Nusa.
- Bukhari, I. (1999). *Shahih Bukhari*. Riyad: Darussalam.
- Muslim, I. (1998). *Shahih Muslim*. Riyad: Darussalam.
- Nusantara, T. P. (2014). *Studi Komparatif Buku: Mengenal & Mewaspada Penyimpangan Syi'ah Indonesia*. Jakarta: Penerbit Titisan.
- Qardlawy, Y. (1983). *Iman dan Kehidupan*. Jakarta: Penerbit Bulan Bintang.
- Sahidin, A. (2003). Memahami Sunni Syi'ah. *Ma'arif*, 31-51.