THE ROLE OF MADRASAH IN THE SPREAD OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION DURING THE SAFAWI DYNASTY IN PERSIA

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Abstract

Madrasahs played an important role in the dissemination of Islamic education during the Safawi dynasty (1501-1736) in Persia, particularly in strengthening Twelver Shi'ism as the state's official ideology. As centers for teaching religious sciences, philosophy, Islamic jurisprudence (fiqh), and various other fields of knowledge, madrasahs became effective tools for shaping the religious identity of Persian society. Numerous madrasah were established in major cities like Isfahan, Qazvin, and Tabriz, serving as hubs for education and the training of scholars. Intellectuals in these madrasahs disseminated Islamic teachings through classical texts, lectures and intellectual discussions. With political and economic patronage from the Safawi rulers, madrasahs not only reinfirced the religious identity of society but also served as strategic instruments for legitimizing the dynasty's rule, transforming Persia into an intellectual center of shiah Islam and a driver of social and religious transformation.

Keywords : *Madrasah; Knowledge; and The Safawi Empire; Shia Islam, Islamic Education*

INTRODUCTION

At that time, Islam achieved economic progress in the Safavid region. This progress also contributed to the Safavid dynasty's achievements in advancing education and art. Islamic history records that Persia was known as a nation with a high civilization and played an important role in the development of education and science. Therefore, it is not surprising that the scientific tradition flourished during the Safavid era (Al-Hadab, et al: 2022).

Islamic history records that the Persians were known as a nation with a high civilization and had a major contribution to the development of science. At that time, the scientific tradition continued to grow rapidly until it reached its peak. Compared to two other Islamic empires at the same time, namely the Ottoman Turkish Dynasty and the Mughal Dynasty in India, the Safavid Dynasty showed more prominent success. In the Safavid court, there were a number of prominent scientists who were often present in various assemblies. One of them was Baha al-Din al-Syaerazi, a generalist in science. In addition, there was sadar al-Din al-Syaerazi, a philosopher, and Muhammad Baqir Ibn Muhammad Damad, a philosopher, theologian and historian. Muhammad Bagir is also known for his observations on the life of bees (Muhaimin, et al: 2024).

The development of science during the Safawi Dynasty was reflected in the number of universities and educational institutions that were established. At that time, there were 48 universities, 162 mosques, and 446 madrasas (Rahim & Haif: 2013) which became centers of education and teaching. In history, the Persians are known as an advanced civilization and have a major contribution to the development of science. This condition became more prominent during the reign of Abbas I, who succeeded in reviving the glory of ancient Persia through the renaissance era. Under his leadership, state stability was achieved, creating an environment conducive to economic and scientific progress. Such progress was seen in the establishment of a number of universities and educational institutions during the Safavid dynasty. There were about 48 educational institutions, 182 mosques and 446 madrasas established during that time. Most of

these schools and institutions were founded by members of the royal family, while the rest were founded by philanthropists or wealthy individuals, who were generally recognized through educational institutions such as madrasas (Nata: 2011).

In addition to madrassas, the development of education is also evident in the continued advancement of philosophy into the modern era, as well as the opening up of space for poetry (Karim: 2011). Outside the madrassa, the transformation of education is seen through the continued development of philosophical thought into modern times and the increasing acceptance of poetry. The scientific and civilizational legacy of the Safavid dynasty is still preserved in various cities in Iran. For example, in Qum there are institutions of higher learning such as high schools, institutes, universities, research centers, and scientific studies, as well as libraries that archive research results and manuscripts for continued study and development. In Mashad, the large mosque complex surrounding the tomb of Imam Ali Rida (the seventh Imam in the Shia Imamiyah Itsna 'Ashariyyah tradition) (Bahri: 2021), is also equipped with a large library that holds about one million books (Wardani: 2003).

RESEARCH METHOD

The approach in this study uses a qualitative approach and this type of research uses a type of literature study research. Literature study research is research that uses a method of reviewing various literature in the form of books, journals, and articles that support research.

This research uses a qualitative approach which means an approach by describing and analyzing social activities, phenomena, beliefs, events, perceptions, thoughts of people individually or in groups. This research uses data collection methods with documentation methods through written sources. Then when the data has been collected, the step taken by the researcher is to analyze the data using descriptive methods or techniques, then interpretative steps, and then finally making decisions from the research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Madrasahs have an important role in the history of the development of Islamic education, including during the Safawi dynasty in Persia (1501-1736). The Safavid dynasty was known as one of the Islamic kingdoms that made religion the main pillar of government and culture. The following is a discussion of madrassas during the Safawi Dynasty:

The Role of Madrasahs as Institutions of Ulama in Building and Spreading Islamic Education

The Safavid dynasty was founded by Shah Ismail I, who ruled for approximately 23 years, from 1501 to 1524 AD. Although his reign did not show significant changes in the social, political, economic, or cultural fields of education, Shah Ismail I was known as a man of science. In addition, he had a great interest in literature and often wrote poetry in Turkish as a form of self-expression.

The golden age of the Safavid dynasty reached its peak during the reign of Shah Abbas I, who ruled from 1588 to 1628 AD. This period is remembered as an era of great Persian revival, often referred to as the Persian renaissance. In the Shi'a view, the establishment of this dynasty is considered the second renaissance of the Shi'a sect in Islamic political history, after their heyday five centuries earlier. Under Shah Abbas I, culture and science flourished. One of the leading scientific figures of this period was Muhammad Bagir bin Muhammad Damad who excelled in philosophy and exact sciences, religious sciences, especially fiqh, also progressed rapidly, in line with the Shia doctrine that emphasized that Ijtihad was always open. Among the influential

scholars was Baha al-Din al-Amily, while in philosophy, Shadr al-Din al-Syirozi played an important role in bringing innovation. In addition, Qumm developed into a center of Shia culture and research, strengthening the intellectual legacy of the Safavid dynasty (Nur: 2002).

The outstanding intellectual works of this period are the twelve writings produced by Sadr al-Din. These writings include valuable commentaries and insights that reflect the depth of his thought and his contributions to philosophy and scholarship.

The education system in the Safavid era fell into three main types. First, indoctrination-based education, which became the core activity in all educational institutions. The aim was to inculcate Shia teachings to build people's sense of patriotism and encourage devotion to the sect. Second, aesthetically oriented education, with the aim of training students to create works of art that could support the development of industry and commerce. Third, education focused on the military and government administration, aimed at strengthening military power and increasing professionalism in the management of state administration.

The knowledge that developed during this era focused more on theosophical and philosophical thought than on science in general. This theosophy and philosophical thinking was geared towards integrating gnostic Sufism with Shia doctrines. This became apparent when Shah Ismail, at the inception of the Safavid dynasty, established Shia theology as the basis of state theology. Therefore, the development of educational institutions at that time was primarily aimed at strengthening the creed and propagating Shia teachings (Rahim & Haif: 2013).

Shia beliefs and then thoughts are used as a basis for the development of research and the development of science (Maryam, et al: 2012). Realizing that adherents of the teachings he adhered to were a minority group in the Islamic kingdom, King Ismail did not hesitate to invite prominent scholars and clerics to serve as educators aimed at instilling Shiite doctrine. As a complement to the education system, reference books for teaching were imported from various regions. This shows that the educational structure has been well prepared and the learning process is carried out systematically in designated classrooms. The aim of this education is not only to meet the need for teaching staff and teaching materials, but also as a strategic step to instill and spread Shiite doctrine. This initiative was spearheaded by Mir Damad and his student, Mulla Sadra, who combined scriptural teachings, theology, and philosophical reflection to formulate a version of Shia Sufism and build a philosophical foundation that supports individual spiritual awareness and strengthens the loyalty of Shia believers to their imams. The implantation of Shia teachings in the Safavid Kingdom's education system became a milestone in the second revival of Shia Islam, continuing the previous revival in the era of the Buwayhi kingdom. This step was also designed to foster a sense of patriotism towards the kingdom and their group. education during that period was deliberately directed at educating the public and spreading Shia teachings, which functioned as a religious encouragement as well as an effort to spread the message of Shia Islam through the development of their kingdom and government system. Thus, the emergence of the Safavid kingdom became an important foundation in the development of Shia Islam.

The state of education at this time had a strong academic atmosphere characterized by tolerance and freedom of opinion. This freedom began to emerge during the reign of Syah Abbas II, after the previous leadership tended to be more indoctrinative (Suwito, 219). The Safavid dynasty's contribution to the development of science and the advancement of Islamic civilization was significant. Their achievements and ingenuity in various fields are clear evidence of the dynasty's influence. However, the Safavid era did not occur immediately after the establishment of the kingdom under Ismail I, the first king who ruled from 1501 to 1524 AD. This period was the initial stage towards the peak of glory that was later achieved under Shah Abbas I (1587-1629), the fifth king of the Safavid dynasty. However, Ismail I's role remains indisputable as a pioneer and a solid

foundation for future Safavid glory. He shaped the distinctive identity of the kingdom by establishing the Shia sect as the official state religion and strengthened the Safavid position through significant territorial expansion. Thus, Ismail I not only consolidated political power but also laid the ideological and geographical foundations for the kingdom's further development. The Safavid achievements in the madrassa sector were in the educational and religious sciences of Islam, such as, philosophy, sharia law, theology, medical science, mathematics, astronomy, and many more.

a. Philosophy and Theology.
    The Safavid era was characterized by advances in philosophical thought, especially in the field of divine philosophy known as Isyraqi philosophy or philosophy of enlightenment. One of the leading figures in this field was Sadr al-Din al-Syirazi or better known as Mulia Sadra, a great philosopher who died in 1641 AD. In addition, there was also Muhammad Bagir bin Muhammad Damad, a philosopher, theologian, and historian known for his unique research on bees and died in 1631 AD (Maryam, et al: 2012). The Safavid dynasty was instrumental in advancing various disciplines, especially philosophy and theology, which reached their peak during this period. Mulia Sadra made a major contribution through his thoughts in divine philosophy and Isyraqi philosophy, while Muhammad Bagir bin Muhammad Damad enriched the scientific treasury with works in philosophy, theology, and history. This research confirms the role of the Safavid dynasty as a diverse, innovative, and progressive intellectual center (Hasyim & Fatimah: 2011).

b. Fiqh and Shari'ah
    In the 10th and early 11th centuries AD, during the reign of Sultan Ismail, the science of fiqh experienced rapid development. This happened because the state needed laws and sharia laws that were in accordance with the state's official school of thought, the Shia school (Hasyim & Fatimah: 2011). Some of the important works in fiqh produced during this period include: (1) essays on state fiqh (al-Fiqh al-Hukum), which dealt with topics such as taxes, Friday prayers, and various other issues. These matters were previously unknown in the Shia school because it was not yet the official state school, and the Shia scholars of the time agreed that making laws was forbidden during the absence of the twelfth Imam (al-Imam al-Tsani 'Asyar). (2) Large encyclopedias of fiqh containing various discussions and branches of fiqh from the Shia perspective. Some of the monumental works produced in this period include: Jami' al-Maqashid consisting of 13 volumes by Sheikh Ali al-karki, Majma Fa'idah wa al-Burhan consisting of 14 volumes by al-Muqaddas al-Ardabili, al-Hada'iq al-Nadhirah consisting of 14 volumes by Sheikh Yusud al-Bahrani (Hashim & Fatimah: 2011).

c. Hadith Science and Shia Riwayah
    It was during the Safavid period that the Shia scholars started making efforts to collect the traditions that were previously scattered in small books (al-Kurrasah al-Shaqirah). This endeavor marked an important development in the codification and collection of traditions in the Shia tradition. Some of the famous hadith books that appeared during this period include: (1) Al-Wafi, by His Eminence Muhammad Muhsin, better known as al-Faidh al-Kasyani. It consists of 14 volumes and is one of the important works in Shia hadith collection. (2) Wasa'il al-Shia by Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Hurr al-'Amili. This book specifically collects hadith-reports related to fiqh only, totaling 35,686 traditions. (3) Bihar al-Anwar by Muhammad Bagir al-Majlisi. This book is the largest work in the Shiite tradition of hadith and no book of hadith has ever been written as large and comprehensive as this one. bihar al-anwar consists of 25 volumes and covers various religious disciplines such as aqidah, history, morals, and fiqh (Hasyim&Fatimah:2011).

d. Medical and Pharmaceutical Sciences
    In the field of medicine and pharmacy during the Safavid period, not many major works were produced. Most of the works that appeared were only small books that discussed specific

research or served as explanations for major works from the previous period. During this period, there were no new theories in the field of medicine, nor developments or updates to previously existing theories. One of the well-known works from this period is "Zubdah Qawanin al-'Ilaj", written by Muhammad bin Hibatullah al-Sabjawary. This work refers to a text by al-sayyid Isma'il al-Jurjani that was written much earlier, in 538H/1143M. Although there were no significant innovations in medicine and pharmacy during the Safavid dynasty, these works still played a role in preserving and elaborating the medical knowledge that had existed before (Hasyim & Fatimah: 2011).

e. Physical and Art Development

One of the important achievements of the Safavid Dynasty in the field of physical development was the establishment of a new capital, Isfahan (Al-Sayyid: 2005). The construction of Isfahan as the new administrative center reflects significant progress in infrastructure development under the Safavid dynasty. This city plays a crucial role in Iran's political and economic dynamics and is a symbol of the legitimacy of the dynasty's power. In the center of Isfahan there is a large field which functions as a market area, celebration location, and venue for polo games. This square is surrounded by important buildings, including multi-storey shops. On the east side of the square, there is a private mosque built in 1603 and completed in 1618, specifically for the use of the shah. On the south side is the royal mosque, construction of which began in 1611 and was completed in 1629. On the west side there is the Ali Qapu palace which functions as the administrative center of the Safavid dynasty government. Meanwhile, on the north side, there is a monumental structure which is the gateway to the royal market, which includes shops, public baths, mosques and educational institutions. From this main square, a 2.5 mile long road stretched to the palace. Along one side, there are large gardens, the residence of the Shah's haren, as well as the residences of palace officials. The construction of the city of Isfahan not only shows architectural progress during the Safavid Dynasty, but also made it a symbol of glory and a center of political, economic and cultural activity (Mubarok: 2008).

The Safavid dynasty played an important role in the history of Islam, particularly in cementing the Shia sect as the religious and political identity of the state. It reached its peak during the time of Shah Abbas I, who brought political stability, economic prosperity and a scientific and cultural renaissance. The construction of Isfahan as the new capital city became a symbol of the dynasty's splendor.

In the field of scholarship, figures such as Mulla Sadra and Mir Damad made major contributions in the fields of philosophy and theology, while Shia fiqh and hadith saw significant advances. Although there were not many innovations in the field of science, systematic efforts in education succeeded in spreading Shia teachings and building a strong scientific foundation. With a legacy in politics, science, architecture and culture, the Safavid dynasty managed to create a strong and influential identity, making it one of the important milestones in the history of Islamic civilization.

The Influence of Safavid Ideology on Madrasah Curriculum

The Safavid Empire was founded by Shah Ismail I who ruled for about 23 years (1501-1524 CE). During his reign, the major social, political, economic and cultural influences on education were not very visible, although he was known as a man who loved science. Shah Ismail I even had a habit of writing poetry in Turkish, reflecting the dynasty's attention to education. In Islamic history, the Persians who populated this dynasty were known as a civilized nation and played an important role in the development of science and technology. During the Safavid Empire, especially under Abbas I, the scientific tradition made significant progress. The development of science is closely related to the basic principles of Shi'a teaching, which rejects the concept of taqlid absolutely and opens the door to ijtihad forever. The Shi'a believe that ijtihad never stops,

and that one is not only required to do taqlid. They also maintain the view that the existence of mujtahids will continue uninterrupted (Inveronzon: 2014).

The triumph of the Safavid dynasty under Shah Abbas I marked the revival of Persia's past glory. For the Shi'a, the emergence of this dynasty is considered as the second revival of Shi'ism in Islamic political history after its triumph about five centuries earlier. During the reign of Abbas I, culture and science experienced rapid development. Among the leading scientists of the Safavid period was Muhammad Baqir ibn Muhammad Damad, an expert in philosophy and science. In addition, religious knowledge, especially fiqh, also developed rapidly because the Shi'a believed that the door to ijtihad was always open. One of the famous scholars of the time was Bahau al-Din al-Amily. In addition, there was also a famous philosopher, Shadr al-Din al-Syirozi. During the Safavid dynasty, the city of Qumm became the center of Shi'a culture and research.

The success of the Safavid dynasty in the field of scientific development during the reign of Shah Abbas I was also reflected in physical developments, such as the establishment of 162 mosques and 48 educational centers. Some of these educational institutions were established at the initiative of members of the royal family. For example, Dilaram Khanun, the grandmother of Shah Abbas II, founded the "Little Grandmother" madrasah in 1645 and the "Great Grandmother" madrasah in 1647. Shah Safi's daughter Maryam Begun also founded a madrasa in 1703, while Shahr Banu, Shah Husain's younger sister, founded a madrasa for princes in 1694.

In addition to the madrassas established by the royal family, several madrassas were also founded by wealthy figures during the Safavid dynasty. Among them, Zinat Begum, the wife of physicist Hakim al-Mulk Ardistani, founded the Nim Avard madrasa in 1705 CE. Meanwhile, Izzat al-Nisa Khanum, the daughter of Qum merchant Mirza Khan and wife of Mirza Muhammad Mahdi, founded the Mirza Husain madrasa in 1687. The existence of the madrassa reflected the government's serious interest in promoting science. One of the famous intellectual works of this period is Sadr al-Din's twelve writings which include commentaries and suggestions on the Qur'an, as well as discussing traditions of life, polemical stories in theology and metaphysics, and accounts of his travels.

The education system and practices during the Safavid dynasty were generally divided into three types of education. First, indoctrinative education, which became the main curriculum in all educational centers, aimed to strengthen Shi'ism and foster people's patriotism in serving the religious sect. Second, aesthetic education, which focuses on art and craftsmanship, is expected to support the industrial and trade sectors. Third, military education and government management, which aims to strengthen the war fleet for the defense of the government and increase professionalism in the management of state administration.

Theosophical thought and philosophy at that time aimed to unite Gnostic Sufism with some teachings of Shia Islam. This can be understood because, at the time of the establishment of his dynasty, Shah Ismail made Shia theology the state theology. Therefore, the development of educational centers was also directed toward this same goal, which was to strengthen the faith and spread Shia teachings. Scholarly activities were often held in the Court Assembly, covering studies in theology, history, and philosophy (Ismail: 2018).

At this time, the development of philosophical schools was divided into two main streams: the peripatetic philosophy developed by Aristotle and al-Kindi, and the Ishraqi (Illuminationist) philosophy pioneered by Suhrawardi. Peripateticism refers to the philosophy that follows the teachings of Aristotle, with al-Kindi being one of his followers. In his work *Fi Al-Falsafah Al-Ula* (On First Philosophy), al-Kindi defines philosophy as "the highest and noblest human endeavor," because it is used to seek the truth, with the most noble pursuit being contemplation of God. Al-

Kindi refers to Aristotle's view in *Protrepticus*, which states that "learning philosophy is not obligatory, but neither is it in vain." Those who consider it to be in vain must be able to prove its futility in a valid manner, and if they do, it would actually be the same as philosophizing.

Another philosophical school is Illuminationism, or the followers of the Neoplatonism school, one of whose prominent proponents was al-Suhrawardi. According to al-Suhrawardi, conventional Peripatetic philosophy is insufficient to achieve the goals of those seeking God who wish to attain the level of "the experience of wisdom or hikmah," or for those trying to combine discursive methods with inner experience. This final task, he argued, was accomplished in his most famous work, *Hikmah Al-Isyraq* (The Philosophy of Illumination), which later became known as *Filsafat Isyraqiya* (Illuminationist Philosophy) (Habibi: 2016).

For al-Suhrawardi, the essence of "Illuminationist wisdom" is "the science of light." This light, according to him, cannot be defined because it is the most real reality, and because it is the reality that "manifests" all things. The pinnacle of the hierarchy of existence consists of pure lights that form ascending steps. The highest level of this light is the *Light upon Light* (Nūr 'ala Nūr), which is the source of all the light that exists below it.

Throughout Islamic history, Persia has been recognized as a nation with a high civilization that made significant contributions to the development of knowledge. During the Abbasid Caliphate (Saleh: 2022), the Persian people played a crucial role in the advancement of science. Among them, several scholars were often present at the court assemblies, such as Baha al-Din al-Shirazi, a generalist in the sciences; Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi, a philosopher; and Muhammad al-Baqir Ibn Muhammad Damad, a philosopher, historian, theologian, and bee life observer. Additionally, Bahauddin al-Amali, who was not only a theologian and Sufi but also a renowned mathematician, architect, and chemist. He revitalized the study of mathematics and wrote works on mathematics and astronomy that referred to the ideas of earlier scholars (As'adurrofik: 2017). One of the great philosophers of this period was Mir Damad (Muhammad Bagir Damad), who produced philosophical works in both Arabic and Persian, including his famous *Qabasat* and *Taqdisat*. He is also known as a successor to the philosophical traditions of Aristotle and al-Farabi. Compared to the other two dynasties, the Ottoman and Mughal empires during the same period, the Safavid dynasty was far superior in the field of science.

In the field of arts education, the Safavid Dynasty also saw significant development. In 1510, the Timurid School of Painting was relocated from Herat to Tabriz. Bahzad, one of the greatest painters of the time, was appointed as the director of the royal library and overseer of a workshop that produced various manuscripts. Shah Tahmasp was also known as a great artist, producing works such as robe designs, wall decorations, and a number of metal and ceramic artworks. From this art school, the *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings) edition was published, which contained over 250 paintings and is considered one of the masterpieces of Iranian manuscript art. Additionally, Shah Abbas I created various types of paintings, such as battle scenes, landscapes, and royal ceremonies (Agus: 2022).

During the reign of Shah Abbas II, intellectual freedom or intellectual liberalism reached its peak. This was reflected in the implementation of a "policy of tolerance," which emphasized tolerance not only between Shia sects but also between different religions. All differences in views within society were regulated under the supremacy of justice, in line with one of the fundamental principles of Shia teachings, namely the principle of *al-adl* (justice) (Yamani: 2022).

During the reign of Shah Abbas II, women were granted the freedom to express themselves and play active roles in various fields, including education. The equality of women during this period

is reflected in illustrations in the *Shahnameh* manuscript (the longest epic poem in world literature), where women are depicted separately from men, often with a separation symbolized by a tent. This separation can be interpreted as a symbol that women were viewed as equals and given space to participate in various aspects of life on an equal footing. Some scholars interpret the social environment depicted in the manuscript as an indication that women during the Safavid period had equal opportunities to access education, whether in science, religion, or the arts (Dina: 2020).

The advantages of educational institutions during that period include:

1. Full Support from the Royal Family: Educational institutions received full support from the government and the royal family, as education was seen as a means to spread Shia ideology. As a result, these institutions were indoctrination-driven, with Shia curriculum becoming a mandatory subject in all educational institutions.
2. High Participation from Wealthy Patrons: There was significant participation from entrepreneurs and wealthy individuals, as evidenced by the establishment of educational institutions or madrasahs by figures such as Zinat Begum, wife of the physicist Hakim al-Mulk Ardistani, who founded the Nim Avard madrasah in 1705, and Izzat al-Nisa Khanum, the daughter of a merchant from Qum, who founded the Mirza Husain madrasah in 1687.
3. Emergence of Renowned Scholars: The period saw the rise of many famous scholars, such as Baha al-Din al-Shirazi, a generalist in the sciences; Sadr al-Din al-Shirazi, a philosopher; and Muhammad Baqir Ibn Muhammad Damad, a philosopher, historian, and theologian who also conducted observations on the life of bees.

The weaknesses or shortcomings of the educational institutions established during the Safavid Empire were:

1. Lack of Development in Pure Science: There was a limited focus on the development of pure sciences, as the education system prioritized fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) and the spread of Shia ideology over scientific inquiry and advancements.
2. High Sectarian Fanaticism: The strong sectarianism led to an educational system that was highly ideological and theological in nature, which, in turn, provoked resentment and division among segments of the society.
3. State-Centric Educational Institutions: The education system was heavily centered around the ruling authority, which made these institutions vulnerable to mismanagement if the ruler failed to provide attention or support. This was evident after the reign of Shah Abbas I, when educational institutions struggled to survive due to the lack of royal patronage and care.

Several factors that led to the establishment of educational institutions during the Safavid Empire include:

1. Strengthening Shia Ideology and Countering Sunni Influence: Madrasahs were founded to reinforce Shia beliefs and to curb the spread of Sunni ideology. This is evident in the declaration of Shia Islam as the official doctrine of the Safavid state, with harsh measures taken against Sunni views. People with differing beliefs were often imprisoned or executed, creating resentment among parts of the population. As a result, Shia clerics played an active role in educational institutions to ensure the continued presence of Shia teachings in society.
2. Training Loyal Cadres for the Ruling Power: Madrasahs were also established to train loyal followers of the ruler (the king). Several schools founded by the royal family demonstrate that these institutions were used for indoctrinating future political supporters, leading to the

proliferation of madrasahs during Shah Abbas I's reign, many of which had a significant influence on education.

3. Maintaining Control and Gaining Support from Religious Elites: The rulers aimed to maintain control and secure support from religious elites. This is evident in the recruitment of prominent scholars to attend or lead studies in the royal court, which was exclusive to the royal family and high-ranking religious figures. According to George Makdisi, madrasahs were an evolution of the *Masjid Khan* system, meaning they were deeply tied to religious objectives. The cross-regional network created by these institutions, which gradually shifted from geographical schools to more personal ones, gave them an ideological-political function. Therefore, it is clear that the rulers sought to maintain their power and garner support through madrasahs, religious studies, and other educational institutions.

The Strategy of Spreading Islam Through Education in the Safavid Dynasty

The religious movement of the tariqa (Sufi order) is a development that stems from the teachings of Sufism. Initially, tariqa was understood merely as a method or way used by a salik (traveler on the spiritual path), which refers to the path taken by a Sufi to reach the highest level of spirituality in order to purify the soul or self. However, sociologically, tariqa has evolved into a socio-religious institution with a very strong membership bond. Functionally, tariqa has the capacity to develop various strategic roles, such as becoming an educational institution, a da'wah (Islamic mission) organization, an economic institution, and even a socio-political institution that can accommodate the aspirations of its followers (Riyadi: 2014).

Soon after, the tariqa movement gave rise to a new dynasty that contributed to the advancement of Islamic civilization. This great dynasty was the Safavid Dynasty, which adopted a unique strategy to expand its power by combining elements of imamate and military force. The dynasty was founded by Sheikh Safi al-Din and capitalized on the situation following the collapse of the Timurid regime. The followers of the Safavid Dynasty came from the Anatolian people, consisting of small groups from Asia Minor and northern Syria. This movement began in Azerbaijan with the goal of promoting the pure teachings of Islam. The power of the Safavid Dynasty successfully transformed the movement into a highly political and hierarchical organization with abundant wealth. The strength of the Safavid Dynasty did not only rely on the tariqa or Sufi groups, but also combined religious power by uniting various clans. This enabled the establishment of a religious-based dynasty and empire that also incorporated tribal strength, especially from the Shi'a community. The Shi'a were known as loyal followers and defenders of Ali bin Abi Talib and his family (ahl al-bayt), ready to be faithful and defend what they believed in (Azizah & Mawardi: 2023).

In the development of the Safavid Kingdom's civilization, knowledge also grew as the foundation for Islamic education, although its growth was not yet rapid and was not yet centralized around the general development of knowledge. The teaching of Islamic education began to take shape with the establishment of institutions aimed at providing the foundation for Islamic education, though the focus was still more on spreading the teachings of Shi'a ideology. Science and technology are two interconnected aspects that cannot be separated. Science serves as the source of technology, opening up opportunities for various inventions and technical ideas. Meanwhile, technology is the application of scientific knowledge that results in tangible innovations, driving humanity to continually develop and progress. Without science and technology (S&T), it is difficult for a civilization to emerge, let alone develop to the point of being recorded in history and remembered to this day (Syafi'i: 2019).

The formation of moral strength in Persia (Iran) is closely linked to the conditions in the Baghdad region, particularly when the power of the Abbasid Caliphate sank into luxury and imposed various pressures on the Shi'a followers in the city of Kufa. Caliph Ali bin Abi Talib, Salman al-Farisi, and Abu Dzar are considered to have played a significant role in influencing the development of Sufism in Persia and shaping the ideological foundation of Shi'ism that developed in the region (Muhaimin & Iskarim: 2024).

The region of Kufa is known as a city that is considered the center of the Shi'a community and the residence of Abu Hasyim, the first Sufi figure. On the other hand, Abd al-Wahid Ibn Zaid, a loyal follower of Hasan al-Basri, established a special settlement for those who were fond of practicing meditation (uzlah) in Abadan, a region located in the Persian Gulf.

In the early 9th century, Shi'a followers were inspired by the mystical thoughts of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq. This inspiration led to the emergence of the doctrine of *hulul* (the belief in divine incarnation) in Persia, which was popularized by al-Hallaj. However, Sufi teachings during this period faced various attacks and accusations from the Abbasid rulers. Al-Hallaj himself was accused of having ties with the Qaramita movement, which began to oppose the Abbasid rule in the 10th and 11th centuries (Syukur: 2014).

CLOSING

Thus, madrasas not only functioned as religious educational institutions. It also became an important instrument in shaping the social and political structure of the Safavid dynasty. Through madrassa education, Imamiyah Shia teachings were systematically instilled in society, creating a strong ideological foundation to support the legitimacy of dynastic power. The role of madrasas in spreading religious knowledge, forming scholars, and preparing government cadres shows how strategic this institution was in maintaining the stability and identity of the Safavid empire. In the end, the existence of these madrassas during the Safavid dynasty not only influenced the development of education and religion in Persia, but also left an intellectual and spiritual legacy that has an impact until today. These madrassas became an important milestone in making Persia the center of Shia Islamic scholarship, which also influenced the development of Islamic civilization as a whole.

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