

ISLAM AND TERRORISM
INDIAN ULEMAS' RESPONSES: A CASE STUDY OF
ULEMA IN THE DISTRICT OF LUCKNOW

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of*

MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled '*Islam and Terrorism - Indian Ulemas' Responses: A Case Study of Ulema in the District of Lucknow*', submitted by me in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Degree of **Master of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University is my own work. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this university or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

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FOR

Mamma

who taught me to aspire.

&

Baba

who gave me the freedom to follow my aspirations.

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Acknowledgements

In the process of writing this dissertation I was helped and supported by a number of people who I owe my gratitude. I would now count my blessings, one by one. This is the time when I realised that I am truly blessed with people around me.

To start with I would like to thank my Supervisor, Rakesh Gupta for his knowledgeable guidance and for his humility. Apart from being my guide he has been an inspiration to me and it is because of his efforts and insightful analysis that I have been able to produce this work.

I thank my parents for all their love and constant support. It is really difficult to express my gratitude towards my parents in words, still I will try. Heartfelt thanks to mamma for her valuable teachings, emotional assistance and her prayers. Very special thanks to baba for letting me walk my way with faith in me. I need to thank him especially because of his physical assistance; the efforts that he made for my field trip. Thanks to both of them for rearing me with unconditional love.

Next I would like to thank my sisters who are closest to my heart. They have been a mirror to me. Thanks to Eram apa for making me realise my potentials. From the worst to the best of times I have always had her as my confidence and my place of comfort. Thanks to Aqsa for being very patient with my mood swings (as she is also my room mate). She has been an innocent part of my childhood and a very essential part of my JNU years. My relationship with both of them is a perfect blend of friendship and sisterhood. Thanks to both for knowing me the best.

Next in line to be acknowledged are my two deeply cherished friends. There have been people who made me smile, some who made me cry, and there is ALI who makes me smile with a tear in my eye. Thanks to him for being my friend and my close companion. Thanks to Saqib for being my bestest buddy, always beside me. He is one person whom I would not like to lose. Thanks to him for arranging an interview with Maulana Fazlur Rahman. Thanks to both ALI and Saqib for walking in my life with a dash of love, laughter, pain and togetherness.

The people who need to be thanked are my brothers Ali Salman, Ali Faizan and Ali Imran Rizvi, who despite the distance, I know were always there. I need to make a special mention of Sabiha Rizvi for reasons that are known to both of us. Thanks to her for listening to me patiently and for adding a streak of excitement in my dissertation work.

Now I wish to thank my friends in J.N.U. who have seen me grow. Thanks to Shweta Upadhyay for being there when I needed her the most. She has been a very important part of my personal life here. Thanks to Shilpi Srivastava and Chandrashekar for helping me both professionally and personally; for reading my chapters and giving me some useful comments. Thanks to Ekta Singh for understanding me and not judging me on my silliest mistakes. Thanks to Neha Pandey for being the most positive and optimistic being in my life.

I thank Raghavendra Singh for being my friend throughout. Without any second thoughts he has always been there for me. I also need to thank Vijendra Singh for his individual contribution in my life. All three of us have been friends since our M.A. days and have seen this bond growing stronger, and have seen each other growing.

Thanks to Pema Ladhen, Avi Modoli and Jitendra Nayak. All three of them have always been with me. My J.N.U. days have become memorable because of their presence. I have shared a very special bond with all of them, especially Pema. Thanks to Binish Maryam for being a very special part of my J.N.U. memories. Thanks to her for being my confidant.

I also owe my gratitude to Aditi Dayal, Urvasi Gautam, Shriya Chaudhuri for their efforts that positively affected me. Thanks to Samar Pandey for fruitful discussion over this issue and for providing me with some useful study materials.

Thanks to Ashu for sharing the guide!

I would also like to thank the ulema whom I interviewed for this work. A special thanks to Maulana Hamid ul-Hasan for being accommodative and responsive. Thanks to the staff of both J.N.U. and Teenmurti Library. I could smoothly work because of constant assistance offered by Teenmurti staff, where most of my work was done.

Last but not the least I would like to thank the Almighty for blessing me with the most supportive family and friends, for opening ways for me, for helping me in all my endeavours, for giving me an opportunity to be a part of J.N.U. where I learnt so much, and for answering my prayers.

There might be shortcomings in this work, for which I take the responsibility.

Ambreen Agha

INTRODUCTION

CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN ISLAM

“Among the world’s major religions it is certainly Islam that the West has the most difficulty in approaching objectively. The reasons for this are noted in past history. Because of the crusades in the twelfth and the thirteenth centuries many people in the West wanted the religion of Islam to be better known. But the image they portrayed of Islam can be quite accurately qualified as “distorted”. Western opinion about Islam and Muslims was based for centuries on its distorted image.”

-----W. Montgomery Watt

No subject in the present times has been exposed to as much interpretation and critical (mis)understanding as the study of Islam. This dissertation is a birds eye view of positions taken by Muslim clerics in Lucknow within the context of Islamic world. The title of this introductory chapter suggests that there has been interaction between many traditions and changes that continued to make up the world of Islam. ‘Continuity and change aims to define a field of historical sociology concerned with long term continuities and discontinuities in the structures of past societies.’¹ Islam is a dynamic force in the contemporary world. Since the beginning of twentieth century there have been Muslim liberationist and revival movements, with great visibility and influence. Any examination of Islam in the modern world must take the past experience into account to understand the present better, with considering Islam to be a closed doctrinaire persuasion. It allows for life’s plurality to expand its horizons. Since society is always in flux with different conjunctions, they influence different persuasions or introduce different trends in the same persuasion. So, contexts transform texts. It is that makes Islam align with Bath socialism, or movements like Polisario in Sub-Sahara region. It is this that makes Catholicism side with liberation in Latin America, as did Protestantism in the hands of Martin Luther, with capitalism. This holds true for revivalist movements.

¹ See, Wall, Bonfield & Schofield, ‘*Continuity and Change.*’

There are three dimensions for looking at the Islamic resurgence. First, “while discussing the causes of revivalist and fundamentalist movements, analysts often see these movements as emerging from a particular set of circumstances. Such interpretations are important for seeing events and movements in the context of specific conditions in which they occur. However, since movements continue over time and expand, an understanding of their dynamics requires more than an examination of the policies of one ruler or the tension within one society, at a given moment. The second additional analytical dimension is required when one seeks to define the basic nature of such movements and one searches for the basic issues involved. Islamic activist movements have not occurred in isolation from the rest of the world; instead, they have been involved in the broader interactions of modern global history. Therefore, here the relationship of various Islamic movements to the basic dynamics of modern history needs to be examined. The Islamic resurgence may be described as a part of the changing relationships among various regions in the world system of capitalism created by the emergence of an industrial society in the West. Other analysts may see the resurgence in the context of changing natures of political legitimacy and social authority in the conditions created by modernisation. Still others may see it as a theological and social reaction to the implications that modern ideas and institutions have for traditional societies. The common factor in all these approaches is the interaction of the Islamic tradition with the ideas and institutions of modern societies. The major theme is the response of Islam to modernisation and development. The third dimensional approach examines Islam itself. It is argued that Islamic revival is not unique to the modern era, and throughout its history, the Islamic community has faced the challenge of changing conditions. For instance, militant activism has been one feature of the Islamic experience. Activist Islamic groups in the twentieth century have can be seen as having underlying similarities because they are involved in modernisation, but they also can be seen as part of a continuing tradition, and they must be viewed in their Islamic as well as their modern context. The forms the Islamic experience has taken to maintain a continuity that spans the gap between premodern and modern. So by recognising the Islamic dimension, one stands a better chance of avoiding pitfalls of using only an analytical model, which imposes alien categories upon the modern Islamic experience. Thus Islam in the modern era is seen as the interaction of the specific aims and goals of individuals and groups, which are affected by particular local conditions, with the

factors of the dynamics of modern development and the continuity of Islamic tradition.”² The oneness of God, the significance of Muhammad, and the *umma* are basic elements in the continuity and unity of Islamic dimension.

The development of the Islamic community makes it compulsory to look into the history of Islam that shows the interaction of the different forms of the Muslim experience in the context of modern world history. The present work is divided into five chapters, each linked with the other, in tracing the development and growth of fundamentalist Islam. The focus of chapter one is plurality within Islam, wherein, it explores the world of Islam, which is both liberal and fundamentalist. ‘Islam developed several sects in its early period. The first schism appeared between Sunnis and Shi’as on the question of succession to the Prophet. When the Umayyads³ constituted the ruling dynasty the Shi’ites were severely persecuted. The persecution was so serious that the Shi’ites adopted the doctrine of *taqiyya*, that is, dissimulation. They practised the Sunni faith publicly but followed the Shi’i faith in private. The Isma’ilis faced similar persecution at the hands of the Abbasids. Then there was dissension within the Sunnis and one Sunni sect persecuted the other. This internal plurality within Islam became the cause of severe conflict and damnation of

² John Obert Voll, *‘Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World,’* (Westview Press: U.S.A., 1982), pp. 2-4.

³ In AD 661, Mu’awiya b. Abi Sufiyan, governor of Syria since 639 and already acclaimed by his Syrian followers as caliph, religious and political leader of the Muslim state, entered the Iraqi garrison town of Kufa. In historical tradition this event is seen as bringing to an end a bitter period of civil war among the Arabs, achieving the reunification under one ruler of all the territories conquered by them, and initiating the caliphate of the Umayyad dynasty of which Mu’awiya was the founder. The dynasty was to rule for 90 years until its overthrow and replacement by that of Abbasids in 749-50. The Umayyad Dynasty was first to emerge in the Middle East following the conquest of the region by the Arabs. It was under the Umayyads that there began to emerge that class of religious scholars which eventually became the leading authority within Sunni Islam and which is chiefly responsible for shaping the historical and religious tradition which has come down to us. It was this class that emerged largely in opposition to the Umayyad government. The main concept which these scholars developed and worked with was that of the Sunna, which came to be identified with the custom and practice of the Prophet Muhammad, and served as the ideal norm of behaviour for his followers. . not all Muslims, though, accepted the primacy or even the legitimacy of the Sunna, and the Umayyad period also saw the emergence of the two other main forms of Islam, Shi’ism and Kharijism. Tradition dates the fragmentation of a previously united Islam into three main frms that we know today (Sunnis, Shi’ites and Kharijites) to the time of the first civil war which ended with the accession of Mu’awiya to the caliphate. However, just as the development of Sunni Islam was a slow process, which only began under the Umayyads, so too Shi’ism and Kharijism were not born in one instant. Shi’ism has a long and complex history which extends well beyond the Umayyad period, but it was then that its basic character was established. Kharijism rejected all other Muslims, regarding them as infidels and therefore liable to be killed unless they repented and accepted Islam, that is, unless they recognised the Kharijite imam and accepted the Kharijite form of Islam. It is this form of Kharijism which has survived into the modern world. (See, Hawting: 1986, 2-4).

dominated community by the dominant community. It is observed that internal pluralism has caused as much problems as external pluralism.”⁴ It is necessary to add that “true Islam cannot thrive without freedom of thought in every single matter, in every single doctrine, and in every single dogma. Just as Luther broke down the barriers of dogma in Christianity, so also Liberal Islam must be recognised and given its place by the orthodox.”⁵ Thus there have also been different trends, both orthodox and liberal, in Islam.

Contemporary Muslims are faced with the problem of diversity within the Muslim community. “The question raised here is ‘how differences among Muslims are to be approached and how authority is constructed?’ The term Wahhabism refers to contemporary manifestations of radical Hanbali ideological trends which resemble the ideology of the eighteenth century activist, Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, who proclaimed an uncompromising and rigorous monotheism, and called for a return to a pure Islam unadulterated by accretions. This involved a rejection of all things Sufi, all things Shi’ite, all veneration of saints or tombs, and much of the Islamic intellectual tradition. The contemporary heirs of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab often claim no special allegiance to his teachings, claiming simply to represent the pure and timeless Islam in an unadulterated form. Thus they reject the term “Wahhabi,” and claim simply to be part of a larger Salafi movement, which aims at fidelity to the pure teachings of the early generation of Muslims. But whatever the label, the survival and growth in the modern world of an ideology pioneered by Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, and drawing on a common Hanbalite intellectual heritage is undeniable. Wahhabism is an ideology vigorously opposed to pluralism, whether that pluralism is within the circle of Islam or without. The circle of Islam is understood within the Wahhabi worldview, as uniform; anything diverging from this uniformity is not Islam, and must be rejected. Wahhabism, with its bold claim to represent the one true understanding of Islam, represents one important way of responding to the challenge of pluralism: to utterly reject the possibility that religious (even cultural) diversity may be a good thing.”⁶

⁴ Asghar Ali Engineer, *Islam: Challenges in Twenty-First Century*, (Gyan Publishing House: New Delhi, 2004), pp. 237-238.

⁵ Asaf A. A. Fyzee, ‘The Essence of Islam,’ in Mushirul Hasan, (ed.), *Islam in South Asia, Volume IV: The Realm of the Secular*, (Manohar Publishers: New Delhi, 2009), p.163.

⁶ Daniel Brown, *A New Introduction to Islam*, (Blackwell Publishing Limited: U.S.A, 2004), pp. 228-230.

“Partly because of the resources and visibility of Wahhabi Islam in the modern world, non-Muslims are increasingly prone to identify “true” Islam with Wahhabi forms. Hence the idea that Islam is intrinsically at odds with Western values has spread widely, popularised by Samuel Huntington’s “Clash of Civilisations” thesis, and reinforced by fear of terrorism since the attacks of September 11, 2001. There is a good chance, in other words, the ordinary Western lay person, when thinks of Islam, has in mind a version of Islam which has been in some way coloured by Wahhabi ideas. This tendency to think the worst - to identify true Islam only with its most rigorous form – has a distinguished pedigree reaching back at least to Lord Cromer, British High Commissioner in Egypt, who famously declared that “Islam reformed is Islam no longer.” It is one measure of success of Wahhabism that it has for long and so successfully convinced many non-Muslims that it is the real thing.”⁷

Apart from this orthodox side, there is of course, another side to the story. The liberal trend within Islam repeatedly insists that there is no compulsion in religion, and argue that Islam does support an ethic of tolerance and that Muslims can fully embrace pluralism. Liberal critics of the orthodox version show discontent on the increasing influence of fundamentalism and talk of hijacking of Islam. Muslim liberals find in the Qur’an a remarkably open attitude towards religious diversity. “Contemporary Muslims are thus faced with a rather striking range of alternative visions both for the place of Islam in a pluralistic world, and for the place of pluralism in Islam.”⁸

“Islam has come under a shadow. Its spirit has been throttled by fanaticism, its theology has been gagged by bigotry, and its vitality has been sapped by totalitarianism. For the last two centuries efforts are being made to free it from its shackles. It is as if Islam lies imprisoned by a tyrannical government where the writ of habeas corpus doesn’t run.”⁹ With the backdrop of 9/11, which magnified the threat of global Islamic terrorism, the Anglo-American attack on Afghanistan and the illegal invasion of Iraq, came about as the war on terror. The second chapter of this dissertation elaborates a comprehensive yet disputed vision of the war against terrorism. “While the American military power, duly helped by Britain and largely

⁷ Ibid, p. 230.

⁸ Ibid, p.233.

⁹ Asaf A. A. Fyzee, ‘The Essence of Islam,’ in Mushirul Hasan, (ed.), *Islam in South Asia, Volume IV: The Realm of the Secular,* (Manohar Publishers: New Delhi, 2009), p.167.

challenged by most of global opinion, demolished the Taliban and the Ba'athist regimes of those countries, followed by added pressure on Iran, Libya, Syria and Pakistan, it equally exacerbated anti-Americanism across the globe. Following 9/11, a worldwide anti-Americanism, Political Islam and the weakening of post-colonial state-based order especially in the developing world – the three contemporary realities of an uneven global politics – entered a new phase and so has the debate on democracy.”¹⁰

It has been argued that ‘neither an intolerant and discretionary version of Political Islam nor an interest-centred and partisan approach by the Western powers towards the Muslim world may redeem democracy and regional security. Reconstruction, followed by regional co-operation and integration into a just global order, could not only guarantee an enduring democracy in these countries but have reversed the process of fragmentation so evident in both Iraq and Afghanistan.’¹¹

The end of the second chapter opens up the question of religious identity¹², an identity which is linked to the Deoband School. In seeking to understand the workings of Deoband madrasa, this chapter attempts to analyse the debates surrounding madrasa education in South Asia. “The current association of fundamentalist Islam with the Deoband School has much to do with the fact that the Afghan Taliban has been the product of Deoband School of thought. It must be noted here that it was the American corporate greed for gas pipelines as well as its dislike of the Soviet backed regime in Afghanistan which helped to create and sustain the Taliban. The Deobandi mercenary *madaris* created on the Afghan-Pakistan border were very different from those

¹⁰ Iftikhar H. Malik, *'Crescent Between Cross and Star: Muslims and the West after 9/11,'* (Oxford University Press: Pakistan, 2006), pp. 255-256.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 278.

¹² In the Middle Ages religious affiliation was the fundamental component of an individual's outlook, and of his or others' understanding of his place in the world. Only on the secondary level would he think of himself as rooted in a local society, or bound to some local centre of political power. And only as an afterthought might he think of himself as part of a larger national or ethnic community. It is argued that the gradual reversal of the strength of these loyalties marks the close of the Middle Ages. Like many grand themes of Orientalist Scholarship, this observation by Von Grunebaum contains a certain truth. But it also obscures a great deal through oversimplification. The question of religious identity, even as late as the Middle Ages, was in fact a complex matter, and its complexity did not evaporate in the years after its close. Moreover, as anyone who reads a newspaper in the early twenty first century knows, it is by no means clear that, of religious, local, and national identities, the former has been relegated to a place of insignificance. (See, Berkey: 2003, 263).

educational institutions for which Deoband is known in other parts of the subcontinent.”¹³

‘Religious revivalism in the Islamic world had earlier sought to purify Islam itself from social practices that had gradually been incorporated into Islam through cultural borrowing. Now, it seemed time to cast its gaze outside the faith, to purify its world by eliminating not merely the internal enemy but the enemy outside. This radical notion of purification now turned to violence, using the call to *jihad* as a call to arms.’¹⁴

It has been observed that there is a complex heterogeneity within Islam. This plurality within Islam doesn't suggest that there is diversity only among the different sects, but it also points out to diversity within a particular sect. For instance, “with the movement of Islamic revivalism in India, it was observed that there was no single voice among the Deobandis. While Husain Ahmad Madani supported the Congress for a united India, Shabbir Ahmad Usmani and Mufti Muhammad Shafi were in the forefront of the struggle for a separate homeland for Muslims. The Deoband madrasa was, however, controlled by the Madani faction. It is also interesting that the ‘*ulama* associated with this madrasa repudiated Mawdudi's version of Islam¹⁵ as late as

¹³ Arshad Alam, ‘Understanding Deoband Locally: Interrogating Madrasat Diya al-‘Ulum,’ in Hartung & Reifeld (ed.), ‘Islamic Education, Diversity, And National Identity: Dini Madaris in India post 9/11,’ (Sage Publications: New Delhi, 2006), pp. 176-177.

¹⁴ Muzaffar Alam, ‘*The Languages of Political Islam in India*,’ (University of Chicago Press, 2004), p.19.

¹⁵ The most important challenge to the liberal nationalist came from fundamentalist Islam. It is generally accepted that Maulana Abul-A‘la Mawdudi influenced both al-Banna and Qutb, though his influence was more on the latter. Mawdudi was opposed to the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan on the ground that nationalism was against the Islamic concept of unity of the ummah. But he went over to Pakistan on its establishment as soon emerged as a supple politician, as skilled in intrigues as in polemics. Like any ideologist, Mawdudi was not developing an abstruse scholarly theory, but issuing a call to arms. He demanded a universal *jihad*, which he declared to be the central tenet of Islam. (See, Noorani: 2003, 57-58). Mawdudi advocated Islamic renewal and revival. He was not opposed to modern ideas so long as the individual placed them in the proper context of the dominant sovereignty of God. Fundamentalism in British India took its most visible form in Mawdudi's Jam'at. It was not a tariqah or a traditional grouping of *ulema*; it was one of the new style associations that manifested the fundamentalist style in a number of areas. As an organisation in a relatively modern format, it was in a position to be active in the new state of Pakistan. (See, Voll: 1982, 227 & 228). Mawdudi's Jam'at became the most vocal instrument of the Muslim clergy. It preaches reactionary obscurantist ideology. It presents Islam as a political ideology and not as a religious pedagogy. Mawdudi explicitly claimed that Islam was political ideology comparable to communism and fascism. It also preaches militancy. It calls upon Muslims to reorganize themselves into a revolutionary party with the aim of capturing total power. Under Mawdudi, Jam'at preached that the aim of Islam was to establish the sovereignty of God on earth or an Islamic state and not the spiritual salvation of mankind. (See, Tanu Patni, (theses), ‘*Organisational Aspects of Terrorism in India*’)

1970's. It was later in the 1990s, that the disciples of some of those '*ulama* who had opposed Madani's position allowed their seminaries in Pakistan to groom and support young students who became part of the Taliban in Afghanistan. It was they who now controlled and led a new movement for Islamic purification that saw political power as its means of fulfilment."¹⁶

The rising intricate combine of Islamic puritans and political strategists has become a matter of concern, both for the civil society and the state. Terrorism carried out in Islam's name has resulted in a collapse of the entire practice of the faith into one terrible and frightening image of Islam. On the pretext of this slandering, the fourth chapter of this work looks into the responses of Muslim clerics from the district of Lucknow. The study of Lucknow makes one discover its active and vibrant political and cultural world, and also a "rich variety of conflicting values and presuppositions held by diverse individuals and groups of Northern Indian society."¹⁷ The overt and mounting campaign against the *madrasas* has forced the *ulema* to come out of their parochial confines and engage in social and political arenas. This study of *ulema* highlights the issues of Islamic identity, and also sees how questions of identity continue to shape the political life of Islamic community. The pronouncements of leading Indian *ulema* voicing the incompatibility between Islam and terrorism, are a constructive development. But this generalised stand taken by the Muslim clerics remains challenged by the fundamentalist forces.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 20.

¹⁷ Michael H. Fisher, '*A Clash of Cultures: Awadh, the British and the Mughals,*' (Manohar Publications: New Delhi, 1987), p. 1.

CHAPTER ONE

THE WORLD OF ISLAM: LIBERAL AND FUNDAMENTALIST

“The academic discourse on “Islamic studies” has still to proffer explanation as to how so many diverse fields, theories, cultural spheres, disciplines and concept came to be associated with a single word “Islam” and why the discussion remains so one-dimensional where Islam is concerned. In contrast, the study of Western society is characterized by careful scrutiny, attention to precise detail, meticulous distinctions and theory building. Indeed, the study of Western culture continues to develop along such lines and to move in a different direction altogether from the unfortunate approach adopted in the area of “Islam” and the so called Arab world.”¹⁸

It is quintessential to have an understanding of specific peculiarities and dynamics in Islam before judging it as one of the political forces in world politics. This chapter intends to understand the dynamics that come from within the community, accompanied by an overview of the ideas, ranging from liberal to extremist. This understanding can be achieved by realizing the heterogeneity and pluralism within Islam. There are different versions of Islam from Morocco to the Pacific through the Indian Ocean that dominate the international field of religion, politics and culture, each determining a liberal or a fundamentalist variant.

A spectrum of thought has been put forward within the academic discourse for a more nuanced understanding of Islam and its role in world politics; of how Islam should be rethought if Muslims are to come to terms with themselves and with the world at large. Since the Second World War, Islam and politics have combined to form a potent force known as Islamic fundamentalism. “In the West, Islamic fundamentalism is often used as the primary analytical tool for the study of contemporary Islam and politics. It is contended that this visioning of Islam draws on a deep historic antipathy that grew between Islam and the West in the Crusades. With respect to Islam and

¹⁸ Malise Ruthven, *London Review of Books*, (August 1, 1996), p. 27.

the West, there is an element of the past and the present colliding in the formation of opposing positions founded on the mutual fear and distrust.”¹⁹

Post 9/11 the contemporary writings of serious analysts on militant Islam reflect that Islam is viewed as the “Green Menace” by the West. The Muslim world was seen as a menace by the Western Christendom from the time it appeared. “Looking at Islam with a mixture of fear and bewilderment, Christians could not accept Muhammad as a genuine prophet or the authenticity of the revelation given to him. The most widely held belief among Christians was that Islam is a false religion and was invented by men whose motives and character were to be deplored, and propagated by the sword.”²⁰ Centuries of interaction between the two worlds has left a bitter legacy between them. “Separated by conflict and held together by common spiritual ties, Christians and Muslims presented a religious, intellectual and military challenge to each other.”²¹ Schleiermacher argued that Christian and Muslims were “contending for the mastery of the human race.”²² However, Fawaz (2003) holds that this unremitting hostility between the West and Islam is misleading. He argues that the pendulum of Western Muslim relations has swung between rivalry/confrontation and collaboration/accommodation. Although conflict arising from cultural, religious and ideological factors has been the norm, realpolitik and interstate interests have also shaped the relationship between the two civilizations. Locating this relationship in history Fawaz iterates that the Western powers felt no qualms about aligning themselves with Muslims against fellow Christian powers. Throughout the nineteenth century, the French, British and Germans joined ranks with the Ottoman Muslims against their European opponents.

Sophisticated analysts like Arkoun rightly argue that there are “those who exploit Islam for ideological purposes, either to legitimize political aspirations or to delegitimise the efforts of others.”²³ It is observed that after 9/11 Islam emerged as the

¹⁹ Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Fundamentalism Since 1945*, (Routledge: London, 2005), p.3.

²⁰ Fawaz A. Gerges, *Islam and Muslims in the Mind of America*, *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol.588, (Jul., 2003), pp. 73 – 74.

²¹ *ibid*, p. 74.

²² Friedrich Schleiermacher, *The Christian Faith*, (1928), p. 37.

²³ Mohammad Arkoun, translated by Robert Lee, *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers*, (Westview Press: USA, 1994), p. xii.

“new enemy”²⁴, as the most unnerving threat to the western culture, and the Muslim community as unprogressive and anti-modern. Malik’s main hypothesis is that “the current mis-images of Muslims and stereotypical if not totally derisive views of Islam have been rooted in more recent times where colonization, the slave trade, slavery, racism and Orientalism ran the roost.”²⁵

Said in the opening pages of his book points out that “the term ‘Islam’ as it is used today seems to mean one simple thing but in fact is part fiction, part ideological label, part minimal designation of a religion called Islam. In no really significant way is there a direct correspondence between the ‘Islam’ in common western usage and the enormously varied life that goes on within the world of Islam...the media have therefore covered Islam: they have portrayed it, characterized it, analysed it, given instant courses on it, and consequently they have made it known.”²⁶ Talking of media coverage Said argues that a reporter is usually made to cover what he knows nothing about, and eventually comes up with superficial phrases like ‘Shias have a penchant of martyrdom.’ So without any knowledge the reporter takes hold of what is nearest at hand, usually cliché or some bit of journalistic wisdom, resulting in distorted hyped news. Said convincingly proved that the modern western media works overtime to control and manipulate our perceptions of Islam and the Muslim world.

It is not only the lack of knowledge among the western elite that has unleashed a multi – dimensional assault on Islam; it is instead “the restatement of hegemony and power politics and the lack of willingness to allocate due space to Islam that continue to underwrite such attitudes and inanities.”²⁷ These slanted views, in fact emerged a long time back in history with the priests, popes, politicians and poets, all sharing an exaggerated and concurrently undervalued view of Islam as a multiple threat while constantly refusing to accept it as a fellow Abrahamic tradition. Scepticism of the Prophethood and of the authenticity of the Qura’n and viewing Muslim politics as an eternal *jihad* purported to eliminate Christianity and Judaism have been ever present.

²⁴ Iftikhar H. Maik, ‘*Cresecent Between Cross And Star: Muslims and the West after 9/11*,’ (Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2006), p. 37.

²⁵ *ibid*, p. 40.

²⁶ Edward W. Said, ‘*Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How we see the rest of the World*,’ (Vintage Books: New York, 1997), p. i.

²⁷ Iftikhar H. Maik, ‘*Cresecent Between Cross And Star: Muslims and the West after 9/11*,’ (Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2006), p. 40.

This led to endorsing partisan policies against the Muslims and made Islamophobia pervasive and inherent in the minds of the western policy makers, politicians, media, academia and the ordinary masses.

Edward Said outlines his argument and says that “three things have contributed to making even the simplest perception of the Arabs and Islam into a highly politicized, almost raucous matter: one, the history of popular anti-Arab and anti-Islamic prejudice in the West, which is immediately reflected in the history of Orientalism; two, the struggle between the Arabs and Israeli Zionism, and its effect upon American Jews as well as upon both the liberal culture and the population at large; three, the almost total absence of any cultural position making it possible either to identify with or dispassionately to discuss the Arabs or Islam.”²⁸ A long tradition of false images of Asia and Middle East in Western culture served as a justification for Europe’s and America’s imperial and colonial ambitions. There has been persistent “Eurocentric prejudice”²⁹ against Arab-Islamic people and their culture.

The study of this contentious and acrimonious subject reflects various preferences of scholars from distinct backgrounds. Hilal Khashan assesses the social and political conditions that have led to the emergence of militant Islamic groups. He holds western colonialism, failure of the secular nationalist model of government, and cultural and intellectual stagnation responsible for the rise of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East. He argues that “there are obviously many misconceptions about the birth and growth of radical Islam. Western media finds it convenient to implicate a number of ‘pariah’ or ‘mad’ Middle Eastern states – Iran, Syria, Sudan – in stimulating radical Islam and, more important, in keeping it alive. These charges cannot be completely dismissed; however the impact of domestic variables in Arab – Muslim societies and – to a lesser extent – the catalytic role of the west in recent years, seem more relevant in explaining the fundamentalist threat than the unsubstantiated pariah state theory. The ensuing proposition argues in favour of treating Islamic fundamentalism in the Arab world as an indigenous force resulting

²⁸ Edward W Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, (Penguin: New Delhi, 1978), p. 26.

²⁹ Keith Windschuttle, *Edward Said’s Orientalism Revisited*, *The New Criterion*, (Jan. 17, 1999).

from societal decay and unpropitious interaction with the west.”³⁰ He substantiates his argument with the case of Iran’s Islamic Revolution in 1979 (regional factors) and the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan also in 1979 (international factors). The triumph of Iran’s revolution led to hostile relations between the radical Islam and the West. The bombing of the US embassy in Tehran and keeping of American hostages for more than a year severed the ties and preoccupied the West for nearly a decade. Some scholars saw in the Iranian Revolution a reawakening of ancient Islamic trends and practices. Hilal quotes William Beeman, who assessed Khomeini movement as an opposition to the Shah and his American supporters. To Iran the US was an ultimate source of corruption and the supporter of illegitimate authority.

Scholars like Nikkie Keddie found no connection between pre-colonial Islamic trends and the belligerent notions propagated by the militant groups today. She insisted that past Islamic practices were “conservative rather than militant or exclusivist.”³¹ The Iranian Revolution and the hostage crisis had the most formative effect on the U.S. foreign policy and the public view of Islam. ‘Accustomed to seeing their country as the most democratic and generous, Americans were shocked to hear Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini call it the “Great Satan.” One U.S. official noted in 1995, “the Iranian experience extremely conditioned U.S. thinking about the violent, anti – American nature of fundamentalist Islam.”³²

Looking at the international system that stimulated the growth of radical Islam one thinks of the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979. The US was against this invasion and reacted in diverse ways. Khashan highlights the role of the CIA in supporting the Islamic resistance movement against the Soviet occupation. He argues that “it is widely believed in the Arab world that Afghanistan was the melting pot which produced, under CIA leadership, member of terror groups from different Arab countries. Thousands of Arabs went to fight in Afghanistan at the expense of Osama

³⁰ Hilal Khashan, ‘*The New World Order and the Tempo of Militant Islam*,’ *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.24, No. 1 (May, 1997), p. 6.

³¹ Nikkie Keddie, ‘Ideology, Society and the State in Post-Colonial Muslim Societies’, in Fred Halliday and Hamza Alavi (eds) ‘*State and Ideology in the Middle East and Pakistan*,’ (Monthly Review Press, New York, 1988), p. 10.

³² Fawaz A. Gerges, ‘*Islam and Muslims in the Mind of America*,’ *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol.588, (Jul., 2003), p. 76.

bin Laden, a Saudi Arabian construction tycoon who had strong CIA connections.”³³ After the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1989 many Arab *mujahideen* returned to their home countries and gave weight to militant Islamic groups there. Khashan concludes by quoting the then Pakistani Prime Minister Sher Mazari who responded in the following words to United States’ demand to control the flow of Arab militants taking refuge in Pakistan. He said, “The Arab militants were originally trained and financed by the Americans. They were the people who began all this; now they pull out and we are left to deal with it...It is very unfair.”³⁴

Hilal Khashan brought into prominence the role of the regional as well as catalyst role of the West in the high tempo of militant Islam. Agreeing with him are other scholars who believe that militant Islam is as diverse as the Arabs themselves and the countries in which it is taking hold. Judith Miller in her article presents the famous “Meridian House” declaration³⁵ that unveiled America’s policy towards Islam in 1992. The declaration reads that “America has nothing against Islam ...but Washington was opposed to those who used religion as a cover for extremism and violence.” Countering this view of the doctrine Miller emphasises American justification of “good” Islamic groups that seek to overturn communist states. This support by the West is for their narrowly defined national interests on strategic lines, that is, access to oil at an acceptable price. Further Miller suggests that the American officials ‘should understand that no matter how often and fervently Islamic groups assert their commitment to democracy and pluralism, their basic ideological covenants and tracts, published declarations and interviews appear to make these pledges incompatible with their stated goals of establishing societies under Islamic laws and according to Islamic values.’³⁶ This declaration was defeated under the Bush administration which said that the west never believed that Islam is a great religion. Instead West always considered Islamic states to be incompatible with values and truths that Americans and most westerners hold to be self evident.

³³ Hilal Khashan, ‘*The New World Order and the Tempo of Militant Islam*,’ *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.24, No. 1 (May, 1997), p. 8

³⁴ *Newsweek*, 31 May 1993, p. 33.

³⁵ This declaration was given by Edward Djerejian in 1992. He was the assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs in the Clinton administration.

³⁶ Judith Miller, ‘*The Challenge of Radical Islam*,’ *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 2 (Spring 1993), p. 51.

This tinted western lens has obscured Islam's humanist approach. There is no denying the fact that Islam is a religion of peace and welfare with "the synthesis of material progress and spiritual realization."³⁷ Iyer observes that "the west is at present the crucible of what is emerging as a universal culture, one united, quickened and even defined by what we are calling postmodernist developments. United States and Western Europe – predominantly white - are at its core, providing the ideas and technological discoveries that fire it."³⁸ This power, cultural dominance and aggressiveness of the west and the anti – Islamic western media has led the Muslims to lose their representational capacity. Muslim identity has been televisionised as a global predicament. Their reality has become the images on television and the innumerable hostile words and expressions in the papers. Muslims in the media have no voice, no platform, so they cannot object and are paralysed to explain. Islam and Muslims are facing grave crisis as their expressions of cultural identity are dismissed as fanaticism, forgetting the plurality within Islam.

There are different perceptions and understanding of Islam, it cannot be viewed and accepted as a homogeneous entity. Islam has both religious pluralism and legal pluralism which is best presented in the two trends: liberal and the fundamentalist. There is a fundamentalist threat from the Islamic militants who unquestionably demonstrate their ability to disturb the peace of the world, and in doing this distort the essence of the religion. Tamara Albertini argues that "although the fundamentalists keep referring to 'tradition' they actually prove to be 'anti-traditionalists' with respect to what has historically been the practice of Islam. Not only do Muslim fundamentalists and Islamists – that is, fundamentalist with a political agenda – show no interest in formal religious training; they are also 'anti – intellectualists,' according to Islam's own standards of religious education."³⁹ Her writing reveals that the deepest concern is not only the fundamentalists anti – western ideology but more of its massive assault on the intellectual culture of Islam which is being done with "such a systematic nature that it is hard to believe this to be an expression of sheer ignorance of how theological and legal matters ought to be dealt with...this state of affairs is a

³⁷ V. R. Krishna Iyer, 'India, Islam and the Pall of Postmodernism,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 27, No. 45 (Nov. 7, 1992), p. 2417.

³⁸ *Ibid.* p. 2418.

³⁹ Tamara Albertini, 'The Seductiveness of Certainty: The Destruction of Islam's Intellectual Legacy by the Fundamentalists,' *Philosophy East and West*, Vol 53, No.4 (Oct. 2003), p. 455.

result of a well thought out strategy designed eventually to remove any scholarly resistance to fundamentalism from within the Muslim world.”⁴⁰

There are scholars who attribute the decline of intellectual culture of Islam to various factors ranging from the effects of colonialism – such as westernization, the modern identity crisis, and the economic breakdown in most of the Muslim countries – to puritanical Saudi Wahhabism. But before we discuss and analyse this fundamentalist trend, we need to understand the emergence and growth of the sects within Islam; to identify the similarities and differences in their practices, and an overview of their ideas, ranging from liberal to extremist.

Common to all these writings is a nuanced understanding of fundamentalism as response to the challenges of modernity which are perceived by the religious zealots as threat to the integrity of their faith. “Some of the believers meet this challenge by reform and compromise; others, by rejection and retreat into revivalism. A section of the revivalists, disdaining retreat, adopted the aggressive stance of fundamentalism in thought and violence in action.”⁴¹

DIVIDING LINES: SUNNIS AND THE SHI’AS

Islam is not monolithic, and like all other religions, there is great diversity in beliefs among its adherents. “Both in the experience and the enactment of Islam there exists great diversity. The non – western observer is tempted to schematize, preferably by the simplest and crudest, binary categorizations: high versus low Islam, scholars’ versus lay, orthodox versus folk, observant versus lax, doctrinaire versus experiential, traditionalist-authoritarian versus concerned with actual relevance, dogmatic/legal versus either philosophical or mystical, men’s versus women’s, urban versus rural or tribal, large formal brotherhoods’ versus small local networks, and so forth. These and many such distinctions, taken together in their kaleidoscopic profusion, may convey a sense of riches; taken separately each is an unwarranted oversimplification.”⁴² These riches make up the community and civilisation of Islam. It is for us to grasp the

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ A. G. Noorani, *‘Islam and Jihad,’* (Leftword: New Delhi, 2002), p. 53.

⁴² C. A. O. Van Nieuwenhuijze, *‘Islamism: A Defiant Utopianism,’* Die Welt des Islams, New Series, Vol. 35, Issue 1 (April, 1995), pp. 5-6.

dynamics of which these phenomenon are the manifestations. Apart from the old established schism between Sunni and Shia, there are recognised differences between the four schools of the Sunni tradition.

There are two major traditions within Islam; the Sunni Tradition and the Shi'i Tradition, that together make five different schools of law, (Four Sunni and one Shi'i) each having its own distinct methodology. "Their differences have much to do with the means of interpretation they grant their jurists, which in turn allows for a greater or lesser independence from the Qur'an and the Tradition. The legal sources they do have in common are Scripture and scholarly consensus (*ijma*)."⁴³

"A cursory glance at early Muslim history reveals the existence and powerful influence of intra-Muslim sectarian conflicts that emerged soon after the death of Prophet Muhammad. Lust for power and wealth was a determining factor behind some of these conflicts, which were then provided with suitable theological support."⁴⁴ The House of Prophet Muhammad has been rent by intestine divisions and strifes. "Differences of opinion on abstract subjects, about which there cannot be any certitude in a finite existence, have always given rise to greater bitterness and fiercer hostility than ordinary differences on matters within the range of human cognition".⁴⁵ The divisions owe their origins to political and dynastic causes- the old tribal rivalries and jealousy. Had the principle of hereditary succession (in favour of Ali) been recognized at the outset, it would have prevented the rise of the disastrous pretensions which engulfed Islam.

THE AHLUS-SUNNAH

The Sunni Tradition was initially split into many sects that gradually disappeared, but it is still divided into four principal denominations, differing on many questions of dogma and ritual. From the two fundamental sources of scripture and the Prophet's deeds and sayings (*sunnah*), the *ulema*' derived the law. A place of special merit is

⁴³ Tamara Albertini, 'The Seductiveness of Certainty: The Destruction of Islam's Intellectual Legacy by the Fundamentalists,' *Philosophy East and West*, Vol 53, No.4 (Oct. 2003), p. 459.

⁴⁴ Yoginder Sikand, 'Muslims in India: Contemporary Social and Political Discourses', (Hope India Publications: Gurgaon, 2007) p. 148.

⁴⁵ Ameer Ali, 'The Spirit of Islam: A History of the Evolution and Ideals of Islam', (Chatto and Windus Ltd: London, 1964), p. 292.

accorded to four scholar jurists (*mujtahid*) who were recognized as the founders of the Sunni legal schools (*madhhab*) and formulated the laws within the Sunni Community. Here the discussion will focus on the four most important persuasions among the Sunnis – Hanafi, Shafe’i, Maliki and Hanabali, designated after their respective founders. “For a time it was permissible to consult the opinions of all the four schools, but later it became the rule to follow one particular school. This rule came to be regarded as binding, and was called *taqlid*. In other words, orthodoxy came to be regarded as strict adherence to one of the four schools of *fiqh*. The particular *fiqh* followed was naturally regarded as comprehending the manifold aspects of the shari’ah.”⁴⁶

The earliest is the Hanafi School named after Abu Hanifa, who advocated legal reasoning by “analogy” (*qiyas*); “personal reasoning”, which is needed to construe analogy; and “juristic preference” (*istihsan*), whereby preference is given to one rule over another if it is perceived to be superior. “The latitude he allows to private judgment in the interpretation of the law seems to be unquestionably a reflex of the opinions of the Shia school. He is called by his followers the *Imam-ul-Na’zam* (the great Imam). His school owns the largest number of followers. The Hanafi code is liberal, compared to the conservative Hanabali code; and is oriented towards urban society. This school entails the use of reason in examining the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* for applying in a new situation.”⁴⁷ ‘Abu Hanifa also considered “custom” as a possible legal source. He stated after issuing a legal statement: “Ours is no more than an opinion. We do not oblige or coerce anyone into accepting it. Whoever has a better judgment, let him advance it.” As a result, Abu Hanifa did not expect members of his school necessarily to repeat his verdicts. A true Hanafi is a Hanafi by emulating the founder’s methodology, not by adhering blindly to his verbatim decisions.”⁴⁸ The Hanafi School is mostly represented in Asia, Turkey, Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq.

The second most popular school in the world is the “Maliki School of law, named after Abdallah Malik, who had a profound devotion for the traditions of the Prophet, which he would transmit only in a state of ritual purity. It emerged as a reaction

⁴⁶ M. Mujeeb, *The Indian Muslims*, (George Allen & Unwin Ltd: London, 1967), p. 58.

⁴⁷ David Waines, *An Introduction to Islam*, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2005), pp. 65.

⁴⁸ Tamara Albertini, *The Seductiveness of Certainty: The Destruction of Islam’s Intellectual Legacy by the Fundamentalists*, *Philosophy East and West*, Vol 53, No.4 (Oct. 2003), p. 459.

against an excessive use of personal reasoning in the Hanafite School. Malik's work covers topics ranging from prescribed rituals of prayer to sales and credit, thus encapsulating man's ritual obligations (*ibadat*) to Allah and the normative behaviour between individuals in society (*mtu' amalat*)."⁴⁹ 'Malikis also used the legal method of having regard for the public interest. The Maliki School means the application of Islamic law in accordance with the interpretation of Abu Malik. It was originally the school of the people of Medina; hence the school was based on the understanding and practice of Islam in accordance with the method and the people of Medina before and after Malik. This is why the school is also called "the School of the Madinites." The Maliki School is conservative and suitable for pastoral communities. It started in Medina and later spread to many places in the Muslim world. The Maliki law applies, in whole or in part, in the Gulf countries, Spain, East and West African countries and also in U.S, France and U.K.'⁵⁰

The Shafi'i School, which prevails in Southern Egypt, the Arabian Peninsula, East Africa, Indonesia and Malaysia, draws a middle course between Hanafites and Malikites. It rejects juristic preference and public interest as legal sources. It does, however, validate analogy as long as it is not derived from a principle that has itself been deduced from a principle. "Analogical reasoning allowed the community to incorporate new situations into the system of *Sharia*, without disturbing the primacy of the Qur'an and *sunnah*. It also permitted individual opinions and differences, something sanctioned by the *hadith*. By pursuing this method the *ulema* could merge Prophet Muhammad's teachings, Arab traditions and non-Arab traditions into single canonical system applicable to the life of all Muslims."⁵¹ Though the Shafi'i school cautioned against change, it cannot be viewed as inflexible. Its founder encouraged jurists to revise their own previous verdicts if they came to a better judgment.

"The fourth and the last school (the Hanbal School) originated by Ibn-Hanbal was against a legal superstructure built upon the Quran and the *sunnah*, and argued that a legal decision must be reached by referring directly to the Qur'an and the *sunnah*

⁴⁹ David Waines, 'An Introduction to Islam', (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2005), pp. 66-68.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Dilip Hero, 'War Without End: The Rise of Islamist Terrorism and Global Response,' (Routledge Publications: London, 2002), p. 26.

instead of a body of religious jurisprudence derived from them. He believed that the Qur'an and the *sunna* were the law itself and not merely the source of it. He argued that the Qur'an must be understood in its literal sense, without resort to allegorical interpretation, and that all Traditions from the Prophet regarded as sound in his time comprised the unquestioned second source of law. He did nevertheless recognize that in order to resolve contradictions between *hadith*, to reconcile divergent views, and to draw deductions from them, some minimum degree of personal judgement was required.”⁵² Hanbalism is today, mainly represented in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Oman, and is the most conservative schools of Islamic jurisprudence.

These four preeminent figures form an unbroken chain in the view of the later Sunni Scholarship. The Sunni *ulema* in the *Dar-al-Islam* settled for one of these four schools which set the boundaries of the Sharia, from the fundamentalist Hanbali to the liberal Hanafi. Muslims have relied upon their reason in applying the principles of the Qur'an and the *sunnah*, and this has been the cause of different schools of law, various tendencies and major sects within Islam.

SHIAS: THE TRADITION OF THE IMAMS

The Shi'i belief revolves around the figure of Ali. The Shias believe that the Prophet chose Ali as his successor and he should therefore have been the first caliph of Islam after the Prophet. In particular the Shias reject the first three caliphates of Abu Bakr, Umar and Usman. This reason for the split between the Shia and the Sunni may appear obscure, but this is central to the parting of their ways. If Ali had been the first caliph, his son Hussain would then have been caliph in place of Yazid, the man who ordered Hussain's death at Karbala. The events of Karbala are of deep significance to Shias. The motif of martyrdom is crucial to Shias, who believe that all except one of the twelve Imams were martyred. “Loyalty to the *ahlal-bayt*- the House of the Prophet, or Ali and his descendants- is at the core of the sect. Indeed the word Shia derives from ‘partisans’ or group of supporters of Ali”.⁵³

⁵² David Waines, ‘*An Introduction to Islam*’, (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2005), p.71.

⁵³ Akbar S. Ahmed, ‘*Islam Today: A Short Introduction to the Muslim World*,’ (I.B.Tauris Publishers: London, 1999), pp. 43-44.

Shias believe that each new leader of the community should have been chosen by the previous Imam and they believe that he should have been the descendant of the Prophet and thus of Ali. But the Sunnis differed in their belief; they believed that the caliphs mainly held political power. “For the Shias religious authority is far more important. The Shi’i heartlands would remain in the region where the deaths of Ali and Hussain took place – present Iraq and Iran. The need to stand up against all odds on a matter of principle, the readiness for martyrdom, total passion, disregard for death and acceptance of tragedy are familiar aspects of the Shia”⁵⁴. It is termed by scholars the “Karbala paradigm”.⁵⁵

The Shias are further divided into five sub-sects based on their faith (*aqidah*) in the Imams. They are; the *Zaidia*, the *Ismailia*, the *Isna-Asharia* or *Imamia*, the *Kaisania*, and the *Ghallia* or *Ghullat*. These sects and the branches they bifurcated into had

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ As has been stated, one of the most consistent and significant trends throughout this period was that Shi’i imams, who were descendents of the Prophet and who had varying degrees of popular support among the masses, were rivals of the Sunni caliphs, who actually ruled the empire. This rivalry was particularly intense during the Umayyad period and came to a head with the battle of Karbala in 680 during the reign of the second Umayyad caliph, Yazid. This battle of Karbala results in ‘Karbala Paradigm’. The most commonly accepted narrative of the battle of Karbala begins with an account of the discontent of Muslims [especially in southern Iraq] under the rule of Yazid, who is portrayed as having been politically oppressive and morally corrupt. Prophet Muhammad’s grandson Hussein (in Medina) received several letters from caliph’s subjects in southern Iraq to lead them in an uprising against Yazid. After sending scouts to assess the situation in Southern Iraq, Hussein and a number of his close relatives left the Hijaz, in Western Arabia, and began the trip to Iraq. In southern Iraq in a desert named Karbala, located near the Euphrates river, the caravan was surrounded by an overwhelmingly large army sent by Yazid. A standoff ensued because Hussein refused to give oath of allegiance to Yazid. At the end of ten days of waiting, negotiating, and occasionally fighting, a final battle took place, in which Hussein and all of his adult male relatives and supporters were killed in a brutal fashion. The survivors, consisting of women and children, together with Hussein’s son Zeyn al-Abedin, who was too ill to take part in the fighting, were then taken captive and transported, along with the heads of the martyrs, which had been placed on spears, to Yazid’s court in Damascus. In this story, Yazid represents the ultimate impious, tyrannical villain. His supporters, like Shemr, represented as being the one who actually killed Hussein, are also portrayed mostly as being immoral, cruel and worldly. Hussein and his supporters, such as Abbas, his sons Ali Asghar and Ali Akbar, the young bridegroom Qasim, to name a few, are represented by Shi’is as symbols of courage, piety and truth. The women and girls, in particular Zeynab, serve as symbols of the ideal of women supporting their male relative, suffering the indignation of captivity with dignity, educating and preparing their sons to follow the path of Hussein, willingly sacrificing their male loved ones to martyrdom, and serving as spokespersons for the cause after the men were martyred. Thus, for Shi’is this event has become the root metaphor upon which many of their religious beliefs and practices are based. It has served as a vindication of the Shi’i cause in the face of Sunni criticism, as well as constituting the central event in their understanding of human history. At the same time, the rituals associated with the battle have historically served as a vehicle for expressing and strengthening a variety of political and social relationships, associations and identities. The “Karbala Paradigm” has also provided an opportunity for spiritual redemption for Shi’is. By mourning the fate of the family of the Prophet Muhammad (the *ahl al-beyt*) generally, and his grandson Hussein specifically, Shi’is hope to gain salvation and admission to paradise. (See, K. S. Aghaie: *The Martyrs of Karbala*: 2004, 8-9).

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more or less attachment to Ali. Out of these sects the Isna - Asharia is a larger and the most prominent group and is referred as Shia proper⁵⁶. The major concentration of this group has been in Iran, southern Iraq and South Asia.

“Shias are the followers of the Imams of the House of Muhammad, the *Isna Asharias*, are also divided into two sub sects - *Usulis* and *Akhbaris* (that is, the followers of principles and the followers of traditions). There is no difference between them on the question of the Imamate or its descents to the last Imam. But they differ on the amount of authority to be attached to the exposition of the *Mujtahids*, who call themselves the representatives of the Imam. The *Usuli* repudiates the authority of the expounders of the law. He contends that the law is clear, and that it is his duty to construe it for himself with the light of reason and progress of human thought, and not to be guided in his judgment by the dictates of men as fallible as himself. God’s teachings delivered through His Messenger do not require the interpretation of priest or lawyer. The *Akhbari* on the other hand, obeys slavishly to the expositions of the *Mujtahids*.”⁵⁷ Under Shiism, each believer must, “follow the interpretation of an *ulema*, which he chooses from among the college of grand ayatollahs, in general by intermediary of the local mullahs, who received their investiture either directly or indirectly from a grand ayatollah. Clericalisation (the formation of an autonomous body of clerics separate from the state) is a consequence. This evolution also consecrated the final autonomy of the clergy, which is still in effect, with followers paying the Islamic tax directly to their *mujtahid’s* representative rather than to the state. The money is gathered by the clergy, then redistributed into pious works, many of which have a social component. Since the eighteenth century then, the Shiite clergy has played a social and educational role with no parallel among the Sunni clergy...all operated to make the clergy a political force.”⁵⁸

“The Twelver *Imami* Shia crystallized into a legitimate legal school in the tenth and eleventh centuries as a reaction to earlier extremist and highly heterodox

⁵⁶ Ameer Ali, ‘*Spirit of Islam: A History of Evolution and Ideals of Islam*,’ (Chatto & Windus: London, 1964), pp. 290-291.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Brian R. Farman ‘*Understanding Radical Islam: Medieval Ideology in the Twenty-First Century*,’ (Peter Long: New York, 2007), pp. 65-66.

movements”.⁵⁹ They agree with the Sunni Muslims on the centrality of the Qur’an and *sunnah* as the primary sources of Islamic law. They, however, define *sunnah* as the life example of the Prophet and his rightful successors, the *Imams*. Their legal system is based on the *hadith* tradition transmitted through the *Imams* and lay stress on the principle of *ijtihad* or personal reasoning in comprehending and interpreting the *Imams*’ rulings applicable to new situations.

This discussion on the two major trends doesn’t end here. It is important to realize the permanent rift between them. There exists a sharp division between the two, both in India and the global world. Each sect claims to represent the authentic Islamic tradition and argues that the other groups are heretical. “The responsibility for fanning intra-Muslim sectarian strife rests with the traditional ‘*ulema*. Islam has no place for an official priesthood that can lay down the official doctrine. In principle, in Islam there are no intermediaries between man and God, the relation being direct and unmediated. While this makes religious leadership in Islam more democratic in theory, it also means that the ‘*ulema* of different Muslim groups are free to stake their own competing claims to represent ‘true’ Islam, in turn branding other Muslim groups as deviant. This fuels intra-Muslim disputes that can often take a violent turn”.⁶⁰

Yoginder Sikand (2007, 152) further iterates that the institutions of the ‘*ulema* and the *madrasa* as they have come to be developed appear to be heavily invested in promoting sectarian divisions. This explains why many ‘*ulema* have been averse to any moves to promote intra Muslim dialogue at the doctrinal level. Groups like Muslim Personal Law Board and the Milli Council do have representatives from different Muslim sects, but while seeking to promote common Muslim interests they have consciously stayed away from addressing the theological dimensions of the sectarian problem. There is no serious engagement with the fundamental question of theological differences that underlie sectarian divisions.

It is imperative to create an environment of mutual trust between the Muslim and the non – Muslim world, particularly the western world, thus reducing the state of

⁵⁹ Mahmoud M. Ayoub, ‘*Islam: Faith and History*,’ (One World Publications: London 2006), p. 134.

⁶⁰ Yoginder Sikand, ‘*Muslims in India: Contemporary Social and Political Discourses*’, (Hope India Publications: Gurgaon, 2007), p. 150.

violence. The points of difference between the two have become more apparent in the recent years.

The discussion on sectarianism within Islam would be insufficient if the universal way of Islam, that is, Sufism is ignored. The Sufis achieved their spiritual goal through esoteric knowledge, experience with spiritual and mystical world. They came to India following the Muslim conquerors. The Sufi saints of India belong to the category of 'God Conscious' men who stood above all parochial and narrow divisions of society and strove to find a unity for the heterogeneous elements that make up its totality. Sufism is generally believed to have originated among the Muslims near Basra in Iraq and is said to have been influenced by Syrian Christian monasticism in the initial phases. Almost all Sufi schools link themselves with Prophet through his cousin and son-in-law Ali. The Sufis always remained inside the fold of Islam and their mysticism not restricted by their adherence to any of the legal or theological school.⁶¹

"The mystics of all religions try to symbolise their experience in three stages; the never-ending quest for God is symbolised in the path on which he has to proceed. The transformation of the soul through painful purification is expressed in the image of alchemy- the age-old dream of producing gold from base material finds realization on the spiritual level. However it should be noted that this painful punishments leading to his purity is not the privilege for all because it is God who "elects" him. Lastly the longing for union was expressed by symbols taken from human love".⁶²

'The practice of Sufism is frequently defined by Sufi themselves in the form of maxims. "Sufism is to possess nothing, and to be possessed by nothing," runs one version. "Sufism means being at ease with Allah" is another. Or again, "Sufism is not composed of practices and sciences, but it is morals".⁶³ Sufis trace their origins back to the Qur'an and the Traditions of the Prophet. The *shari'ah* as the embodiment of the will of Allah touches the domain of their everyday life, both ritual and social.

⁶¹ Carl W. Ernst, '*The Shambhala Guide To Sufism*', (Boston, 1977)

⁶² Ibid, pp. 26-31.

⁶³ David Waines, '*An Introduction to Islam*', (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 2005), p. 138.

“Followers of the Hanafi School tend towards rationalism, the Shafe’i School follows the moderate theology; the Maliks are predestinationist; and the Hanbalites tend to be literal in their interpretation of theology. The Sufis are the followers of, both the sunni and the shia tradition. Inspired by the shia belief, with the passage of time they also came to be influenced and fall under the sunni tradition. These are theological differences and not sectarian differences”.⁶⁴ The two major sects are the Sunnis and the Shias.

There existed and continues to exist a pronounced heterogeneity within Islam. It is imperative to distinguish between the multiple trends present in Islam for a better understanding of the religion and its practices. This distinction would enable one to discern and draw a line between its mainstream tradition of tolerance and pluralism, and the radical offshoot and puritanical variant, which struggles to control the whole world.

THE FUNDAMENTALIST OVERTONES:

Fundamentalism literally refers to an early twentieth century American Protestant movement that called for religion based on a literal interpretation of the Bible. There is no word for fundamentalism in Arabic: the closest word in Arabic, *usuli*⁶⁵, was coined specifically to approximate the English fundamentalism. Many have argued that the specifically western origin of the word, coupled with pejorative connotations attached to it by journalists and academics who condemn the phenomenon, make it a term that almost guarantees misunderstanding.

The two important branches that should be noted for their fundamentalist approach in Islam are Barelawis and Wahhabis. The orthodoxy preached by these two trends we need to look into the practices of Shah Waliullah, an eminent Naqshbandi Sufi sheikh. “He proposed that the conclusions of the four (Sunni) legal schools be analysed in accordance with the texts of the Qur’an and Hadiths-a fundamentalist position. To achieve this and to bring the ordinary Muslims into direct contact with the Qur’an, he

⁶⁴ Kenneth W. Morgan, *Islam, the Straight Path: Islam Interpreted by Muslims*, (Motilal Banarsidas Publications, 1987) p. 418.

⁶⁵ *Usuli* can be translated to mean fundamentals or roots.

translated the holy book into Persian, the language of the literate Muslims. Most importantly, he argued that with the Islamic *umma* enlarging and progressing there was constant need for *ijtihad* (independent reasoning) to cope with the new problems arising. He was probably the first Islamic thinker to articulate that religious thought had to interact with changing social conditions”.⁶⁶

Under the attacks by the Hindu, Sikh and British East India Company, the Mughal rule continued to disintegrate. With this the reformism preached by Waliullah turned into militancy under the leadership of Ahmad Barelvi, a disciple of Waliullah’s son, (inspired by Hanafi teachings). He harnessed the reformist movement within the framework of renewed *Sharia* orthodoxy. This led to the birth of *Tariq-e Muhammadiya* (way of Muhammad), an order which coupled Sufi discipline with sharia orthodoxy. He declared *jihad* against the Sikh rulers, who were persecuting Muslims. Later he led his followers to the Indo-Afghan border in view of finding an Islamic state on a “liberated territory.” He faced resistance from the Pushtun tribesmen, who left his camp because he levied *sharia* tax on them. Barelvi’s forces were defeated by the Sikh army in 1831 and he was executed. But his death did not bring an end to the reformist turned militant movement.

A figure that remains instrumental in formulating a fundamentalist doctrine within Islam is Abd-al Wahhab who was inspired by the Hanbal teachings. He preached against deviation within Islam and demanded that believers adhere only to the fundamental doctrines of the faith and practice outlined by Prophet Mohammad. Wahhab and his followers accepted only a literal approach to the faith.

‘Post 9/11, Wahabism has been identified by governments, political analysts, and the media as the major “Islamic threat” facing western civilization and the inspiration for Osama Bin Laden and his Al – Qaeda network. It has become infamous for its negative influence on Islam, mosques, and *madrasas* globally. It is described as extremist, radical, puritanical, contemptuous of modernity, misogynist and militant in nature. It has been characterized as Islamo–fascism following in the traditions of

⁶⁶ Dilip Hero, *War Without End: The Rise of Islamist Terrorism and Global Response*, (Routledge Publications: London, 2002), p. 37.

communism and nazism.⁶⁷ There are many who have asserted that the militant extremism of Osama has its roots in the religious teachings of Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahhab, 'who is believed to have legitimated *jihad* against non-wahhabis and encouraged the forcible spread of the Wahhabi creed. According to this interpretation, Ibn abd al-Wahhab is the godfather of modern terrorism and Islamic militance.'⁶⁸ The Wahhabis wanted to impose a degree of puritanism on the community. Claiming authority from the *Hadith* they banned music, dancing and even poetry which had been an integral part of Arab life.

Wahhab's principal ally Muhammad ibn Saud called himself Imam and governed the community of believers of the unity of Allah. In 1802 the Wahhabis invaded Karbala, destroyed Imam Hussains shrine and ordered the killing of all Karbala residents, who according to them were apostates. They seized Mecca and demolished all the domes over the graves of the leading figures of early Islam. These events signaled the victory of fundamentalist forces.

The hegemony of Wahhabis, an extremist sect, over Mecca and Medina created unease among the pilgrims whose loyalties were spread over a whole range of orthodox sects and Sufi orders. These actions did not go unchallenged. The Ottoman Sultan ordered Muhamad Ali Pasha to defeat the Wahhabis. He succeeded, thus ending the vigorous fundamentalist movement of that time. But later in 1924 the collapse of the Ottoman Empire led to leadership vacuum in the world Muslim community. Few years later Abdul Aziz tried to fill in this vacuum. He used Wahhabism as his ideological tool to achieve this end. He was successful in justifying his claim to the Imamate.

'He stressed the Wahhabi principles of 'Unitarianism'⁶⁹ and socio-religious equality of the believers. Wahhabis set out to attack polytheists, unbelievers and hypocrites. Any deviation from the *sharia* was labeled by them as innovation, and therefore un-Islamic. Wahhabis believed in the division of the world into *Dar al Islam* and its counterpart, *Dar al Harb* (The Realm of War between believers and non-

⁶⁷ Natana J. Delong – Bas, '*Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad*,' (Oxford University Press: New York, 2004), p. 3.

⁶⁸ *ibid*, p. 4.

⁶⁹ Believing in the unity of Allah.

believers).⁷⁰The House of Saud has used Islam to legitimize its dynastic rule. Saudi Arabia represents Wahhabism- a fundamentalist polity that has remained unchanged since its inception in 1932. It is the oldest fundamentalist Islamic state in the world.

The Indian Wahhabis' fundamentalist overtones suggest that literal and selective reading of the Qura'n has led their actions towards vandalism and violence against the other sects and religions. It has been said already that Al- Wahhab's main targets were the Shias and the Sufis but it should be noted that Wahhab also condemned many popular practices of Sunni Islam as innovation or reversion to paganism. Some of these included visiting or praying at the graves of the holy men, celebrating the Prophet's birthday, smoking tobacco, shaving of beards and telling of beads. The fundamentalists are limited in their worldly visions as they continue to live in the age of the Prophet.

Finally, both 'Ibn Abd al-Wahhab and the Wahhabis are often accused of being outside the Sunni tradition due to their position as "heretical innovators" and extremists.⁷¹ Wahhabism is a brand of Islam founded on the Arabian peninsula in the eighteenth century. "They consider themselves *ghayr muqallidun*, non-adherents – that is, they do not follow any school of law. Thus, in Wahhabism, unlike the conservative Hanbalism out of which Wahhabi Islam first emerged, not one of the legal means developed by classical jurisprudence is accepted."⁷²

Delong-Bas's work brings a major shift in Wahhab's understanding and preaching of Islam. In his exclusive work he argues for 'a need to escape from the oversimplification of the negative portrayal of Wahhabis and hence calls for "a study faithful to the historical record."⁷³ He argues that the real Wahhab was a well trained and a widely traveled scholar, whose writings insisted on the adherence to Qura'nic values, like the maximum preservation of human life even in the midst of *jihad* as

⁷⁰Dilip Hero, *War Without End: The Rise of Islamist Terrorism and Global Response*, (Routledge Publications: London, 2002), p. 15.

⁷¹Hamid Agar, *Wahhabism: A Critical Essay*, (Islamic Publications International: New York, 2002), pp. 2-5.

⁷²Tamara Albertini, *The Seductiveness of Certainty: The Destruction of Islam's Intellectual Legacy by the Fundamentalists*, *Philosophy East and West*, Vol 53, No.4 (Oct. 2003), p. 461.

⁷³Natana J. Delong – Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad*, (Oxford University Press: New York, 2004), p. 5.

holy war, tolerance for other religions, and support for a balance of rights between men and women. This results in a very different worldview from that of contemporary militant extremists.

Delong's work reveals a more moderate, sophisticated, and nuanced interpretation of Islam that emphasizes limitations on violence, killing and destruction and calls for a dialogue and debate as the appropriate means of proselytisation. Bas argues that Ibn Abd al – Wahhab's discussion on jihad included both the elements of 'classical and modernist tradition.'⁷⁴ 'Like the classicalists, he grounded his discussion on *jihad* in the Qur'an, *hadith*, and the writings of past jurists in order to demonstrate his continuity with an intellectual tradition. He emphasized the mechanics of *jihad* – how it to be carried out, by whom, under what circumstances and how it was to end – rather than broad ideas about warfare. He also issued strict regulations about how enemies were to be treated, distinguishing between adult male combatants, who were liable to punishment and non-combatants, including, women, children, the elderly, the handicapped, slave and religious leaders, both Muslim and non-Muslim, who were exempted from punishment on the basis of their nonparticipation in battle. Like the modernists, Ibn Abd al – Wahhab's vision of jihad was purely defensive in nature. He legitimated *jihad* only in cases which Muslims had experienced an actual aggression.'⁷⁵

Further Bas argues that Wahhab's teaching on *jihad* were in marked contrast to contemporary fundamentalists, most notably Osama bin Laden. Although it is often posited that bin Laden's ideology of global *jihad* has its origin in Wahhab's writings, because both are Wahhabis, the reality is that 'bin Laden's writings owes far more to the writings of the medieval scholar Ibn Taymiyya and his contemporary interpreter, Sayyid Qutb, than it does to the writings of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab.' Bin Laden like Taymiyya and Qutb envisages the world as divided into two absolute and mutually

⁷⁴ Rudolph Peters has identified three major categories of writings on *jihad*: traditionalist-classicist, modernist and fundamentalist. The traditionalist copy the phrases of the classical works on *fiqh*; the modernists emphasise the defensive aspect of jihad regarding it as tantamount in modern international law; and the fundamentalists view it as a struggle for the expansion of Islam and the realization of Islamic ideals. (in Rudolph Peters, '*Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam: A Reader*,' (Princeton Markus Wiener, 1996), p. 150.

⁷⁵ Natana J. Delong – Bas, '*Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad*,' (Oxford University Press: New York, 2004), p. 288.

exclusive spheres – the land of Islam (*dar al-Islam*) and the land of unbelief (*dar al-kufr*). This division results in a necessarily hostile relationship. For Laden, *‘jihad* is intended to be the modus operandi of Muslims, not a restricted method of self defense. He espouses a vision of a world in which good and evil are engaged in cosmic conflict, he believes that *‘jihad* must take on offensive as well as defensive capabilities and should be a permanent state of being for Muslims.’⁷⁶

Contrary to DeLong’s writings there are a range of scholarly writings positing that the ideology underpinning modern *‘jihad* is articulated in Wahhabism, much inspired by Abd al-Wahhab. Charles Allen iterates that the founder of Wahhabism saw himself as a reformer and revivalist reacting against corruptions inside Islam. He declared holy war on those corruptions and took that war to his fellow Muslims. But his Wahhabism very quickly ‘developed its own militant politico-religious ideology built around an authority figure who was both a temporal and a spiritual leader. It became, in essence, a cult...its ideology always was and remains rooted in violent intolerance.’⁷⁷ Allen tells the complex story of Wahhabism and Islamic revivalism, which continues today under the generic term of ‘pan-Islamism,’ a movement for reshaping the world along Islamic lines, to which many disparate individuals and groups turn for comfort and salvation.

Since 9/11 and London 7/7 immense efforts have been made to understand the phenomenon of Islamist extremism. These attacks led to a resounding response in the west, that this was actually a problem with Islam, it was claimed that the religion of Islam had to be reformed, in order to protect society. Norman Tebbit declared, ‘the Muslim religion is so unreformed since it was created that nowhere in the Muslim world has there been any real advance in science, or art or literature, or technology in last five hundred years.’⁷⁸ Hellyer identified the public relationship between Islam and the West, which is ‘inextricably associated with prejudice and discord...Islamophobia has been confirmed as a problem by a plethora of studies. It cannot be ignored, and it will remain to be a factor in the survival and thriving of Muslim communities as long

⁷⁶ *ibid*, p 289.

⁷⁷ Charles Allen, *God’s Terrorists: The Wahhabi Cult and the Hidden roots of Modern Jihad*, (Abacus: London, 2006), p.21.

⁷⁸ H. A. Hellyer, ‘Ruminations and Reflections on British Muslims and Islam Post- 7/7,’ in Tahir Abbas (ed), *Islamic Political Radicalism: A European Perspective*, (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 2007), p. 248.

as it exists.’⁷⁹ There is another discussion arguing that the ‘Islamic Civilisation and the Western Civilisation are in fact variants of the same civilization, and that struggles within them should be viewed as the struggle within a single family. It is now no longer even remotely justifiable to speak of Islam as something ‘out there’. Both are connected to each other and exist, in different ways, within each other.’⁸⁰

Both these type of interactions between the West and Islam play a crucial role in understanding the two; and their impact on the global politics. Hellyer argues that ‘it is the phenomenon of Islam in the West that attracts more attention at the moment. In the West, Islam exists not simply as an extension of some sort of Arabian or Pakistani interloping cultural imperialism, but as a living reality that is challenging a European, in all shapes and forms that identity expresses itself in.’⁸¹

This also explains the dreadful clash of civilization that had become imminent and unavoidable, after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. To many Americans, “the face of Islam is seen in Arab celebrations of the twin tower massacres, the malevolent smirk of Osama bin Laden, the images of the 19 hijackers, and suicide bombings in Israel. That face is identified, above all, with maniacal hatred of the United States.”⁸² The September 11 attacks on the American soil made Islam a global phenomenon – ‘not simply as the faith of millions, but as a word that, very much like “America”, was now part of everyone’s vocabulary, demanding from everyone an opinion about itself. With its cataclysmic arrival in New York and Washington on the eleventh of September, Al Qaeda’s *jihad* ceased to be a foreign or alien subject to become the very stuff of American popular and political culture, finally making a home for Islam in the West.’⁸³

⁷⁹ *ibid*, p. 250.

⁸⁰ R. Buillet, ‘*The Case for Islamo-Christian Civilisation*,’ (Columbia University Press: New York, 2004).

⁸¹ H. A. Hellyer, ‘Ruminations and Reflections on British Muslims and Islam Post- 7/7,’ in Tahir Abbas (ed), ‘*Islamic Political Radicalism: A European Perspective*,’ (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 2007), p. 251.

⁸² Stephen Schwartz, ‘*The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Saud from Tradition to Terror*,’ (Doubleday: New York, 2002), p. xi.

⁸³ Faisal Devji, ‘*Landscapes of the Jihad: Militancy, Morality, Modernity*,’ (Hurst & Co.,: London, 2005), p. xii.

Islam became a part of global culture and the link between Islam and terrorism became the central media concern which led to new rounds of ‘culture talk.’⁸⁴ Mamdani argues that “‘culture talk’ turned religious experience into a political category, differentiating ‘good Muslim from bad Muslim’, rather than terrorists from civilians.’⁸⁵ In his article Mamdani questions the tendency to read Islamist politics as an effect of Islamic civilization whether good or bad, and Western power as an effect of Western Civilisation. Both the politics and power are born of an encounter, an encounter between Islam and the West, where two cultural identities get politicised; and ‘neither can be understood outside of the history of that encounter.’⁸⁶ He distinguishes between ‘fundamentalism as a religious identity and political identities that use a religious idiom, such as political Christianity and political Islam, which are political identities formed through direct engagement with modern forms of power.’⁸⁷ It is observed that apart from being a religious and cultural identity, Islam has also become a political identity.

Viewing Islam as the fearsome and implacable other has only added to the problem. It is imperative to understand that the issue of violence is not a Muslim problem per se. There have always been groups and individuals from all backgrounds participating in violence, to further their political ends. This myopic view of Islam has led to deeper conflicts and wholesale cultural destruction. It is essential to look into the dense network of terror and trace the arteries of an international economic system that feeds armed groups the world over.

“In terms of radical Muslim extremism, there is a neo-religious imperative that uses a particular methodology to justify itself by relating to religious discourse, and allows excesses to emerge from the Muslim community.”⁸⁸ The global *jihad* espoused by Osama bin Laden and other contemporary extremists is rooted in erroneous

⁸⁴ Mahmood Mamdani, ‘*Good Muslim Bad Muslim: Islam, the USA and the Global War Against Terror*,’ (Permanent Black: New Delhi, 2005).

⁸⁵ Mahmood Mamdani, ‘*Good Muslim Bad Muslim: A Political Perspective on Culture and Terrorism*,’ *American Anthropologist*, Vol.104, Issue 3, (Sept, 2002), p. 766 – 775.

⁸⁶ *ibid.*

⁸⁷ Mahmood Mamdani, ‘*Good Muslim Bad Muslim: Islam, the USA and the Global War Against Terror*,’ (Permanent Black: New Delhi, 2005). p. 36.

⁸⁸ H. A. Hellyer, ‘Ruminations and Reflections on British Muslims and Islam Post- 7/7,’ in Tahir Abbas (ed), ‘*Islamic Political Radicalism: A European Perspective*,’ (Edinburgh University Press: Edinburgh, 2007), p. 256.

interpretation of Islam and in exploiting the essence of Islam to advance their own agenda. Locating these radical violent *jihadis* within the Wahhabi paradigm is too simplistic an argument to understand the dynamics of world politics. "It is inaccurate or unconstructive to conclude that all Wahhabis are a violent threat to the West."⁸⁹ Schwartz emphasizes that there should be "a shift in Islam away from the Wahhabi-Saudi promotion of terror to the mainstream Muslim commitment to mercy and compassion that would not only ease tensions Western and Islamic worlds but could also make peace...and encouraging rabbis, imams, Christian clerics, Sufi shaykhs, and ayatollahs to enter upon a regional and global "faith-based initiative" for peace."⁹⁰

The studies of Al Qaeda and its *jihad* tend to focus on violence with global effect. Bernard Lewis link Al Qaeda's violence to the nature of Islam itself, whereas John Esposito, another renowned scholar of Islam, links Al Qaeda's jihad to political and economic causes of more recent times and not to the ancestry of Muslim history. "...the virulent terrorist Islamic fundamentalism that inspired al-Qaeda alongside other movements including the Taliban, the Egyptian Islamic *jihad* and fundamentalist states such as Sudan are all intimately linked to one element or source: Wahhabi dominated Saudi Arabia."⁹¹

Wahhabi-Saudi attempts "...have led to their interference in Afghanistan...in Israel, where the Saudi regime directly funds and guides Hamas; in Kashmir, where efforts of local moderates to resolve the status of the region have been thwarted by Wahhabi aggression; and in Algeria; where political tensions between the 'old socialist establishment and new Islamic movements were manipulated to launch a bloody civil war...And finally Wahhabi-influenced extremist movements continue to contest for authority in such countries as Nigeria and, of course, the all important example of a state driven to permanent crisis by Wahhabi influence: Pakistan."⁹²

⁸⁹ Ibid, p. 259.

⁹⁰ Stephen Schwartz, 'The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Saud from Tradition to Terror,' (Doubleday: New York, 2002), p. xxii

⁹¹ Beverley Milton-Edwards, 'Islamic Fundamentalism Since 1945,' (Routledge: London, 2005), p. 95

⁹² Ibid, pp. 95-96.

Jessica Stern in her phenomenal work discovers the similarities between the terrorist organizations that are formed by opportunistic leaders, using religion as both motivation and justification. Her empirical study explores that the Islamic *ihadis* in the mountains of Pakistan and Afghanistan and the Christian fundamentalist bombers in Oklahoma have much in common. Her interview with Ayman Zawahiri, Osama bin Laden's second in command reveals his disenchantment with the western forces. She writes, "Zawahiri accuses Western forces of employing international institutions such as the United Nations, multinational corporations and international news agencies as weapons in their "new crusade" to dominate the Islamic world. The new world order is humiliating to Muslims. The new crusaders disseminate immorality under the slogans of progressiveness, liberty and liberation."⁹³

She argues that these religious extremists see themselves under attack by the global spread of post Enlightenment western values and view people who practice other versions of their faith, or other faiths, as infidels or sinners because the true faith is in jeopardy, and killing of innocents becomes imminent. Stern found 'angst' and 'fear' to lie beneath these grievances. She examines the deeper feelings of 'alienation', 'humiliation' and 'greed' that fuels terrorism and argues that leaders deliberately intensify those feelings.⁹⁴

While referring to 9/11, Stern argues that it was evil in a straightforward way. Quoting philosopher Susan Nieman, she writes, 'September 11 hijackers plotted their attack for years. They may have felt themselves grievously wrong by U.S. policies, but their victims were not responsible for creating or implementing them. The hijackers issued no ultimatum. Many of the victims were not Americans. Malice and forethought, the classic components of evil intentions have rarely been so well combined.'⁹⁵ Stern's work on religious terrorism summarises the dynamics of "religion in the service of terror."⁹⁶ She argues that religion has two sides – one that is

⁹³ Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*, (Harper Collins: New York, 2003), p. xviii.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. xxiv.

⁹⁶ Pinar Tank, 'Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militant Kill by Jessica Stern,' *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 41, No.5 (Sept., 2004), p.648.

spiritual and universalist, and the other particularist and sectarian. It is essential to “recognise the seductiveness of sectarianism to understand the extent of the danger.”⁹⁷

Terrorism has emerged as one of the most important political issues in the world. In the wake of September 11, the threat of terrorism has given the problem of Islamic terror instant importance, outstripping the understanding of religion in its essence. Islamists treat Islam as a political ideology, without the essence of the religion. I think the problem is with terrorism and its perpetrators who manipulate and exploit religion; and are a manifestation of pure evil. This is where the problem lies and not with Islam or any other religion. Islamism is not Islam. The lines between the two might appear blurred, but it is imperative to draw the distinction. This is not to deny that an unacceptable face of Islam does not exist. A wider knowledge of Islam bears out that Islam has many faces; and is internally complex.

The 21st century has witnessed the resurgence of religious terror and its devastatingly tragic consequences. It will be wise on our part to view things from a distance – neither too far nor too close. This distance will give us the right perspective to view and analyse events occurring in different situations and circumstances. It would be wrong to see these upsurges as a single malevolent trend. “The Islamist movement is diverse, with almost as many manifestations as there are interpretations of the Qura’n.”⁹⁸ Beverley’s argument that many Muslim domains today are characterized by weak or failed states, which generate instability and propensity for conflict, and in turn make armed violence increasingly inevitable, is acceptable. “When economic resources are scarce, competition for them increases and societies become increasingly vulnerable to political violence, as highlighted in Muslim countries. Such conditions expose Muslim countries to internal conflict and intervention of other actors. Islam alone then is not the sole determinant of terrorism but Muslims engulfed by conflict or party to conflict are frequently defined by such a label.”⁹⁹

⁹⁷ Jessica Stern, *Terror in the Name of God: Why Religious Militants Kill*, (Harper Collins: New York, 2003), p. xxvii.

⁹⁸ Shahid Qadir, *Civilisational Clashes: Surveying the Fault-Lines*, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 19, No.1 (Mar., 1998), p. 151.

⁹⁹ Beverley Milton-Edwards, *Islamic Fundamentalism Since 1945*, (Routledge: London, 2005), pp. 94-95.

The event of 9/11 has made the 'war on terror' the centerpiece of U.S. global strategy.
The next chapter will look into the relationship between U.S. policies and terrorism

CHAPTER TWO

IDEOLOGY BEHIND THE WAR ON TERROR

Ideology is a powerful force that propels ordinary individuals into action. “Ideology frames organisational structure, leadership and membership motivation, recruitment and support, and shapes the strategies and tactics adopted by the group. *Jihadi* ideologues and group leaders craft their ideology by *interpreting*, reinterpreting or misinterpreting religion and politics. The personal history and worldview of an individual may make him or her more or less susceptible to a particular terrorist or extremist ideology.”¹⁰⁰ The contemporary *jihadi* groups use ideology to recruit followers from a cross section of society and indoctrinate their potential and existing support base. Ideology disseminates in the form of information or propaganda. ‘The import of liberalism and parliamentarianism in Egypt, Syria has bred cultural anxieties that political Islam has capitalised on. The failure of pan-Arabism and Arab-nationalism has created a political space for fundamentalism. Islamists have insisted that imported influences and ideologies have failed to deliver genuine development while fostering illegitimate values, and therefore a return to traditional Islamic concepts of governance is only way to redeem crisis-ridden societies. Hence a combination of existential frustration and disenchantment with the West has created the conditions for Islamic fundamentalism.’¹⁰¹ It has been argued that to counter the threat posed by a group, “its operational infrastructure must be dismantled and its conceptual structure eroded. As terrorism is a vicious by-product of ideological extremism, government and society must develop an ideological response to make it difficult for terrorist groups to replenish their human losses and material wastage.”¹⁰²

The 9/11 terrorist attacks heralded a significant change in the international system; Islamic terrorism emerged as the primary strategic threat faced by the United States.

¹⁰⁰ Rohan Gunaratna, *Ideology in the Terrorism And Counter Terrorism: Lessons from al-Qaeda*, in *The Ideological War on Terror: Worldwide Strategies for Counter Terrorism*, by Anne Aldis & Graeme P. Herd, (Routledge: London, 2007), p. 21.

¹⁰¹ Joseph Kostiner, ‘Islamic Fundamentalism and Terrorism,’ in P.R. Chari & Suba Chandran, *Terrorism Post 9/11: An Indian Perspective*, (Manohar Publications: New Delhi, 2003),

¹⁰² *ibid.*

'The *Jihadi-Wahhabi* ideology has been developing not only among groups of exiles or fighting warlords in Muslim countries and areas, but among growing numbers of supporters, Islamist scholars and organisations among Muslim communities in the West. The rapid growth of global communication, through the internet and cellular and satellite technology is a major factor that has contributed to this new ideological greenhouse.'¹⁰³ There was a short lull soon after 9/11, followed by a resurgence of counter terrorism strategies, revolving around the defeat of radical Islamic forces. The Bush administration centred on a desire to replicate the idea of a *just war*, in which military retaliation accompanied with escalation of warfare were considered inevitable and justified. It is imperative to understand the intellectual context in which the Bush administration interpreted this threat. The absence of democracy and freedom actually spawned extremism under the guise of terrorism. Radical political Islam was recognised to be an offshoot of the social and political structure within the autocratic West Asian nations.

Furthermore, it is believed that "there is a real threat that the impact of these violent ideologies. Doctrines and activities, on the one hand, and the global counter-terrorism effort, on the other, may lead to two major developments: Firstly, *the development of new and larger bases of Islamist radicalism and terrorism or political violence in Muslim communities in the West – mainly Europe, and North and South America – under the consolidation of two relatively new Islamist doctrines.* One is the globalisation of the Islamist struggle in the form of the solidarity of global jihad as a religious duty, and against what is perceived as the global conspiracy against Islam as a religion, culture and a way of life. The other is the emergence of a new Islamist trend and doctrine of the 'Non- Territorial Islamic State.' Within this framework, Muslim communities in the West are perceived as a kind of Islamic state without territorial dimensions, and the ideal and religious mission of Islam is to establish one Islamic state and rule. This doctrine, whose origins were developed by Islamic scholars in the United Kingdom, emphasised the socio-cultural, economic and political consolidation of the Muslim communities. It did, however, give freedom to the principle of Islamic pluralism and to activities of a variety of organisations, groups and institutions reflecting all kind of trends of modern Islamic thought. The

¹⁰³ Reuven Paz, 'The Brotherhood of Global Jihad,' in *The Global Threat of Terror: Ideological, Material and Political Linkages*, by K.P.S. Gill & Ajai Sahni, (Roli Books: New Delhi, 2002) p. 49.

democratic and liberal environment of the Western countries greatly influenced this pluralism, but the fundamentalist nature of many Islamic movements in their homeland persisted among these communities. One of the main elements that supported this doctrine was the interaction between different Muslim population from various Muslim countries, nationalities, regions and cultures. This interaction assisted in the emergence of mutual influence, cooperation, solidarity and the developing sense of a global threat to Islam and the Muslims. The globalisation of the reaction to this perceived threat lead to the doctrine of a global jihad.

Secondly, “*the development of what we might call ‘Social Terrorism’*- terrorism that is primarily motivated by social factors, such as the hatred of foreigners, growing unemployment and other economic circumstances, difficulties in coping with Western modernisation, the changing and dismantling of traditional values and family ties. Such elements might affect other group of immigrants as well. But, the growing Islamic and Islamist activity among Muslim communities of emigrants, in addition to Islamist doctrines of conspiracies and the global struggle against the West encourage the rising potential of the spread of radical doctrines among the younger generation of Muslims. If we carefully look at the profiles of many of the arrested suspects with links to al-Qaeda following the September 2001 attacks in the United States, and in different regions of the world, we find quite a different kind of people as compared to the Arab volunteers in Afghanistan. They are generally more educated and familiar with Western culture. But instead of using this familiarity for personal benefits and greater integration in Western culture, they nurture their hostility and use their familiarity to take advantage of the weaknesses of their host societies. They are what we may call ‘Terrorists of Alienation’. Such social processes are not new in the Arab and Muslim world.”¹⁰⁴

The threat posed by Islamic extremism led to a new grand strategic era of the War on Terror. Within the academia and the administration there emerged a conventional narrative about the causes of the attacks and the way the United States should respond, which would determine the course of the war on terror. “The worldview of

¹⁰⁴ Reuven Paz, ‘The Brotherhood of Global Jihad,’ in *The Global Threat of Terror: Ideological, Material and Political Linkages*, by K.P.S. Gill & Ajai Sahni, (Roli Books: New Delhi, 2002), pp. 47-48.

the neoconservatives had the merit of internal consistency and plausibility. It also meshed with the public sentiment characterised by fear and a yearning for forceful action. There were alternate viewpoints regarding the President's repeatedly asked question, "why do they hate us?" The President gave the first answer: "They hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other." This upset the mood of the country and things became unsayable. An alternative viewpoint emerged from Chalmers Johnson, a political scientist, who answered the same question by saying: "The suicidal assassins of September 11, 2001 did not attack America, as our political leaders and the news media would like to maintain. They attacked the American foreign policy," that had been kept secret from the American people."¹⁰⁵ This counter viewpoint suggests that the media failed to play its role and lost its power to remain independent of officialdom.

It is argued that the Bush administration reacted to the catastrophe by pointing in two different directions. 'On the one hand the President proclaimed a 'War on Terror,' which called for the creation of a global coalition of states against non-state violence in general and transnational terrorism 'with global reach' in particular – thus appearing to capitalise on global sympathy for the United States in its post 9/11 agony. On the other hand they also identified Taliban ruled Afghanistan as being at the heart of the problem because of its willingness to give refuge to bin Laden and to the al-Qaeda training camps.'¹⁰⁶ The United States did not succeed in capturing either bin Laden or the Taliban leader Mullah Omar. Few believed that Iraq had replaced Afghanistan as a home for al-Qaeda and was involved in planning 9/11.

Al-Qaeda represents a global tribe waging segmental warfare. "The militant *jihadi*st groups under the al-Qaeda ideological umbrella use the information age to reiterate ancient patterns of tribalism on a global scale. They skilfully tap into powerful tribal motifs that easily arouse both the heart and the mind among Muslims globally, fused

¹⁰⁵ Ibrahim Warde, *The Price of Fear: Al-Qaeda and the Truth Behind the Financial War on Terror*, (I.B. Tauris: London, 2007), p. 54.

¹⁰⁶ David Carlton, *The West's Road to 9/11: Resisting, Appeasing and Encouraging Terrorism since 1970*, (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2005), p. 258.

against an outside enemy, and a *jihadist* narrative so compelling that it amounts to both an ideology and a doctrine.”¹⁰⁷

With the approach of the Bush administration in the War on Terror being firmly grounded in a global outlook, it was recognised that the “lack of fundamental freedoms was seen as resulting in Islam serving as the sole political mobilising agent which, although Muslim politics had many faces, resulted in extremism directed internationally against the United States and the West in general.”¹⁰⁸ As the response of the United States to the 9/11 attacks marked the onset of a new grand strategic era, it is necessary to understand how political Islam fits in with the strategy underpinning the War on Terror.

The 9/11 Commission Report makes the following remark about the globalisation of al-Qaeda’s jihad:

“The 9/11 attack was an event of surprising disproportion. [...] It was carried out by a tiny group of people, not enough to man a full platoon. Measured on a governmental scale, the resources behind it were trivial. The group itself was dispatched by an organisation based in one of the poorest, most remote, and least industrialised countries on earth. [...] To us, Afghanistan seemed very far away. To members of al-Qaeda, America seemed very close. In a sense they were more globalised than we were.”¹⁰⁹

Devji comments that the “surprising disproportion” was between al-Qaeda’s severely limited means and seemingly limitless ends that made a global movement of its jihad. He argues that the attacks of 9/11 were immaculately planned and executed, but lacked intentionality because al-Qaeda could neither control nor predict their global repercussions.¹¹⁰ The event of 9/11 unleashed powerful forces which radically altered

¹⁰⁷ Magnus Ranstorp and Graeme P. Herd, ‘Approaches to Countering Terrorism and CIST,’ in *The Ideological War on Terror: Worldwide Strategies for Counter Terrorism*, by Anne Aldis & Graeme P. Herd, (Routledge: London, 2007), p. 6.

¹⁰⁸ Steven Wright, *The United States and Persian Gulf Security: The Foundations of the War on Terror*, (Ithaca Press: U.K, 2007), pp. 18 – 19.

¹⁰⁹ *The 9/11 Commission Report: Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States*, (W.W. Norton: New York, 2004), pp. 339-40.

¹¹⁰ Faisal Devji, *Landscapes of the Jihad: Militancy, Morality and Modernity*, (Hurst & Co.: U.K., 2005), p. 1.

the politico-ideological contours of contemporary world politics. The U.S.A once again found an enemy to target. This was Osama bin Laden, a former protégé of CIA in Afghanistan, fighting against the then Soviet troops and a fugitive Saudi millionaire and his tiny band of crazy warriors, al-Qaeda.

The ascendancy of George W. Bush offered a sought after opportunity to implement the discretionary policies in Middle East, where soon after 9/11, the war on terror began to zero in on Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Iran while simultaneously allowing Ariel Sharon a free hand in using brute force against the Palestinians.¹¹¹ Late in the evening of September 11, the President addressed the nation on the terrible events of the day. He said, "...A great people have been moved to defend a great nation. Terrorist attacks can shake the foundations of our biggest buildings, but they cannot touch the foundation of America. These acts shattered steel, but they cannot dent the steel of American resolve. Today, our nation saw evil, the very worst of our human nature. The functions of our government continue without interruption. The search is underway for those who are behind these evil acts. I've directed the full resources of our intelligence and law enforcement communities to find those responsible and to bring them to justice. We will make the distinction between the terrorist who committed these acts and those who harbour them."¹¹² Bush responded with a comprehensive strategy to protect America. He reorganised the federal government and built global coalitions to remove violent regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq that threatened America.

It becomes clear that the "coming decade will be defined by a war in the shadows, where Western intelligence agencies will continue to try to identify and degrade a constantly innovative and adaptive terrorist adversary that is global in reach. This enduring battlefield will have no definable frontiers, no apparent or visible enemies and the battles will be waged not only physically but also ideologically and across the virtual domain. This ideological battlefield is proving increasingly complex, elusive and multifaceted in an era of globalisation where like the famous 'butterfly effect' one small local event translates in seconds into global consciousness. Additionally, the

¹¹¹ Ifkhar H. Maik, '*Cresecent Between Cross And Star: Muslims and the West after 9/11*,' (Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2006), p. 5.

¹¹² Yonah Alexander and Michael B. Kraft, '*Evolution of U.S. Counterterrorism Policy*,' Vol. I, (Library of Congress Cataloguing-in-Publication Data: United States of America, 2008), p. 247-248.

ideological battlefield requires understanding the culture of the enemy and an architecture that provides synergy of messages across simultaneous levels. It is clear that the terrorists understand how to do this much better than us. This will be the ultimate and decisive challenge in the global war on terrorism.”¹¹³ It is apparent that ideology plays and will continue to play a crucial role in terrorist activities. Realising this effective role of ideology it becomes imperative to wage an ideological battle against these terrorists to counter their ideological claims behind every heinous crime.

The form of threat posed by Al-Qaeda as well as by other international terrorist organisations appears to have been interpreted by the Republican right within the USA as that of an ‘advanced expression of the de-territorialising forces of globalisation.’ The war on terror has been articulated within areas of the US foreign policy establishment as a commitment to the ‘defence of the traditional values and institutions of the nation-state against that de-territorialising threat.’¹¹⁴

AXIS OF EVIL: BUILDING THE WAR ON TERROR

“Our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been stopped, found and defeated.”

(President George W. Bush, September 21, 2001)

Combating the root causes of radical Islamism became a priority for the Bush administration. The ghastly terrorist attacks led to a complex mixture of political, social and economic reactions from around the world. “The war on terror began on the financial front.”¹¹⁵ Bush announced, “[...] We have launched a strike on the financial foundation of the global terror network.”¹¹⁶ The financial war was, from the start, a global one. The President gave notice to the international financial community, “If you do business with terrorists, if you support or sponsor them, you will not do

¹¹³ Anne Aldis & Graeme P. Herd, *The Ideological War on Terror: Worldwide Strategies for Counter Terrorism*, (Routledge: London, 2007), p. 3.

¹¹⁴ Julian Reid, *The Biopolitics of the War on Terror: A Critique of the ‘Return of Imperialism’ Thesis in International Relations*, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.26, No. 2, (2005), p. 242.

¹¹⁵ Ibrahim Warde, *The Price of Fear: Al-Qaeda and the Truth Behind the Financial War on Terror*, (I.B. Tauris: London, 2007), p.vii.

¹¹⁶ *ibid.*

business with the United States of America.”¹¹⁷ All members of the United Nations officially signed on to the financial war, doing their part in freezing accounts, signing treatise, creating new bureaucracies and committing to starving terrorists of funds.

The *Global War against Terrorism* has been crystallised into a workable “institutional, procedural and legislative structure, both in the international arena, and within nations. The US has, of course, initiated a massive, unprecedented diplomatic effort to mobilise world opinion in favour of this ‘Global War’, and its ‘Coalition against Terrorism’ now includes a number of ideologically disparate nations-some of which are and have ben open conflict over extended periods of time.the ‘Coalition’ is, consequently, not integrated into a multi-layered structure that creates a space for complex exchanges of information or cooperative action between its various members, but is essentially held together by the ‘hub’ of current US interests. Participants of this coalition are bound by nothing more than their commitment – which is often little more than a rhetorical stance, and at least in some cases, even this has been secured through coercive diplomatic efforts.”¹¹⁸

The war on terror exposes that it was the exclusive prerogative of the U.S. to decide who was or who was not a ‘terrorist’ and what constituted their ‘support structure’. This war on international terrorism was going to be permanent, global, and largely covert. Incongruously, Afghanistan was immediately declared to be the object of such a war even though the U.S. itself had claimed that the majority of those who had carried out 11 September attacks were Saudi nationals and none of them was Afghan.¹¹⁹

“The Bush government is reported to be working on a new strategic doctrine that moves away from the Cold War strategies of ‘containment and deterrence.’ The new doctrine will advocate re-emptive attacks against hostile states and terrorist groups who may develop chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. President Bush’s address at the June graduation of West Point cadets assumed significance because it described

¹¹⁷ *ibid*, p. viii.

¹¹⁸ K.P.S. Gill & Ajai Sahni, *The Global Threat of Terror: Ideological, Material and Political Linkages*, (Roli Books: New Delhi, 202), pp.4-5.

¹¹⁹ Aijaz Ahmad, *Iraq, Afghanistan & the Imperialism of Our Time*, (Leftword: New Delhi, 2004), p. 12.

his new strategic doctrine of pre-emption with clarity. The new strategic shift formulated by the White House and Pentagon recommends and justifies the use of military force by the U.S. against any state that is considered as hostile or ‘makes moves to acquire weapons of mass destruction – nuclear, biological or chemical. This doctrine is being termed as the latest National Security Strategy; it is being called a policy of ‘defensive intervention, which may often come into play. The dangerous implications of this policy are being brushed aside. The U.S. administration considers this change necessary after the events of 11 September. It is said that the nature of the enemy has changed, the nature of threat has changed, and so the response has to change.’¹²⁰

The invasion of Afghanistan in October 2001 and the ousting of Taliban were to serve the purpose of denying a formal base of operations for al-Qaeda. The invasion of Iraq in March 2003 has also been based on the same strategic objectives. ‘President Bush launched his war against terrorism, which in his view was inspired and organised in essence by none other than the Arabs, in particular, and religious fundamentalists among 1.4 billion Muslims of the world, in general. Afghanistan was declared as one al-Qaeda’s main base. By December 2001, it was quickly disposed of, occupied and a chosen government was installed with coalition forces guarding it around. Iraq came next. Bush was ready to bring direct war to Iraq.’¹²¹ In his State of Union message he told the world that North Korea, Iran and Iraq constituted “an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world.”¹²² The three countries had little in common. North Korea was geographically isolated from the other two and was run by a repressive communist regime. Iran was governed by a fundamentalist Islamic regime, while Iraq was governed by the brutal secular, or non-religious, dictatorship of Saddam Hussein under the Baathist one party system. Furthermore, none of these countries had any known record of having supported al-Qaeda. Although a connection between the Afghan government and al-Qaeda had been clear, there was very little evidence of any links between al-Qaeda and Hussein’s regime in Iraq. These inconsistencies seemed inappropriate to many observers.¹²³

¹²⁰ Afsir Karim, *War on Terror*, (Har-Anand Publications: New Delhi, 2008) p. 87.

¹²¹ Zafar Imam, *Iraq 2003: The Return of Imperialism*, (Aakar Books: New Delhi, 2003), p. 79.

¹²² *ibid.*

¹²³ Rodney P. & John S. Bowman, *America at War: Iraq War*, (Facts on File: U.S.A, 2005), pp. 51-52.

On 12 September, 2001, Donald Rumsfeld, the U.S. Defence Secretary, had argued in favour of an immediate attack on Iraq, together with Afghanistan. The Secretary of State Powell had with difficulty persuaded the President and his Cabinet that the two countries should be attacked not simultaneously but in succession, one after the other, because Afghanistan was an easy target while an immediate attack on Iraq would be difficult militarily and hard to justify to allies diplomatically.¹²⁴

Looking at the record of the U.S foreign policy, it appears that the use of force has been a crucial element in its execution. 'Years before 9/11, the neoconservatives had propounded a militarist interventionism in the Middle East by focussing on the removal of Saddam Hussein and the invasion of Iran. They felt constrained by international treaties that operated as unnecessary curbs on U.S power and global imperatives. 9/11 came as a blessing from the blue as the neoconservatives aggregated their efforts to reorganise the Middle Eastern political map by espousing the invasion of Iraq and Iran besides supporting Israel in its own untiring campaign of Palestinian dispossession.'¹²⁵ It becomes evident that a few exotic words soon roll off the tongues of every commentator on terrorism: "madrasas, the little known Koranic Schools, Wahhabism, the austere Islamic sect that dominates Saudi Arabia; and Al-Jazeera, the Qatar based news network, which soon stood accused of propagating an ideology of hatred."¹²⁶ Anyone connected to Wahhabism could be a suspect; and any Islamic charity financing a madrasa could find itself accused of funding terror.

THE CASE OF AFGHANISTAN

"The 11 September terrorist attack, and the subsequent war in Afghanistan to crush Osama bin Laden's al-Qaeda organisation and the Taliban movement which supported it, have raised some important questions for those interested in the architecture of a free society. In the United States, serious questions have surfaced about the freedom of aliens, the judicial review of executive action, and even the

¹²⁴ Aijaz Ahmad, 'Iraq, Afghanistan & the Imperialism of Our Time,' (Leftword: New Delhi, 2004), p. 11.

¹²⁵ Iftikhar H. Maik, 'Crescent Between Cross And Star: Muslims and the West after 9/11,' (Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2006), pp. 9-10.

¹²⁶ Ibrahim Warde, 'The Price of Fear: Al-Qaeda and the Truth Behind the Financial War on Terror,' (I.B. Tauris: London, 2007), p.57.

extent to which cherished freedoms might need to be compromised for the higher good of preventing terrorist networks from conducting their nefarious activities. In Afghanistan also, some important questions for liberals have surfaced. One set relates to the possibility, disturbing for anarchists that the weakness of the state was indispensable to the flourishing of the al-Qaeda network. But another relates to the question of how new institutions should be designed in the post-Taliban period. The State in Afghanistan collapsed many years ago, and the results have not been very pleasant: civil society, historically quite robust, found itself pillaged by decidedly uncivil forces. In the current situation, there is strong international support for rebuilding the state.”¹²⁷

Identifying Afghanistan to be falling under the Wahhabi cult, the U.S administration occupied and invaded Afghanistan in October 2001, which reflected their immediate operational concern. Ousting of the Taliban and eliminating al-Qaeda was the purpose behind the vigorous counterterrorism policy. In a few days after 9/11 the United States was seeking out allies in the region to assist efforts to destroy al-Qaeda bases and networks of support in Afghanistan. On October 6, 2001 President Bush on a Radio Address updated Americans on their global campaign against terror. “[...] Our enemy is the terrorist and the regimes that shelter and sustain them. Afghanistan is a case in point. Its Taliban regime has made the nation into a sanctuary and training ground for the international terrorists – terrorists who have killed innocent citizens of many nations, including our own. [...] America respects the Afghan people, their long tradition and their proud independence. And we will help them in this time of confusion and crisis in their country. We’re offering help and friendship to the Afghan people. It is their Taliban rulers, and the terrorists they harbour, who have much to fear.”¹²⁸ This was the final warning before the announcement of military strikes against the Taliban, Afghanistan’s brutal religious dictatorship.

¹²⁷ This is a part of the paper presented at the Special Asian Regional Meeting of the Mont Pelerin Society, Goa in January 2002 by William Maley. See Afsir Karim, ‘War on Terror,’ (Har-Anand Publication: New Delhi, 2008), p. 63.

¹²⁸ Yonah Alexander and Michael B. Kraft, ‘Evolution of U.S. Counterterrorism Policy,’ Vol. I, (United States of America, 2008), p..258.

Bush then declared the war on terror.

‘This declaration of a permanent global war upon other sovereign states in retribution for an act of terror carried out by a group of private citizens-coupled with the intent to invade Afghanistan, even though none of the perpetrators of that crime was an Afghan national was so disproportionate that it could not be seriously considered a response to the event of 11 September. What was being announced rather was a radical ‘Re-Mapping of the Globe’ so as to redefine and refurbish the mode of American imperial domination.’¹²⁹

This war was to be unlike any other war America had ever fought and would involve “far more instant retaliation and isolated strikes.” He pledged every tool at his disposal-diplomacy, intelligence, law enforcement, financial influence, and “every necessary weapon of war to win”.¹³⁰ Initially, the Taliban refused to negotiate and demanded to see evidence of Osama bin Laden’s involvement in 9/11 attacks. Nearing an invasion, the Taliban then offered to extradite bin Laden to a neutral country, but Bush refused. The invasion began with the insertion of American and British Special Forces on the ground, followed by an aerial bombing campaign in early October 2001, targeting Taliban and al-Qaeda forces. The Taliban’s defenses were no match for the allies’ overwhelming technological superiority. In mid-November, the Taliban evacuated Kabul, and regrouped their remaining forces near Kandahar. Many of the remaining al-Qaeda forces retreated into the mountains near the Pakistan border, east of Kabul. Late in November and early December, most of the remaining Taliban and al-Qaeda forces surrendered, but bin Laden’s whereabouts remained unknown (Godwin: 2008, 191). These military strikes against al-Qaeda terrorist training camps and military installation of the Taliban regime in Afghanistan were carefully targeted actions designed to disrupt the use of Afghanistan as a terrorist base of operation, and to attack the military capability of the Taliban. Except for failing to apprehend bin Laden, the military action in Afghanistan was a success; capturing thousands of terrorists, destroying Afghanistan’s terrorist training camps and reopening the American embassy in Kabul.

¹²⁹ Aijaz Ahmad, *Iraq, Afghanistan & the Imperialism of Our Time*, (Leftword: New Delhi, 2004), pp. 12-13.

¹³⁰ Jack Godwin, *The Arrow And The Olive Branch: Practical Idealism in U.S Foreign Policy (The Ethics of American Foreign Policy)*, (Greenwood Publishing Group: U.S.A, 2008), p.190.

The U.S. campaign in Afghanistan appeared to support the ‘rapid-transfer approach.’¹³¹ After a small U.S. force achieved military victory, political authority passed to Hamid Karzai, an Afghan exile leader selected by a *loya jirga* - a grand assembly of Afghan tribal leaders – and subsequently appointed president of Afghanistan at an international conference in Bonn. Per capita reconstruction expenditure in Afghanistan had remained modest. Officials viewed this seemingly successful post war transition as a vindication of the Administration’s break with conventional wisdom about nation building, buttressing arguments of Defence officials that Afghanistan should serve as the model for Iraq.¹³²

The State Department argued against applying the Afghanistan as the model to Iraq, as it was believed that the Iraqi exile leaders were unlikely to garner the same level of support as Karzai had enjoyed; and that Iraq would need a longer transitional period because of the need to reconcile Iraq’s competing ethnic and sectarian groups.

The focus of war on terror was not limited to Afghanistan; it was broader, including Iraq – another central front in the war on terror. The U.S invasion of Iraq an overreaction to 9/11, created a new land of *jihad*, increasing the threat severalfold. Bush’s immediate instinct after the attack was to hit back with force. “Following the September 11 terrorist attacks, there were leaks to the media about alleged evidence of a meeting in Prague between an Iraqi intelligence officer and one of the hijackers of the doomed airplanes that crashed into the World Trade Centre. However, both the FBI and the CIA declared that no such meeting occurred. It is unlikely that the decidedly secular Ba’athist regime-which savagely suppressed Islamists within Iraq-would have been able to maintain close links with Bin Laden and his followers. It was noted how Bin Laden views Saddam Hussein ‘as an apostate, an infidel or someone who is not worthy of being a fellow Muslim.’ Much of the money trail comes from US ally Saudi Arabia; none has been traced to Iraq. Various accounts of alleged Iraqi connections with various al-Qaeda operatives alleged by the US Secretary of State Colin Powell and others have, upon closer examination, proved to be groundless.

¹³¹ Stuart W. Bowen, Jr., *Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience*, (U.S Government Printing Office: Washington DC, 2009), p. 8.

¹³² *ibid.*

State Department's own study did not list any serious act of international terrorism by the government of Iraq."¹³³

There was a shift in the attitude towards the reason behind the invasion. General Tommy Franks, Commanding General of the U.S. Central Command removed a small group of key planners from the Afghanistan campaign and directed them to revise plans to attack Iraq. "Whereas the Taliban had been pinpointed as hosts of al-Qaeda, there was little legitimate effort to connect the invasion of Iraq to the terror that was 9/11. This is because the "war on terror" had moved on, from addressing broadly shared security concerns to targeting militant nationalism."¹³⁴

THE RECONSTRUCTION OF IRAQ : 2003

"After the shock of September 11, Americans rallied around the flag in support of the country and their government. Unfortunately, that commendable sentiment brought a blind loyalty, an unquestioning willingness to accept whatever the leadership said was necessary to fight terrorism. By suppressing our natural scepticism, turning off our analytical filters, we participated in a *major national mistake*, the invasion of Iraq."¹³⁵

Richard Clarke, the former counterterrorism official in the Bush administration, critically analysed the steps taken to wage a war on Iraq. He argued that both terrorism and Iraq had to be looked at with deep analysis, as both the issues were laced with important subtlety and nuance. The apathy in complicated analysis led to this "major national mistake."¹³⁶ The point that Clarke made was, 'attacking Iraq would actually make America less secure and strengthen the broader radical Islamic terrorist movement.'¹³⁷ In the new administrations discussions of terrorism, Paul Wolfowitz had urged a focus on Iraqi-sponsored-terrorism against the U.S even though there was no such thing.¹³⁸ It all began in February 2003, when Secretary of

¹³³ Stephen Zunes, 'The US Obsession with Iraq and the Triumph of Militarism', in *'Iraq: The Human Cost of History*, ' by Tareq Y. Ismael & William W. Haddad', (Pluto Press: U.S.A., 2004), p.168.

¹³⁴ Mahmood Mamdani, *'Good Muslim Bad Muslim: Islam, the USA and the Global War Against Terror*, ' (Permanent Black: New Delhi, 2005), p. 179.

¹³⁵ Richard Clarke, *'Against All Enemies: Inside America's War on Terror*, ' (Free Press: New York, 2004), p.

¹³⁶ *ibid*, p.

¹³⁷ *ibid*, p.244.

¹³⁸ *ibid*, p.264.

State Colin Powell delivered an address to the United Nations presenting evidence, which later proved to be false, that Saddam Hussein possessed chemical and biological weapons. The reasons given by the Bush administration for its war with Iraq shifted from terrorism to weapons of mass destruction to the suffering of the Iraqi people. 'Even if Iraq had weapons of mass destruction it is not in and of itself a threat to the United States. Over two thousand nations possess weapons of mass destruction, according to unclassified CIA testimony to Congress. It was never thought that the Iraqi chemical or biological weapons could be a threat to the United Nations in 2002.

Saddam had ample opportunity to use them on the U.S. for over a decade and did not. Both the White House and the CIA must have known there was no "imminent threat" to the U.S., but one claimed the opposite, and the other allowed them to do so uncorrected. The President claimed that the invasion of Iraq was just one battle in the War on Terrorism that began on September 11. Many of the heroic U.S. troops who risked their lives fighting in Iraq thought, because of misleading statements from the White House, that they were avenging the 3,000 dead from September 11. It was horrible to give such a false impression to the American people and the American troops instigated to fight there.'¹³⁹

It was in September 2003 that the President clearly stated that there was no evidence that Iraq was involved in the September 11 attacks. After publicly admitting that there was no connection between the al-Qaeda attack of September 11 and Saddam Hussein's government in Iraq, advocates of the Iraq war began to shift their argument. They began to emphasise the "connections" and "linkages" between Iraq and al-Qaeda in general, no longer specifically mentioning September 11.

Clarke argues that 'a counterweight ideology should have been created against al-Qaeda, fundamentalist, radical version of Islam, because much of the threat that we face is ideological, perversion of a religion. Instead of seeking to work with the majority in the Islamic world to mould public opinion against the radicals, we invaded and occupied an oil rich Arab country that posed no threat to us.'¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Ibid, pp. 267-268.

¹⁴⁰ ibid, p. 264.

Every war has a story line. Conn argues that “Iraq was sold as a war to halt weapons of mass destruction; then to overthrow Saddam Hussein, then to build democracy. In the end it was a fabrication built on a falsehood and anchored in a fraud.”¹⁴¹ From the outset the Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld believed that the fall of Saddam would lead to a transfer of power to an interim Iraqi authority. Reflecting this belief, the U.S. forces were conceived as liberators who would leave Iraq within months of toppling the regime. Later, “a different view of regime change developed at the State Department. Some officials believed that Iraq with its history of sectarian violence could not be easily reshaped. They concluded that invading Iraq and replacing its totalitarian regime would require a U.S. commitment of enormous scope, carried out over period of years, engaging everything, from Iraq’s judiciary to its electrical grid.”¹⁴² ‘The history of America’s war with Iraq, from the Gulf War to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, has seen the upgrading of propaganda from distortion and exaggeration of facts to a deliberate invention of lies.’¹⁴³

It was argued by experts, from both inside and outside the government that the prewar planning of postwar Iraq exposed the United States to extraordinary risks. It faced a massive resistance from Iraqi people in June 2003. Zaki Chehab, an Arab journalist, penetrated into the inner structures of Saddam loyalists and Islamist radicals and also reached out to ordinary people struggling in this occupation. The complexity and ferocity of the Iraqi insurgency is reflected in one of the nationalist’s statement¹⁴⁴:

“The resistance began immediately after the arrival of U.S. forces into the country. We started this national front with ten people. We then opened it up to more people, and with the help of the faithful and those who believe in our cause, we have expanded to the extent that we have bases or cells all over Iraq. People join us from all walks of life. Those who cannot fight support us financially...there

¹⁴¹ Conn Hallinan, ‘*Afghanistan: Not a Good War*,’ *Foreign Policy in Focus*, July 30, 2008.

¹⁴² Stuart W. Bowen, Jr., ‘*Hard Lessons: The Iraq Reconstruction Experience*,’ (U.S Government Printing Office: Washington DC, 2009), p.3.

¹⁴³ Mahmood Mamdani, ‘*Good Muslim Bad Muslim: Islam, the USA and the Global War Against Terror*,’ (Permanent Black: New Delhi, 2005), p. 196.

¹⁴⁴ Mahmood was an independent candidate of a national organization, ‘The National Command Front.’ He was interviewed by Zaki Chehab.

is plenty of coordination going on between different groups and bases.”¹⁴⁵

The dense link between the Saddam Fidayeen, the independent national organisations and the Islamist, escalated the situation of resistance against the occupiers. “Western draconian laws, discriminatory policies targeting Muslim citizens and visitors, and worst of all, thoughtless and equally ruthless military campaigns and further deterioration of the political situation in West Asia have allowed more support for the fundamentalist groups.”¹⁴⁶ A collective message was addressed to President George Bush and his allies from the National Command Front. It read as follows:

“We made a promise to our people to send the bodies of your soldiers home, one after the other in response to the random terrorist attacks which are being carried out by the American forces where innocent people get killed and the elderly humiliated...Once again we call upon you, if you are serious about looking after the safety of your soldiers, to leave our country immediately, or we will take revenge for every Iraqi killed or humiliated and every house ransacked. You should know that the Iraqis are now well aware of the big lie you have told them that you are here to liberate Iraq from dictatorship.”¹⁴⁷

The U.S administration’s humiliating policies lead to bitterness and hatred, and eventually people resorted to violence for revenge. The U.S. officials’ rationalisation of the torture and abuse, that are systemic and result from dehumanisation of the enemy reveal their national security agencies reliance on abusive mechanisms and “outrages against personal dignity.”¹⁴⁸ “As Abu Ghraib, Guantanamo and other well-documented cases in Iraq and Afghanistan reveal, the U.S. military violated established international and domestic conventions and policies. These abuses occurred because a highly rationalized system of interrogation is in effect, placing a higher value on information extraction than it does on human rights.”¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁵ Zaki Chehab, *Iraq Ablaze: Inside The Insurgency*, (I.B. Tauris: New York, 2006), p.7.

¹⁴⁶ Iftikhar H. Maik, *Crescent Between Cross And Star: Muslims and the West after 9/11*, (Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2006), p. 253.

¹⁴⁷ Zaki Chehab, *Iraq Ablaze: Inside The Insurgency*, (I.B. Tauris: New York, 2006), pp. 9-10.

¹⁴⁸ Gregory Hooks & Clayton Mosher, *Outrages against Personal Dignity: Rationalising Abuse and Torture in the War on Terror*, *Social Forces*, Vol.83, No.4 (June, 2005), p. 1627.

¹⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 1628.

While the war in Afghanistan saw most industrial countries not only rhetorically back US-led campaign but also offer material assistance, the subsequent war in Iraq has profoundly divided opinion and represents a likely watershed in the post Cold War international order. The Iraq War had wide implications for the conduct of international relations. It was the first pre-emptive war in the century and the first waged on the basis of the intelligence reports. It carries implications for the nature of warfare, the “war on terror”, the relevance of international law, and the United Nations. Nelson Mandela accused the United States of creating a “holocaust” and John Pilger called Bush presidency the “Third Reich of our times.”¹⁵⁰

9/11 opened the doors for George Bush to do what he had always longed for. “The truth can no longer be camouflaged that the U.S. military occupation of Iraq is indeed like the return of imperialism. For the unfortunate people of Iraq, the old and the new imperialism have one common basis-coercion, submission and control through use of massive force or threat to use it.”¹⁵¹ The American onslaught has caused devastation beyond imagination across Iraq. “Many high ranking, efficient and extremely organised members among the Bathists have emerged from their beleaguered position, drawing strength from the anti occupation sentiment, especially within the Sunni population. They have joined the ranks with Islamist militants, including al-Qaeda affiliates, carrying out ferocious attacks against both America – led coalition forces and Iraqi security forces and police. They remain politically unscathed, in the shadows, and a force to be reckoned with.”¹⁵²

(CORROSIVE) EXTERNAL INTERVENTION: UTILITY OR FUTILITY?

The question that one might ask is why the United States targeted the Hussein regime if it was not an imminent threat in military terms? Iraq has the world’s second largest stocks of oil, after Saudi Arabia. But oil cannot provide the full explanation, or even the bulk of it. Iraq’s real significance is political. In attacking Iraq, the Bush administration hoped to achieve more than just a regime change: Iraq presented a

¹⁵⁰ Rick Fawn & Raymond Hinnebusch, *The Iraq War: Causes and Consequences*, (Viva Books: New Delhi, 2007), pp. vii-viii.

¹⁵¹ Zafar Imam, *Iraq 2003: The Return of Imperialism*, (Aakar Boks: New Delhi, 2003), p. 90.

¹⁵² Zaki Chehab, *Iraq Ablaze: Inside The Insurgency*, (I.B. Tauris: New York, 2006), p .103.

chance to redraw the political map of the entire region. The overthrow of Saddam Hussein regime is meant to change the balance of forces in the Middle East. Israeli major-general Ya'akov Amidror had bluntly put forward the American intentions in April 2003. He said that Iraq was not the ultimate goal. The ultimate goal is in the Middle East, the Arab world and the Muslim world. Iraq would be the first step in this direction; winning the war against terrorism means structurally changing the entire area. The United States seeks to replace defiant regimes and intimidate others, imposing a new regional order by creating pro-American regimes, first in Iraq, and then in an apartheid-style Bantustan-like state of Palestine, presenting regime change as a strategy for "democratisation."¹⁵³

The United States led-*"war on terror"* has produced the most abrasive and sustained attack on the international law. The Bush administration justified and defended its ruthless policies and actions as part of an effort to defend the nation from terrorism and to "liberate" other nations.

"The 'war on terror' is widely regarded as instigating a major regression within the development of the international system."¹⁵⁴ "With the World Trade Centre attack of 11 September 2001, the US declaration of the 'war on terror', and the subsequent invasions by the USA of Afghanistan and Iraq, the global order is now widely said to be fragmenting into a mode of organisation more anachronistic than it is innovative. Faced by vital threats to their security, major nation-states of the Western world are, it is argued, reasserting themselves territorially, militarily and politically. Among them the USA has committed itself to a war and a strategy that has invoked descriptions and accusations of a traditional form of 'imperialism'. Consequently we are witnessing a return to a condition of international politics that some consider more consistent with models of the late 19th century."¹⁵⁵

There is no denying the fact that both Afghanistan and Iraq were being ruled by autocratic regimes, but a change could be brought from within these societies, through

¹⁵³ Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim Bad Muslim: Islam, the USA and the Global War Against Terror*, (Permanent Black: New Delhi, 2005), pp. 201-202.

¹⁵⁴ Julian Reid, *The Biopolitics of the War on Terror: A Critique of the 'Return of Imperialism' Thesis in International Relations*, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.26, No. 2, (2005), p. 237.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid*, p. 239.

the people themselves. Using terrorism as an excuse to invade Afghanistan, and weapons of mass destruction to occupy Iraq has exposed the United States "limitation of a unilateralist military strategy based on vengeance and the dictum of pre-emptive strike."¹⁵⁶ After 9/11, Iraq, more than Afghanistan, became the real launching pad for a brazen U.S. intervention undertaken in the midst of international opposition, including in the halls of the U.N. Mary Kaldor called for an extension and strengthening of international humanitarian law, 'Global civil society is pitched in a direct struggle with both the Bush administration and Al-Qaeda to bring the "inside" of human rights and democracy home'.¹⁵⁷ 'By any standards of international law, the American occupation of Iraq is illegal.'¹⁵⁸

It is observed that following the terrorist attacks of September 11, George Bush appeared to be more comfortable in using the American power to further his goals. The attacks of September 11 served to reinforce Bush's existing conviction of the universality of the values that grounded his own Christian faith: freedom, liberty and democracy. Indeed, as with many other fellow Americans, Bush categorised those who perpetuated the terrorist attacks as the embodiment of evil and consequently a direct challenge to the good values seen to be epitomised by the United States. One of the most remarkable features of the current articulation of US foreign policy is the apparently naked commitment to imperialism. "The USA has throughout much of its history been accused of pursuing an imperialist agenda. Customarily its foreign policies have been accompanied by discursive commitments to democratically anti-imperialist ends. Yet the current reassertion of American power is, it would appear, avowedly imperialist."¹⁵⁹

Bin Laden and Abu Musad al-Zarqawi have been able to convince a large majority of Muslims that after the Iraq war the offensive against Islam by the U.S can no longer be dismissed as a figment of imagination. The American military action in Iraq provides undeniable proof of what bin Laden has described as 'an ocean of

¹⁵⁶ Iftikhar H. Maik, *Cresecent Between Cross And Star: Muslims and the West after 9/11*, (Oxford University Press, Karachi, 2006), p. 264.

¹⁵⁷ Mary Kaldor, *Global Civil Society: An Answer to War*, (Polity Press: Cambridge, 2003), p. 156.

¹⁵⁸ Aijaz Ahmad, *Iraq, Afghanistan & the Imperialism of Our Time*, (Leftword: New Delhi, 2004), p. xvii.

¹⁵⁹ Julian Reid, *The Biopolitics of the War on Terror: A Critique of the 'Return of Imperialism' Thesis in International Relations*, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.26, No. 2, (2005), p. 242.

oppression, injustice, slaughter and plunder.’ He justifies jihad in any form and considers American attacks on Iraqi civilians as terrorism of the worst kind. He has succeeded in convincing almost the entire Muslim *ummah* that it is necessary to resist the ‘crusaders’ and their supporters. This has led to a situation where every Muslim is expected to contribute to this *jihad* by any means within his capability and status.¹⁶⁰

A myriad of writings have appeared attempting to give meaning to the *new world order* in the context of the War on Terror. Generally these writings argue a case for a new colonialism and imperialism by military means and if needed, by conquest. “We have to understand what the alternative to failure is. We have to call it by its real name. Political globalisation is a fancy word for imperialism, imposing our values and institutions on others. However you may dress up, whatever rhetoric you may use, it is not very different in practice to what Great Britain did in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries... The future of Afghanistan must, if war is successfully persecuted, be very similar indeed to those states currently under this kind of international colonial rule. Nothing else will do. Contrary to popular arguments made in the 1960’s, imperialism is affordable for the richest economy in the world. The U.S has the resources, but does it have the guts to act as a global hegemony and make the world a more stable place?”¹⁶¹

WAR ON TERROR: A GLOBAL STRATEGY SOUTH ASIA AND THE WAR ON TERRORISM

Today South Asia is more fractured, frightened and frustrated than ever before. It is a fractured region because the chasm that separates India and Pakistan in terms of their respective interests and perceptions has become even more unbridgeable in recent times. The mutual incompatibility of Indian and Pakistani interests has grown despite the two countries ostensibly being on the same side of the global war against terror. If their incompatibility fractures the region, their brinkmanship frightens it: the regional consequences of a meltdown in India-Pakistan relations are too horrible to imagine. India is frustrated because it feels that Pakistan is “getting away” with sponsoring

¹⁶⁰ Afsir Karim, *War on Terror*, (Har-Anand Publications: New Delhi, 2008), p. 198.

¹⁶¹ Ninan Koshy, *The War on Terror: Reordering the World*, (LeftWord Books: New Delhi, 2003), pp. 184-185.

terrorism on Indian soil due to its “indispensable” role in the global war against terror (the Afghanistan campaign). And Pakistan is frustrated because its Kashmir agenda seems to be coming to nought. The other states of South Asia are frustrated because the security dilemma between India and Pakistan overlays the region.¹⁶²

The cataclysm of 9/11 seems likely to endure and have lasting implications for South Asia. This event reinforces the centrality of the India-Pakistan bilateral relationship in South Asia. ‘The post 9/11 developments had profound implications for South Asia with Pakistan becoming a frontline state and India’s security rapidly deteriorating with spectacular terrorist attacks mounted on its icons of democracy. The resulting milieu is propitious for India and Pakistan to invest more heavily in military security at the cost of their social sectors. [...] U.S interest is not related solely to the war against terrorism in Afghanistan, but has several other objectives like countering Russian and Chinese influence in Central Asia, gaining access to fossil fuel in the region, protecting the pipelines to exploit its fossil fuel resources in future, and so on. These developments have led analysts to believe that the shift in U.S interests from Europe to Asia is accelerating and is informed by its growing concern with China, developing relationship with Russia and a new appreciation of India’s weight in the Asian polity. U.S involvement in the current South Asian crisis is multifaceted.’¹⁶³

Following the bleak landscape of personal loss, religious fanaticism and political cynicism, post these attacks, South Asian politics and international political culture, have been changed forever. After 9/11, Islam has been placed at the centre of world attention, leading to a change in the world view of Islam.

India was one of the first countries to declare unequivocal support to the US war on terror. Immediately after the September 11 attacks, India’s then Foreign Minister, Jaswant Singh offered solicited, unlimited military cooperation, including the use of airbases, to the US. At the same time General Pervez Musharraf, too offered to be America’s staunch ally if India and Israel were kept out of the alliance. For obvious

¹⁶² Varun Sahni, ‘Fractured, Frightened and Frustrated: South Asia after 11 September,’ in Dipankar Banerjee & Gert W. Kueck, *South Asia and the War on Terrorism: Analysing the Implications of 11 September*, (India Research Press: New Delhi, 2003), p. 86.

¹⁶³ P. R. Chari, ‘Post-11 September Global Developments: An Indian Perspective,’ in Dipankar Banerjee & Gert W. Kueck, *South Asia and the War on Terrorism: Analysing the Implications of 11 September*, (India Research Press: New Delhi, 2003), pp 52-53.

geo-strategic reasons for the first stage of the war on terror, it was Pakistan's facilities that the US needed most.¹⁶⁴

“Looking at India's foreign policy it is observed that India's war against terrorism is between a coalition of democracies and terrorism. India's main enemy today is neither Pakistan nor Afghanistan but terrorism. Much damage has been done to India's self-interest by the image it has sought to create in the recent years of being a part of America-India- Israel strategic triangle against Islamic fundamentalism and terrorism; Taliban has described the three countries as the enemies of Islam. Likewise India's growing understanding with America as its 'natural ally' would be more useful to both of them if based on dignity, equality and an enlightened concept of national interest, and not as a helpless country besieged by *jihadis* and seeking support for its survival from the most powerful country which is hostile to them. The present situation offers India an opportunity to outgrow this defeatist mindset and behave as an emergent and self-confident power by seeking alliances outside the America-India-Israel axis.”¹⁶⁵

The world community supported the US-led coalition's war against terrorism in Afghanistan. Regrettably, this high-minded war has encapsulated itself within the limited effort of capturing Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar “dead or alive”, and decimating the Taliban and the al-Qaeda outfits. None of these objectives have succeeded, with the two “hate figures” suspected to have escaped into the Federally Administered Tribal Area of Pakistan, whilst large sections of the Taliban and al-Qaeda have crept in POK. Some part of the current anxiety afflicting India is that these battle-hardened terrorist elements have entered POK and would be steadily infiltrated into Kashmir to fuel the proxy war continuing there since 1989.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Ninan Koshy, *The War on Terror: Reordering the World,* (LeftWord Books: New Delhi, 2003), p. 131.

¹⁶⁵ Balraj Puri, *India and the War against Terrorism,* Economic & Political Weekly, Vol. 36, No. 40, (Oct, 2001), p. 3805.

¹⁶⁶ P. R. Chari, 'Post-11 September Global Developments: An Indian Perspective,' in Dipankar Banerjee & Gert W. Kueck, *South Asia and the War on Terrorism: Analysing the Implications of 11 September,* (India Research Press: New Delhi, 2003), pp.53-54.

India has been the regional 'sore winner' as Stephen P. Cohen says:

“Although it took no joy in seeing America restore its relationship with Pakistan after the September 11 attacks, the renewed link ultimately turned to New Delhi’s advantage. The U.S. lifted the [nuclear-related] sanctions on India too. The United States also exerted heavy pressure on Islamabad to cease its support for cross-border movement from Pakistan to Kashmir and pressed Islamabad to crack down Islamic radicals, many of whom were targeting India. Washington accelerated the pace of rapprochement between the two once - estranged democracies. Indian American military cooperation increased dramatically, earlier plans for defence cooperation were revived and big military sales to India were soon in the offing.”¹⁶⁷

Thus the Indian government’s alacrity in supporting the American war against terrorism was conditioned by India’s problems with cross-border terrorism dramatised by the brazen assaults on major symbols of Indian democracy, the Parliament attack of December 2001. The War against terrorism is viewed in South Asia only through the prism of national self interest because, unsurprisingly, several bureaucratic constituencies are flourishing in the region that have a stake in not defeating terrorism. How committed the United States, Pakistan and India are to continuing the war against terrorism once the U.S. turns its attention to some other troubled region in the world will soon become clear.¹⁶⁸ “This grand alliance that the U.S. has rigged up to shadow box terrorism is a collage of disparate interests with a marked absence of commitment to the cause. It smacks more of crass opportunism rather than a willing cooperation to take on the evil of naked terror.”¹⁶⁹

“Less extreme but more persuasive is the American strategic analyst, Kenneth N. Waltz: *Supposedly the weak have become strong-but have they? By cleverly picking their targets, terrorists have often been able to use slender resources to do disproportionate damage...terror is a threat to the stability of the states and to the*

¹⁶⁷ Ninan Koshy, ‘The War on Terror: Reordering the World,’ (LeftWord Books: New Delhi, 2003), pp. 134-135.

¹⁶⁸ P.R. Chari & Suba Chandran, ‘*Terrorism Post 9/11: An Indian Perspective,*’ (Manohar Publications: New Delhi, 2003), pp.22-23.

¹⁶⁹ Yashmant Dewa War on Terrorism: Coalition Sans Commitment,’ in P.R. Chari & Suba Chandran, ‘*Terrorism Post 9/11: An Indian Perspective,*’ (Manohar Publications: New Delhi, 2003), p. 51.

peace of mind of their rulers: that is why President Bush could so easily assemble a coalition a mile wide. Yet because terror is a weapon wielded by the weak, terrorists do not seriously threaten the security of states... that is why, although a mile wide, the anti-terrorist coalition is only an inch deep. If this is broadly correct, Gray was perhaps entitled to conclude that ‘no one is really all that interested in chasing terrorists.’ The implication is that, after the fuss over 9/11 has finally died down, states including even the United States itself, will decisively return to business-as-usual in responding to terrorism, that is, ignoring, appeasing, resisting and sponsoring the phenomenon in conformity with their perceptions of their narrow short term interests and paying little more than lip-service to international cooperation against it.”¹⁷⁰

“Situated as India is today, with its plural democratic society, it is singularly well placed to contribute to ensuring peace and stability in the region. The Muslim community, its *ulema* and intellectuals, would normally be most enthusiastic partners in this national endeavour and in the process would get more closely integrated with Indian nationalism.”¹⁷¹ “A regional consensus against terrorism, which is sorely needed, is unlikely to emerge as long as the neighbouring states, in particular India and Pakistan, have such divergent perceptions of what constitutes terrorism. The focus in South Asia has still not moved away from the *causes* of terrorism to the *consequences* of terrorism, which appears to be the global trend.”¹⁷²

“9/11 has surprisingly come to benefit the state, of both developed and developing countries, for it could now easily brand its own dissenters or anti-state elements as ‘terrorist’ and join the global or, more precisely, the US- led ‘war on terrorism’. Definitionally, terrorism is now an over defined concept, with the state, organic intellectuals, and the dissenters constantly battling out the meaning of terrorism. In the midst of their contestations, a plethora of terrorism, or what could also be referred to as ‘versions of terrorism’, have flooded the vocabulary of scholarly language. At this

¹⁷⁰ David Carlton, *The West's Road to 9/11: Resisting, Appeasing and Encouraging Terrorism since 1970*, (Palgrave Macmillan: New York, 2005), p. 274.

¹⁷¹ Balraj Puri, ‘India and the War against Terrorism,’ *Economic & Political Weekly*, Vol. 36, No. 40, (Oct, 2001), p. 3806.

¹⁷² Varun Sahni, ‘Fractured, Frightened and Frustrated: South Asia after 11 September,’ in Dipankar Banerjee & Gert W. Kueck, *South Asia and the War on Terrorism: Analysing the Implications of 11 September*, (India Research Press: New Delhi, 2003), p. 97.

point one cannot help but remember the remarks of R. G. Collingwood, the English historian and philosopher, who had implored his readers ‘to resist the vice of collecting “definitions” of this, that, and the other, as if anyone but a fool imagined that he could compress a thing like art, or religion, or science into an epigram which could be lifted from its context, and, so lifted, continue to make sense. Giving and collecting definitions is not philosophy, but a parlour game.’ The overflow of definitions of terrorism is nothing but a reflection of the modernist quest to constantly and in some measure understand the ‘reason’ of terror, albeit in an epigram form.”¹⁷³

There are several versions of terrorism identified with the reason of the state. Counter-terrorism is also a version of terrorism. “When the state, including its coercive machineries like the police or the military, or groups favourable to the government resort to policies, tactics, and strategies to counter the violent activities of anti-state or anti-government elements. Counter-terrorism is different from anti-terrorism in that it is more ‘offensive’ in its approach.”¹⁷⁴

CONCLUSION

An analysis of the U.S. war on terror makes one rightly believe that *the line between liberation and terror was blurred*. It was forgotten or consciously ignored that the aftermath of this intervention would be catastrophic, for both, Iraq and the Muslim world at large. It is not surprising to know that this disenchantment and destitution leads to desperation and determination among the Muslim youth to join militant organisations and wreck havoc in the antagonistic societies of U.S. and its allies. “With Iraq’s regime ousted, the lesson to radical Islamists is that the nation state is no longer capable of resisting American hegemony. The tragic result may be that many will come to the conclusion that the only way to challenge this hegemony is through non-state actors using asymmetrical warfare, thereby dramatically increasing the risks of large scale acts of terrorism.”¹⁷⁵

¹⁷³ Imtiaz Ahmed, ‘*Understanding Terrorism in South Asia: Beyond Statist Discourses*,’ (Manohar Publications: New Delhi, 2006), pp.11-12.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 18.

¹⁷⁵ Stephen Zunes, ‘The US Obsession with Iraq and the Triumph of Militarism’, in ‘*Iraq: The Human Cost of History*,’ by Tareq Y. Ismael & William W. Haddad’, (Pluto Press: U.S.A., 2004), p. 208.

Looking for justifications in these terror actions inflicted by the terrorists is not credible. I think that both, the interventionists and the resisters have a lot to learn from their disastrous experience. The interventionists should not perpetuate hatred with their policies; and the resisters should avoid nefarious regimes and should not repeat tragedies and atrocities that would permit occupation in their territory. "The US-led militarisation of the West Asian countries has been repeatedly justified in the name of defending the security interests of the United States. However, US military prowess is many times greater than all the potential Middle Eastern adversaries combined."¹⁷⁶ In these terrorist attacks and in the war against terrorism human loss has occurred on a massive scale. The indiscriminate use of force by security forces invariably leads to conflict escalation. The suffering of the civilian population becomes a popular propaganda tool in stirring up anti-America and anti-Islam sentiments. Neither of the means in achieving the ends can achieve credibility and legitimacy. Foreign domination cannot be the reason for international terrorism; and vice versa. Together, both these antagonistic partners can help the world achieve peace and annul the war against each other.

'We need to tackle the fountainhead of terrorism, presently the entire effort seems to be directed to fight certain terrorist groups, mostly those that threaten us, and the war on terrorism has got totally lost in strategic agendas. A reorientation of global effort for combating terrorism is required, fundamentalism and terrorism must be countered in all its manifestations, as narrow and selective approach can have little impact.'¹⁷⁷

"Andrew Hack notes that the military and political strengths or capabilities determine the ultimate outcome of conflict; terrorist and anti-terrorist campaigns are violent confrontations where military and political capabilities play an important role. The terrorist of the bin Laden variety, however does not depend on these factors though it requires strong organisational support and safe haven in one area or the other."¹⁷⁸

Using Karim's analytical lens I argue that "it will be difficult to apply the new doctrine against terrorist groups who may have no permanent hosts or bases. Small terrorist groups may operate from the U.S. soil itself or from friendly countries. Some groups may operate without the knowledge of the host country; an attack with

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*, p.170.

¹⁷⁷ Afsir Karim, 'War on Terror,' (Har-Anand Publications: New Delhi, 2008), p. 7.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

chemical or radioactive material based on wrong assumptions or information would endanger the lives of thousands of innocent people.”¹⁷⁹

It is evident that contempt for democracy and due process is the strength of terrorists. “There is, consequently, urgent need for democracies to examine the ideological basis of their constitutional orders, and to come to terms with the fact that the freedoms and rights, they have been instituted to defend, are entirely inconsistent with the use of terrorist violence on any grounds., and that harsh punitive measures and narrowly targeted use of force are necessary and integral to the responses mandated by the challenge that terrorism constitutes to the future of pluralistic and liberal societies.”¹⁸⁰

The *identity* in question is the one associated with the ‘Deoband’ that needs to provide a corrective to the way their ideology has developed certain aberrations in the process of Talibanisation. *Does Deoband support fundamentalist version of Islam? Has the Deoband ideology been distorted with the passage of time and space?* It is essential to seek answers to these questions for a better understanding of the religion and the political implications that come with an interaction between religion and politics. The next chapter is a discussion on the Deoband School in South Asia and its other political and social linkages.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid, pp. 87-88.

¹⁸⁰ K.P.S.Gill & Ajai Sahni, *The Global Threat of Terror: Ideological, Material and Political Linkages*, (Roli Books: New Delhi, 2002), p. 5

CHAPTER THREE

DINI MADARIS IN SOUTH ASIA: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE DEOBAND SCHOOL

“Today the term ‘*madrasa*’ stands for Islam...in a heavily loaded sense of a place of biased and distorted learning. It is regarded loosely, as a hotbed of terrorism in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and, in India, of opposition to modernity and progress... [funded by] ‘anti-national external sources’.

-----Nita Kumar (Seminar, October 2003)

This chapter considers analysing and understanding the role of *madrasa* education in South Asia, both in the past and in the present. It is not possible to understand *madrasa* education today without an adequate knowledge of its past. For long these religious educational institutions held a key position in the Indian subcontinent.

The *madrasa* has been one of the most important institutions of Islamic civilisation. A large number of *Maktabas* and *Madrasas* grew in their places of worship-the *Masjids*. “From the very beginning of Islamic history, mosques were put to use for educational purposes. Mosques remained the main place for Muslim education till the establishment of *madrasas*. The use of mosques for the purpose of educating the Muslim masses had certain advantages. First, after a small extra construction in the mosque, the burden for a separate building was easily avoided. Second, the staff which engaged for prayers also performed the duties of teachers. And thus educational expenditure was reduced to the minimum.”¹⁸¹ Later with the passage of time and with the expansion of education it was realised that mosques were inadequate to cope with the growing number of students. The inadequacies of boarding and higher education and the “institutionalisation of education”¹⁸² led to the establishment of *madrasas* with buildings of their own, with residential arrangement

¹⁸¹ Mohammad Akhlaq Ahmad, ‘*Traditional Education Among Muslims: A Study of Some Aspects in Modern India*’, (B.R. Publishing Corporation: New Delhi, 1985), p. 20.

¹⁸² Akhtarul Wasey, ‘*Madrasas in India: Trying to be Relevant*,’ (Global Media Publications: New Delhi, 2005), p. 21

and scope for higher education.¹⁸³ In earlier short studies, it was argued “how *madrāsas* served as hostels for travellers - chiefly wandering students, merchants, and pilgrims - as sites for courts or tribunals, as major employers, and as an important means for the integration of Islamic society.”¹⁸⁴

The *madrāsa* is now thoroughly embedded in the modern world. There has been a transformation of *madrāsas* and Islamic higher education under the influence of modern and intellectual developments. ‘The study and transmission of religious knowledge have always been at the heart of Islamic tradition, and is central to Islamic culture. The institution most directly involved in the transmission is the *madrāsa*, a kind of seminary or college for Islamic sciences.’¹⁸⁵ “Critics of the *madrāsas* tend to see them in stereotypical terms, often branding all *madrāsas* as backward and reactionary.¹⁸⁶ They are described by their detractors, Muslims as well as others, as conservative and illiberal. They are seen as a major burden on Muslim society, consuming much of its meagre resources, and a stumbling block in the progress of the community. Such critiques, while not entirely bereft of truth, appear somewhat far-fetched and exaggerated. To claim that all *madrāsas* are static and impervious to change is grossly misleading. *Madrāsas* today are considerably different from their counterparts in pre-colonial and colonial India, although there are significant continuities as well. As for the argument that *madrāsas* are conservative, this is to state the obvious, for, as the *madrāsas* generally see themselves, they are indeed the guardians of Islamic ‘orthodoxy’¹⁸⁷, regarding their principal role as the conservation

¹⁸³ Mohammad Akhlaq Ahmad, ‘Traditional Education Among Muslims: A Study of Some Aspects in Modern India’, (B.R. Publishing Corporation: New Delhi, 1985), p. 21.

¹⁸⁴ Gary Leiser, ‘The Madrasa and the Islamisation of the Middle East: A Case of Egypt,’ Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt, Vol. 22 (1985), p. 29.

¹⁸⁵ Robert W. Hefner, ‘Introduction: The Culture, Politics and Future of Muslim Education,’ in Robert W. Hefner & Muhammad Qasim Zaman (ed.), ‘Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education,’ (Princeton University Press: U.S.A, 2007), p. 5.

¹⁸⁶ It should be noted that given the size and diversity of India, it is difficult to generalize about all *madrāsas* in the country. In that sense, it is misleading to speak in terms of the Indian *madrāsa* system. Different *maslaks* or schools of thought have different approaches to Islamic education, as also different curricula, methods of teaching and organization. To consider all *madrāsas* as identical, and to make conclusions based on this assumption, is misleading. (See Sikand: 2005, p. 94).

¹⁸⁷ ‘Orthodoxy’ is not a mere body of opinion but a distinctive relationship – a relationship of power, to regulate, uphold, require or adjust *correct* practices, and to condemn, exclude, undermine or replace *incorrect* ones. Seen from this perspective, the spread of the *madrāsas* was part of a heightened orthodoxy brought about through a great recentering of Islamic tradition. The recentering has to do, first, with the establishment of a stricter controls for recognizing just who counted as a religious authority; and the recentering also had to do with just what counted as Islamic knowledge. (See Hefner & Zaman: 2007, pp. 10-11).

of the Islamic 'orthodox' tradition, which, although diversely understood, historically constructed and in a constant process of elaboration, is generally seen by the *ulema* as unchanging and fixed. Many *ulema* regard the existing *madrassa* system as in no need of any major reform."¹⁸⁸

This varying response towards the reformation of the *madrassa* is because of the heterogeneous modes of Islamic education. If one follows a strict Islamic regulatory regime, the other advocates a more moderate way of Islamic learning. The following Bengali mystical song signifies the human yearning to liberalise orthodox Islam and its practices:

"The bird is trapped in the body's cage. Its feet are bound with worldly chains...the bird pines with longing. It yearns to spread its wings... the clay bird laments: 'why did you infuse my heart with longing if you didn't give my wings the strength to fly'."¹⁸⁹

It has been observed that the *madrassas* have seen recurrent attempts at reform in Muslim societies during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. 'It is beyond dispute that there is an urgent need to reform the *madrassa* both in terms of syllabus and method of teaching. Their effort and contribution to making education available to the poor is beyond doubt. What is debatable is the method of teaching that makes the student short on comprehension of the subjects taught because discussion is discouraged. As a result they remain ignorant of other viewpoints. Similarly, exclusive stress on old Islamic texts makes them out of date in fast changing world.'¹⁹⁰ There is a general impression about Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan that he was a vocal critic of *Madrassa* education. But, in fact, he was just in favour of reforming the old syllabi of *madaris*. He wanted collaboration between two educational systems, that is, modern and religious.¹⁹¹ Modernisation and reform of *madrassa* syllabi is a

¹⁸⁸ Yoginder Sikand, 'Voices for Reform in the Indian Madrasas,' in Akhtarul Wasey, '*Madrasas in India: Trying to be Relevant*,' (Global Media Publications: New Delhi, 2005), pp. 51-52.

¹⁸⁹ This song is from '*The Clay Bird*', a rare Bangladeshi rare film that visibly and delicately represents Islamic education in the *madrassa* system in Bangladesh, and certainly this representation is not a simplistic one. This film realistically depicts the mundane practices of Islamic education in the East Pakistan *madrassa*. It presents the possibility of merger between Islam and Bengali identity and the need to debate various trends of Islamic educational practices. [See Hossain in Malik: 2008, 137&139].

¹⁹⁰ Akhtarul Wasey, '*Madrasas in India: Trying to be Relevant*,' (Global Media Publications: New Delhi, 2005), p. 18.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, 26.

continuous and regular tradition as far as Indian *madrassa* education is concerned; and a self developing change in the *madrassa* syllabus is a special quality of this system of education. Even Deoband has revised its syllabus many times. The *ulema*, specifically in Pakistan, have often been more suspicious of governmental efforts at reform. The *ulema* have tended to see governmental initiatives not as “modernising” *madrassa* but as seeking to undermine these last bastions of authoritative Islamic learning, diluting the “purely religious” instruction offered in them and, thereby, undercutting the *ulema*’s ability to reproduce and replenish their ranks.¹⁹²

‘Since the eleventh century, when it first emerged as the principal institution of higher Islamic learning, the *madrassa* has undergone many changes, adapting in varying degrees to local cultures and changing times. Looking at the centrality of this institution in the preservation and production of knowledge as well as in the formation of the religious elite, the *madrassa* is crucial to the construction of religious authority. Profound changes in Muslim societies in modern times have frequently raised questions about the position and function of the *madrassa* in society and of the *ulema* reared in it, about whether this institution ought to be reformed, and if so, to what end, how, and by whom.’¹⁹³

CHANGED PERCEPTIONS: (MIS) LEADING IMAGES OF MADRASA

In the post 9/11 attacks the *dini madaris* has gained unprecedented attention among the international community. The Western public has become aware of many things of which, before 9/11, it was blissfully ignorant. The situation changed with the attacks of September 11, 2001. “The attacks led to a sharp escalation in anti-Muslim sentiments across the world. Muslims were vilified as bloodthirsty monsters and Islam as a terrorist creed bent on the extermination of all ‘disbelievers’. The attention of the global media now turned to the *madrassas* of South Asia. Although none of those involved in the attacks, not even bin Laden himself, had been trained in a traditional

¹⁹² Muhammad Qasim Zaman, ‘*The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*,’ (Princeton University Press: Princeton, 2002), pp. 78-83.

¹⁹³ Muhammad Ayoob, ‘*Religious Education and the Rhetoric of Reform: The Madrasa in British India and Pakistan*,’ *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol.41, No. 2 (April, 1999), p. 294.

madrasa or was a qualified '*alim*, the press routinely lambasted the South Asian *madrasas* as veritable 'dens of terror'."¹⁹⁴

The recent development in the Islamic world which has caught the eye of western reporters is increasing prominence of religious educational institutions, usually known as *madrasas*. "This has partly been on account of the general perception that fundamentalism (ideology under-shoring the need to recover the traditional Islam), Islamisation (process of establishing traditional beliefs and practices among ordinary Muslims) and extremist violence stem from the *madrasas*."¹⁹⁵ This new focus of criticism and accusation against the *madrasa* identified them as having alleged fundamentalist impact and as breeding grounds for terrorist activities. These allegations originated from the fact that the radically traditionalist Taliban in Afghanistan are a product of a particular offshoot of Deobandi Muslim scholarship.¹⁹⁶ 'The roots of this offshoot are found in the historical context of mid-19th century's Indo-Muslim reformist movement. This movement was characterised by apolitical and non-violent attitude. Later in the course of the Indian struggle for independence from British rule in the early 20th century this apolitical attitude had changed. The

¹⁹⁴ Yoginder Sikand, '*Bastions of the Believers: Madrasas and Islamic Education in India*,' (Penguin Books: New Delhi, 2005), p. xxiii.

¹⁹⁵ Davis Emmanuel Singh, '*The Independent Madrasas in India: Dar-ul-Ulum, Deoband and Nadvat al-'Ulama, Lucknow*,' p. 1.

¹⁹⁶ Since the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which had provided sanctuary to bin Laden, owed its inspiration to the Deobandi school of thought, the *madrasa* at Deoband, a small sleepy town in northern India, was now alleged to be the epicenter of a global Islamic 'terrorist' conspiracy. It was asserted that Deoband had emerged as the nerve centre of a plot, hatched in league with the dreaded Pakistani Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), to dismember India. It was claimed that many, if not most, *madrasas* in India were secretly involved in training terrorists in the guise of providing students with religious education. (See Sikand: 2005, p. xxiii).

Jam'yyat Ulama-i Hind¹⁹⁷ is considered to be the first political aspiration of the important section of the Deobandi *ulema*.¹⁹⁸

The role played by the Deoband in Pakistan and Afghanistan is perhaps responsible for this image of *madrassa* in South Asia. The *madrassas* of Pakistan have been making headlines since 9/11 when the twin towers of the World Trade Centre were attacked by Islamic militants in the United States. "A Lexis-Nexis search of newspaper reports for the year following September 11, 2001, reveals hundreds of separate articles devoted to the new *madrassas*. These institutions have spread like wildfire in the Muslim world, particularly in South Asia. Their rise is linked, inevitably to the political movement known loosely as "Islamism," and to the popularity of groups such as the Taliban and the emergence of new Muslim leaders as Osama bin Laden."¹⁹⁹ The leading theological academy of modern India, the Darul-'Ulum of Deoband, has been studied because many of its *ulema* played an important role in nationalist politics in India and opposed the foundation of Pakistan. This has seriously distorted the treatment of the nineteenth century history of the school, endowing it with "an anti-British and revolutionary character when, in fact, the school's concerns were completely apolitical."²⁰⁰

'The USA and other Western countries referred to this kind of education as dubious, suspicious and dangerous. At the same time, in parts of the Indian society, the new

¹⁹⁷ The main objective of the Jam'yyat Ulama-i Hind was to guide the Muslims in their political and non-political matters within the framework of Islamic teachings, to reconcile Islam with national aspiration by giving full support to Hindus in their national struggle against the British Raj. The Jam'yyat wanted to guide the followers of Islam in their political and non-political matters from a religious point of view. It wanted to protect Islam, centres of Islam and Islamic rites and defend Islamic nationalism against all odds. The jamm'yyat wanted to achieve and protect the general religious and national rights of Muslims. Organizing the ulama on a common platform was another objective. It wanted to organize the Muslim community and launch a programme for its moral and social reform, to establish good and friendly relations with the non-Muslims of the country, to complete independence for the nation according to the Shari objectives, to organize the Millat-i-Islamiyah, nito a *shari* body, to work for the religious, educational, moral social and economic reforms of the Muslims, and to propagate Islam by way of missionary activities in India to their best ability, and lastly to maintain and strengthen the bond of unity and fraternal relations with Muslims of other countries. (See, Muhammad Akhlaq: 1985, pp. 130-131)

¹⁹⁸ Jan-Peter Hartung, 'Towards a Reform of the Indian Madrasa? An Introduction,' in Helmut Reifield & Jan-Peter Hartung, (ed.) '*Islamic Education, Diversity and National Identity: Dini Madaris in India Post 9/11*,' (Sage Publications: New Delhi, 2006), p. 8.

¹⁹⁹ Jonathan P. Berkey, 'Madrasas Medieval and Modern: Politics, Education, and the Problem of Muslim Identity,' in Robert W. Hefner & Muhammad Qasim Zaman (ed.), '*Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education*,' (Princeton University Press: U.S.A., 2007) p. 40.

²⁰⁰ Barbara Metcalf, '*The Madrasa At Deoband: A Model for Religious Education in Modern India*,' Modern Asian Studies, Vol.12, No.1, (1978), p. 111.

context of international debate gave rise to older anti-Islamic sentiments, which tried to include the Indian *madaris* into the stream along with the ones in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. However, the international allegations, and the Hindu nationalist critique, supported by the mass media marked an apparent absence of factual information regarding the diversity and activities of Muslim alternative systems of education in India.²⁰¹

Scholars and journalists have been able to garner evidence for Muslim efforts at recovering or maintaining medieval Islam, or an effort at Islamizing Muslim masses perceived to be erring from orthodoxy, or even some evidence for the ‘proliferation of separatist attitude’ among the impressionable youth of the *madrasas*, but is this view of *madrasas* entirely right?²⁰² Writings on Indian *madrasas* made sweeping generalisations. “In doing so, the historical evolution of the *madrasas* and the enormous diversity within the madrasa system itself, including conflicting and mutually opposed political stances of the *ulema* of different *madrasas*, were conveniently ignored. Ignoring the fact that only a relatively small proportion of Muslim children actually study in *madrasas*, it was made to appear as if the entire Muslim community was somehow so mired in religious ‘obscurantism’ that Muslims simply refused to send their children to regular schools.”²⁰³

MILITANCY IN MADRASAS

It is perhaps against the 9/11 backdrop that Islamic education has become the focus the focus of scholarly and public debate, not only in the West but also in India. “Even a cursory review of scholarly or popular writings in India makes it clear that the greater part of the debate on *madrasa* education post 9/11 has been an exercise in establishing a correspondence between *madrasa* education and militant Islam or a passionate denial of any such affinity.”²⁰⁴

²⁰¹ Helmut Reifield & Jan-Peter Hartung, *Islamic Education, Diversity and National Identity: Dini Madaris in India Post 9/11*, (Sage Publications: New Delhi, 2006), p. 8.

²⁰² Davis Emmanuel Singh, *The Independent Madrasas in India: Dar-ul-Ulum, Deoband and Nadwat al-Ulama, Lucknow*, p.1.

²⁰³ Yoginder Sikand, *Bastions of the Believers: Madrasas and Islamic Education in India*, (Penguin Books: New Delhi, 2005), p. xxiv.

²⁰⁴ Arshad Alam, ‘Understanding Deoband Locally: Interrogating Madrasat Diya’ al-Ulum,’ in Helmut Reifield & Jan-Peter Hartung, *Islamic Education, Diversity and National Identity: Dini Madaris in India Post 9/11*, (Sage Publications: New Delhi, 2006), p. 176.

All *madrasas* are not militant. “Those which are militant became when they were used by the Pakistani state to fight in Afghanistan during the soviet occupation and then in Kashmir so as to force India to leave the states. The fact that until January 2002, when General Pervez Musharraf clamped down on Islamic militants, lists published by fighting groups included madrasa and non-madrasa students, suggests that some *madrasas* did send their students to fight in Kashmir. After 9/11 Americans attempted to understand *madrasas* better.”²⁰⁵ The attacks on New York’s World Trade Centre and the U.S Pentagon in September 2001 cast Pakistan’s Islamic Boarding Schools in a disturbing new light. It is argued that “most of the *madaris* were established during General Zia al-Haq’s tenure (1977-1988), not only through the encouragement of the state but also often with the financial assistance of the state. If *madaris* are sectarian and militant, it is not the product of an Islamic approach to education but of the militaristic policies of General Zia al-Haq and his supporters. For nearly a decade, the U.S. government poured hundreds of millions of dollars’ worth weapons into Pakistan, much of it through *madaris*, and used madrasa students to fight proxy war in Afghanistan.”²⁰⁶ If only a small fraction of that money and ingenuity were sustained over the next decade on curriculum development, books and scholarship, teachers and staff salaries, the *madaris* sector could be transformed into a foundation for tolerance and moderation, essential teachings of Islam. Indeed it might be argued that the U.S. government has a moral duty-not merely a strategic interest-to commit such funds and to help to repair the damage done to the *madaris* sector.²⁰⁷

P. W. Singer, an analyst wrote that “there were ten to fifteen per cent of ‘radical’ *madrasas* which teach anti-American rhetoric, terrorism and even impart military training. No proofs for these claims were offered.”²⁰⁸ ‘Those who label *madrasas* as ‘dens of terror’ ignore the fact that politics is hardly ever explicitly taught in most Indian *madrasas*. The overwhelming focus of their syllabus is on religious beliefs, and the nitty-gritty of *fiqh* rules governing ‘proper’ worship, dress, personal behaviour

²⁰⁵ Tariq Rahman, ‘Madrasas, The Potential for Violence in Pakistan,’ in Jamal Malik (ed.) ‘*Madrasas in South Asia: Teaching Terror?*,’ (Routledge: London, 2008), pp. 76.

²⁰⁶ Christopher Candland, Pakistan’s Recent Experience In Reforming Islamic Education,’ in Jamal Malik (ed.) ‘*Madrasas in South Asia: Teaching Terror?*,’ (Routledge: London, 2008), p. 104.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ Tariq Rahman, ‘Madrasas, The Potential for Violence in Pakistan,’ in Jamal Malik (ed.) ‘*Madrasas in South Asia: Teaching Terror?*,’ (Routledge: London, 2008), pp. 76.

and appropriate gender codes. The curriculum is thus overwhelmingly conservative, literalist and legalist, but definitely not politically radical.²⁰⁹

More significantly, the private armed groups or armies either associated with religious parties or acting on their own, train both *madrassa* and other school dropouts. They were financed by the intelligence agencies of Pakistan. Some of these armies such as Lashkar-i-Taiba, Jaish-i-Muhammad and Harkat-al-Mujahidin print militant literature which circulates among the *madrassas* and other institutions. 'The students studying in *jihadi* schools are totally brainwashed right from the beginning. The text books have been authored to provide one dimensional worldview and restrict the independent thought process of children' (Liberal Forum 2003: 72). Although these parties have been banned, their members are said to be dispersed all over Pakistan, especially in the *madrassas*. The *madrassas*, then, may be the potential centres of Islamic militancy in Pakistan not because of what they teach but because of the politically motivated people, committed to radical political Islam, who seek refuge in them. However, such people are to be found outside the *madrassas* also.²¹⁰

Radical Islamist movements, as numerous studies have shown, enjoy little support in traditional *madrassas*. However what is surprising to many people is that secular institutions and western countries also produce Islamic militants. Olivier Roy points out that, most young Islamist militants are trained in secular institutions. 'Their main bases of support are regular colleges and universities, in particular faculties of hard sciences such as engineering and medicine. Not one among the Arabs accused of masterminding the attacks of September 11 had received a traditional *madrassa* education.'²¹¹ 'Mainstream education is no guarantee of preventing a person joining a militant group.'²¹²

²⁰⁹ Yoginder Sikand, *Bastions of the Believers: Madrasas and Islamic Education in India*, (Penguin Books: New Delhi, 2005), p. 224.

²¹⁰ Tariq Rahman, 'Madrasas, The Potential for Violence in Pakistan,' in Jamal Malik (ed.) *Madrasas in South Asia: Teaching Terror?*, (Routledge: London, 2008), pp. 76-77.

²¹¹ Yoginder Sikand, *Bastions of the Believers: Madrasas and Islamic Education in India*, (Penguin Books: New Delhi, 2005), p. 225.

²¹² Tariq Rahman, 'Madrasas, The Potential for Violence in Pakistan,' in Jamal Malik (ed.) *Madrasas in South Asia: Teaching Terror?*, (Routledge: London, 2008), p. 77.

Seeing this misleading image of Islam it made many “Muslim states to seek the *ulema* to undercut the influence of radical Islamists, by getting them to issue appropriate *fatwas* against them and declaring their actions to be ‘un-Islamic’. For many *ulema*, Islamists, who are often bereft any formal Islamic training, have no authority to speak for Islam. Thus, for instance, in India, numerous Barelwi²¹³ *ulema* have written voluminous tomes condemning Islamist groups such as the Jama’at-i Hind as ‘enemies of faith.’ Likewise, in the Deobandi case, the leading ideologue of the Deobandi-inspired Tablighi Jama’at²¹⁴, Maulana Muhammad Zakariya, penned a voluminous treatise on the Jama’at-i Islami, declaring that what it preached was not Islam at all, but rather a new religion called ‘Mawdudism’, named after the Jama’at’s founder, Sayyed Abul ‘Ala Mawdudi²¹⁵. To equate the two is misleading.”²¹⁶

²¹³ The Barelwi ‘ulama emerged as a reaction against the Deobandis and the Ahl-i-Hadis. They were detached from political activity and offered social and religious guidance to their followers. In a period widely held to be threatening to their culture, they blamed not only the colonial ruler but perhaps also the reformist Muslims. They held fast to Hanafi law and to custom-laden style of Sufism. Barelwi influence has been regarded as largely rural, where the legitimacy given parochial cults and mediational style of the leadership has been valued. Barelwi support was largely rural and less well educated. All three groups of Sunni ‘ulama thought themselves as rivals, both intellectually and socially, but the resulting competition provided the motive for what was their common work of ‘religious revitalization and redefinition.’ (See Metcalf: 1982, 267-314).

²¹⁴ Tablighi Jamaat is wholly devoted to the religious cause and is least interested in political aspects of Muslims. It has no office bearers. Neither it maintains any record of membership nor does it have any funds to run the movement. This Jamaat is purely a religious body and is least concerned with the political or economic life of the Muslims. (See Akhlaq:1985, 138.)

²¹⁵ Maulana Mawdudi was a dynamic personality and the founder of Jamaat and in a short span of time gathered a large number of followers who became devoted to his programme. He critically examined the basic principles of Islam and argued that there is no need to take an apologetic view of Islam as some of the reformists in the past have done. He exposed the weaknesses of both traditional Islam as understood by the conservative *Ulama* and modern Islam as interpreted by the westerners Muslims. Later, with the partition of India the Mawlana who was opposed to the demand of Pakistan moved to the new Islamic State in the hope that his dream of establishment of Islamic State might be fulfilled there. Soon he established a Jamaat (Jamaat Islam-i-Pakistan) there and framed a new constitution in 1952. It should be noted that the Indian counterpart of the Jamaat known as Jammata-i-Islam-i-Hind was formed in April 1948 and produced a constitution of its own in 1956. It would not be fair to say that both the Jamaats are one and the same. Jamaat Islam-i-Hind is quite distinct from its counterpart in Pakistan in many respects. It would be unfair to condemn the former for the activities of the latter. The essential difference between Jamaat Islam-i-Hind and Jamaat Islam-i-Pakistan was that while the latter was considered as socio-political movement, the former was a socio-religious one. Initially Jamaat Islam-i-Hind had no political ambitions. But later, forced by circumstances, the activities of the Jamaat did not confine to socio-religious matters. The Jamaat’s support to Janta Party and its active involvement in the state politics of Jammu and Kashmir reveal its political inclination. (See Muhammad Akhlaq: 1985, pp.132-137). Mawdudi in his attempt to distinguish between Muslims and non-believers excluded majority of the faithful from his brand of Islam. He was contemptuous of Muslim hypocrites who fought *jihad* for democracy: “If such people consider themselves to be Muslims, they are grossly mistaken...one cannot subscribe to one religion and work to establish another one.” [See Jalal: 2008, 254]. The objective of Islamic *jihad* Mawdudi claimed ‘is to put an end to the dominance of the un-Islamic systems of government and replace them with Islamic rule. Non-Muslims must live as subject peoples within an Islamic state, but they cannot be allowed to impose their spurious laws on God’s earth and thus create evil and strife. 9See Bonney: 2004, 203).

DEOBAND: THE ICON OF ISLAMIC EDUCATIONAL REFORM IN MODERN INDIA OR THE PILLAR OF ORTHODOXY?

The current association of fundamentalist Islam with the Deoband School has much to do with the fact the Afghan Taliban has been the product of Deoband School of thought. The Deobandi mercenary *madaris* created on the Afghan-Pakistan border were very different from those educational institutions for which Deoband is known in other parts of the sub-continent.²¹⁷

‘The Deoband *madrasa* has been a major centre of ‘traditional’ Muslim religious leadership in the subcontinent, and has often been counterposed to a second educational institution, Aligarh, founded at about the same time, taken to be its opposite as the modernising, westernising institution. There are two points about the Deobandis that are well known. First, the Deobandis formed no political organisation of their own, a stance they continued in independent India. Second, when other Muslim leaders espoused the cause of a separate state for Muslims, articulated under the aegis of a separate party for Muslims, the Muslim League, the Deobandis whether declined to support this idea of a separate state.’²¹⁸

“The Deoband School and the Aligarh School were antagonistic to each other in both the educational and political programme. Sir Sayyid Ahmad made efforts to persuade Muslims to boycott Congress. But the *ulema* of Deoband stood on their own ground. They exhorted Muslims to ignore Sir Sayyid’s advice and join the Congress in large numbers and wrest the power from foreign rulers.”²¹⁹ One of their earliest *fatwas*

²¹⁶ Yoginder Sikand, *Bastions of the Believers: Madrasas and Islamic Education in India*, (Penguin Books: New Delhi, 2005) p. 226.

²¹⁷ Arshad Alam, ‘Understanding Deoband Locally: Interrogating Madrasat Diya’ al-Ulum,’ in Helmut Reifield & Jan-Peter Hartung, *Islamic Education, Diversity and National Identity: Dini Madaris in India Post 9/11*, (Sage Publications: New Delhi, 2006), p. 177.

²¹⁸ Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Contestations: Essays on Muslims in India and Pakistan*, (Oxford University Press: New Delhi, 2004), p. 8

²¹⁹ Mohammad Akhlaq Ahmad, *Traditional Education Among Muslims: A Study of Some Aspects in Modern India*, (B.R. Publishing Corporation: New Delhi, 1985), pp 125.

declared “the activities of the moderniser Sayyid Ahmad Khan to be unislamic, and banned all Muslims from joining his Patriotic Association.”²²⁰

Later efforts were made by Shaikul Hind Maulana Mahmudul Hasan to bring the two schools closer to each other. “In 1910 *Jashn-i-Dastarbandi* was held at Deoband and in this people of different shades of opinion participated. The Aligarh College also participated and the delegation exchanged views with the Deoband party. As a result of exchange of views it was agreed that there should be an exchange of students between Deoband and Aligarh so as to foster friendship and intimacy between the two schools. But unfortunately its first exchange of two Aligarh students proved a bitter experience and wrecked the whole scheme. Aligarh boys who came to Deoband to study Islam were found to be British secret agents who helped the British in the arrest of Shaikul Hind.”²²¹

The founders of the Darul-‘Ulum Deoband represented the rebellious spirit of the disgruntled Muslims, who had been manifesting their dissatisfaction with the state of affairs created by the establishment and perpetuation of a foreign rule in India.²²² Its teaching system follows the tradition of Hanafi School²²³ on the pattern of Shah

²²⁰ Charles Allen, *God’s Terrorists: The Wahhabi Cult and the Hidden Roots of Modern Jihad*, (Abacus: London, 2006), p. 209.

²²¹ Mohammad Akhlaq Ahmad, *Traditional Education Among Muslims: A Study of Some Aspects in Modern India*, (B.R. Publishing Corporation: New Delhi, 1985), pp. 125-126.

²²² The resistance movement was launched against the Company by the Ulema of the madrasas. The revolt of 1857 was the last resistance movement in which the Indian Muslims played a leading role in order to defeat the East India Company. After the failure of 1857 it seemed that the Muslim leadership, especially the ulema were suppressed brutally. The period between 1857-1876 is a period of shock for the Indian Muslims; and from here on they appear to have given up the hope of taking power from the British government. They, therefore diverted their attention from grabbing political power to education. From here on two educational movements started among the Indian Muslims; one led by Maulana Qasim Naautvi, which is known as the Deoband Movement and the other by Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan, known as the Aligarh Movement. Sir Sayid urged Indian Muslims to compromise with their rulers and with the help of modern education uplift themselves economically, socially and politically. Both the movements were of a defeatist mindset. (See Akhtarul Wasey: 2005, pp. 28-29.)

²²³ Hanafi School is one of the four schools of Sunni law. South Asian Muslims are predominantly Sunni and have since the late nineteenth century belonged to several rival sectarian orientations. The “Barelawis” adhere to forms of devotional piety and ritual that focus on venerating the person of the Prophet and Muslim saints. Others, however, have decried such veneration as a form of idolatry. The Ahl-i-Hadith argue that the foundational texts- the Quran and the reported teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (hadith) suffice as the exclusive source of all guidance, which renders not only the saints but also the medieval schools of law unworthy of attention and, indeed, illegitimate. The “Deobandis”, like the Ahl-i-Hadith, affirm the centrality of the foundational texts; but like the Barelawis, they also defend the authority of their Hanafi School of law. Of all the sectarian orientations in South Asia, that associated with Deoband has been intellectually the most vibrant and politically the most significant. (See, Hefner & Zaman: 2007, p. 62).

Waliullah Dehlwi.²²⁴ Hanafi methods and norms, articulated in the course of debates that span many centuries, are, to them, the best available prism through which the Qur'an and the *hadith* are most authoritatively approached.²²⁵ 'Their critique of the modernisation theory argued that people everywhere were moving towards a form of society, politics and culture whose script had already been written in the West and that progress was stimulated only by contact with the West on the part of societies that had been largely stagnant.'²²⁶ Established within ten years of after the unsuccessful uprising of 1857 when bitter frustration prevailing everywhere and the future seemed dark and appallingly discouraging, it was undoubtedly a bold venture. The Deoband Movement tried hard to save the religious capital of Indian Muslims and stressed upon religious education so that they may live here as Muslims.²²⁷ 'The guiding spirit of this venture Mawlana Muhammad Qasim Nanatawi was not content with establishing a *madrasa* at Deoband only; he exhorted the Muslims to start such

²²⁴ After the disintegration of Mughal empire Shah Waliullah Dehlwi spearheaded the first movement among ulema and launched a powerful campaign to recapture the glory of Islam and regain political power. He showed singular political farsightedness and made every endeavour to awaken the Mughal rulers and Muslim chiefs. By the middle of the eighteenth century political power had slipped off from the hands of the Muslims. At this critical moment Shah Waliullah exhorted Muslim rulers to rise to the occasion and fight the rising non-Muslim powers and crush them once for all. He dominated the eighteenth century political scene in India. The philosophy of Shah Waliullah was the outcome of the compromise between his Puritanism which was the result of his contact with Wahhabis in Arabia and the Sufism which he inherited from his family. his Puritanism would not accept Sufism without questioning its negative aspect which was not conducive to healthy growth of Islamic society. As a matter of fact he interpreted Sufism in a such a way that it became a part of Islamic culture. Equally, his sufistic tendencies held a check on his Puritanism and did not allow it to grow wild and become a source of irritation to the Muslim masses. (See Akhlaq Ahmad: 1985 pp. 104-108).

²²⁵ Muhammad Qasim Zaman, Tradition and Authority in Deobandi Madrasas in South Asia,' in 'Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education,' (ed.) Robert Hefner & Muhammad Qasim Zaman, (Princeton University Press: U.S.A., 2007), p. 63

²²⁶ Barbara D. Metcalf, 'Islamic Contestations: Essays on Muslims in India and Pakistan,' (Oxford University Press: New Delhi, 2004), p.8.

²²⁷ The founders of Darul-Uloom, Deoband stressed only on saving the religion and religious capital of Indian Muslims. It was well reflected in the syllabus of the institution in which almost all the previous syllabi of Madaris were accommodated. The establishment of Darul-Uloom Deoband and the setting of Aligarh Muslim University were not the solution of the educational problems of Indian Muslims. Soon after the Deoband(1866) and MAO (1875), we find that a great convention of Muslim Ulama and scholars (both traditionalists and modernists) was held in Kanpur in 1894 which ultimately led to the establishment of the Nadwatul Ulama (council of Ulama). In this convention both groups agreed on one thing that the purpose of Muslim *ummah* in India was not being fulfilled, neither by Darul-Uloom Deoband nor by MAO College. Five successive conventions were convened to reach an agreed solution. In 1898 they finally agreed to establish a "model educational institution" at Lucknow by the name of Darul-Uloom Nadwatul Ulama which was supposed to maintain a fine balance between the madrasa and English education. The Nadwatul Ulama played an important role in the modernization of madrasa education system in India. This movement started for reform in syllabi became stale soon after the establishment of Nadwatul Ulama. Maulana Azad, a prominent personality of the Nawah Movement said that though the Nadwatul Ulama took the cause of reform very strongly, it somehow failed. After the failure of Nadwa Movement there seems no comprehensive and collective movement working for the reform of madrasa education system and its syllabi. (See Wasey: 2005, pp. 31 -32.)

madrasas at different places. It appeared that he planned to weave all *madrasas* into an administrative and educational network with Deoband as its centre. Unfortunately, the idea was not realised and each madrasa developed and went into oblivion on its own; yet the spirit survived.²²⁸

'The *madrasa* at Deoband began modestly in 1867 in an old mosque, the Chatta *masjid*. The school from its inception was unlike earlier *madrasas*. The school was, notably, a distinct institution, not an adjunct to a mosque or home. It was run by a professional staff and its students were admitted for a fixed course of study. A series of affiliated colleges were even set up, many ultimately staffed by the school's own graduates and their student examined by visiting Deobandis.'²²⁹ The goal of the school was to train well-educated *ulema* dedicated to scriptural Islam. Such *ulema* would become prayer leaders, writers, preachers, and teachers and thus disseminate their learning in turn. To this end the school set formal requirements for admission and matriculation.²³⁰

One of the unique things about this religious institution is that 'no modern university of today can boast of enjoying so much academic freedom as this traditional Islamic university enjoys. This has been possible because of the fact that it has always refused to accept any grant either from the central or provincial government. It is entirely dependent on munificence.'²³¹ Thus, financially, the school was wholly dependent on public contributions, mostly in the form of annual pledges, not on fixed holdings of *waqf*, pious endowments contributed by noble people. 'In older schools, like the famous Farangi Mahal²³² in Lucknow, family members taught students in their own homes: there was no central library, no course required of each student, no series of

²²⁸ Ziya-ul Hasan Faruqi, *The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan*, (Asia Publishing House: Bombay, 1963), pp. 22-23.

²²⁹ Barbara Metcalf, *The Madrasa At Deoband: A Model for Religious Education in Modern India*, Modern Asian Studies, Vol.12, No.1, (1978), p. 112.

²³⁰ Ibid, p. 118.

²³¹ Mohammad Akhlaq Ahmad, *Traditional Education Among Muslims: A Study of Some Aspects in Modern India*, (B.R. Publishing Corporation: New Delhi, 1985), p. 26.

²³² The last great Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb 'Alamgir is said to be a staunch defender of the *sharia*, and many Sunni '*ulema* of today lionize him as a 'defender of Islam'. In order to guide the dispensation of justice in accordance with the *sharia*, Aurangzeb authorized the collection of a number of *fatwas* issued by different Hanafi muftis on various subjects. Involved in preparing this compendium was a renowned '*alim*, Mullah Qutubuddin Sihlwi. In 1692, he lost his life in a land dispute. To compensate for this loss, Aurangzeb offered his sons a mansion that formerly belonged to a European (firangi) merchant, the Firangi Mahal, in Lucknow. Under mullah Qutubuddin's third son, Mullah Nizamuddin, Firangi Mahal grew into a leading centre of Islamic learning in India. (See Sikand: 2005, 45-46).

examinations. After a student had read a certain book with his teacher, he would receive a certificate, a *sanad*, testifying to his accomplishment, then seek another teacher or return home. The Farangi Mahal family depended primarily on revenue from their endowments and on the largesse of princes. The *ulema* of the school cultivated intellectual interests and trained students to become government servants. There were no spokesmen for including English or Western subjects. Muhammad Qasim insisted that the school was not opposed to such study, but simply wanted to avoid duplication of government efforts. Students could, he insisted, continue in government schools after completing their studies at Deoband, but even when the curriculum was reduced to six years, few continued beyond that long course. Thus, with no new subjects and philosophy gradually restored, the curriculum was not dramatically innovative. It was, however, to become famous for its emphasis on hadith, a subject that provided material for popular teaching and influence. The Deobandi *ulema*, in contrast, sought to create a body of religious leaders able to serve the daily legal and spiritual needs of their fellow Muslims apart from government ties.²³³

There exist thousands of Deobandi *madrāsas* in India and Pakistan, often with most tenuous links or more often none at all. "In the war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, along with the Afghans, young men from Pakistan also participated in the war and on their return became part of the militant sectarian organisations. Many *madrāsa* counted veterans of this Afghan struggle among their students, and numerous *madrāsas* came into existence specifically to cater to the needs of the young Afghan refugees."²³⁴ After the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Zia-ul Haq, the Chief Martial Law Administrator of Pakistan set up a chain of *dini madrāsas* of the Deobandi School on the Pak-Afghan border. He did so to turn out highly motivated *jihadis* to support the *Mujahideens* fighting the Soviet forces. *Madrāsas* of the Deoband School earned a reputation of producing fiercely fanatic Islamic zealots who would rather die in a *jihad* to go to paradise direct than live a normal life.²³⁵

²³³ Barbara Metcalf, 'The Madrasa At Deoband: A Model for Religious Education in Modern India,' *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol.12, No.1, (1978), pp. 112 - 118

²³⁴ Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Tradition and Authority in Deobandi Madrasas in South Asia*, in 'Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education,' (ed.) Robert Hefner & Muhammad Qasim Zaman, (Princeton University Press: U.S.A., 2007), pp. 71.

²³⁵ D. Bandyopadhyay, 'Madrasa Education and the Condition of Indian Muslims,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 16 (Apr., 2002), p. 1482.

“Few institutions better typify the variegated involvement of *madrāsas* in facets of religio-political radicalism in Pakistan than does the Jammāt al-Ulum al-Islamiya, a leading Deobandi madrasa of Karachi founded by Muhammad Yusuf Banuri²³⁶ in 1955. The *madrāsa’s* radical activism has also extended to the Muslim separatist movement in Indian Kashmir. While Pakistan has always denied Indian allegations of active involvement in destabilising the Indian control of this disputed territory, many militant Muslim groups active in Kashmir have been based in Pakistan; and it was only after the two countries nearly came to war in 2002 that some of these groups were outlawed in Pakistan. Of all the Pakistani *madrāsas*, the Jamaat al-Ulum’s reputation for militant activism is surely the best deserved.”²³⁷

Ubayd Allah Sindi²³⁸ was a younger and the severest internal critic Deoband has ever produced. In his writings he was severely critical of most other Deobandi scholars for turning the promise of their reformism into a narrow sectarian orientation that had only exacerbated the chronic fragmentation of the community. ‘*Madrāsas* belonging to other sectarian orientations, especially the Barelawis, are far less involved in the sort of sectarian radicalism that the Deobandis have come to represent in Pakistan.’²³⁹

“The most important intellectual influence on Sindi was the work of the eighteenth century *hadith* scholar and legal thinker Shah Waliullah. Sindi sought to unite varied Muslim groups on a common platform in order to collectively face the challenges

²³⁶ Banuri was a distinguished scholar in his own right. He led the charge in castigating modernist interpretation of Islam, affirming the authority of the ulama, and resisted governmental efforts to regulate the affairs of the madrasa. Banuri had recognized that madrasa learning no longer sufficed to meet modern challenges and therefore it needed reform. (See Heffner & Zaman: 2007, 72).

²³⁷ Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Tradition and Authority in Deobandi Madrasas in South Asia*, in ‘*Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education*,’ (ed.) Robert Hefner & Muhammad Qasim Zaman, (Princeton University Press: U.S.A., 2007), pp. 71-74.

²³⁸ Sindi was born into a Sikh family in the Punjab in north-western India, converted to Islam as a youth, and then spent a number of years studying at the madrasa in Deoband. Here he came under the influence of Mahamud Hasan, a much revered scholar then teaching at the madrasa but also involved in what turned out to be abortive efforts to dislodge British colonial rule in India. Mhamud sent Sindi to Kabul in pursuit of these efforts. When the conspiracy came to light, the British exiled Mahmud Hasan to Malta and Sindi himself was forced to spend a quarter century in exile. This long exile was profoundly enriching in giving Sindi an unusually cosmopolitan perspective on Islam and the ulama. Apart from him, the need for reform has not originated within madrasas but in government circles, and especially in postindependence India, among Muslim modernists. Most Deobandi ulama were distinctly unsympathetic to Sindi. (See Heffner & Zaman: 2007, 68).

²³⁹ Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Tradition and Authority in Deobandi Madrasas in South Asia*, in ‘*Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education*,’ (ed.) Robert Hefner & Muhammad Qasim Zaman, (Princeton University Press: U.S.A., 2007), p. 75.

confronting them. Sindhi wanted to make the ethical norms of the Qur'an the basis of a new consensus. He went well beyond Waliullah, however, arguing that these norms were universal, which meant that members of other religious communities could also concur on them by becoming aware that the Qur'an shared much with their own ethical norms. Whether or not members of other religious traditions would have warmed up to Sindhi's proposal to make the Qur'an the basis of an "overlapping consensus"²⁴⁰, Sindhi was convinced that the *ulema's* conventional approaches had rendered their tradition irrelevant and their foundational texts unintelligible. One partial parallel to Sindhi's project is offered by Wahid al-din Khan, a traditionally educated Indian religious scholar who has long remained severely critical of fellow *ulema* for what he sees as their inability to recognise the radically changed conditions in Islam and Muslims find themselves in the modern world. Like Sindhi, he too views *ulema* as committed to a scholarly tradition that is a product of a very different age, a tradition that does not offer obvious or appropriate solutions to contemporary needs."²⁴¹

Increasingly, the name of Deoband came to represent a distinct style, "the tack of the Darul Ulum Deoband will be the Hanafite practical method in accordance with the *ahl al-sunna wa l-jama'a* and the disposition of its holy founders, Hazrat Maulana Qasim Nanatawi and Hazrat Maulana Rashid Ahmed Gangohi."²⁴² It became "a *maslak*, of

²⁴⁰ This term has been borrowed from the philosopher John Rawls.

²⁴¹ Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *Tradition and Authority in Deobandi Madrasas in South Asia*, in 'Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education,' (ed.) Robert Hefner & Muhammad Qasim Zaman, (Princeton University Press: U.S.A., 2007), pp. 68-69.

²⁴² The moderate 'tack' of the Deoband School is based on seven basic foundations and were summarized by the long-time rector of the Darul Ulum, Deoband, Maulana Qari Muhammad Tayyib: **(1) Knowledge of the Sharia:** Which includes all the branches of beliefs, devotions and worldly dealings, the outcome of which is faith, provided this knowledge may have been acquired through the teachings, training and grace of the company of authoritative divine doctors and may not be result of self-opinion or mere book reading or power of study or mere rational search and intellectual investigation, though it may not be devoid of rational style of description and argumentative proof and demonstration. **(2) The following of the Path:** That is, consummation of good breeding, self purification and spiritual traversing within the auspices of researching Sufis and their well tried principles, because, without this, moderateness in morals, stability of zest, internal insight, mental purity and observation of reality are not possible. **(3) Conformity to the Sunna:** That is, conformance to the Prophetic Sunna in every walk of life and dominance of the permanent Sunna through maintaining respect of the sharia in every state and utterance, every conditions of the exterior and the interior; for without it is impossible to be released from the conventions of ignorance, customary innovations and prohibited indecencies. **(4) Jurisprudential Hanfitism:** the name of Islamic practical doctrines and casuistic interpretation of laws is *fiqh* (jurisprudence), and since the elders of the Darul Ulum are Hanafite, the meaning of jurisprudential Hanafitism is compliance with the Hanafite jurisprudence in causistic practical doctrines, and conformance to its principles of jurisprudence only in the education and preference of propositions and *fatwas*. **(5) Dialectical Maturidi'ism:** That is, as

Indian Islam that emphasized the diffusion of scripturalist practices and the cultivation of an inner spiritual life. By roughly 1880 there were over a dozen Deobandi schools; by the end of the century, at least three times of that. Deoband had pioneered a non- governmental style of formal organization for madrasa education in India. The school succeeded in training a large number of *ulema* in its 'reformist ideology' and in establishing a network of ancillary schools further disseminating that teaching. Deoband thus offers a striking and successful example of the bureaucratization of traditional religious institutions that has made them effective in the modern world."²⁴³

'The *madrasa* at Deoband has created a niche for itself as the most puritan and orthodox seminary of Islamic theology. The Deobandis aimed to train a new generation of learned Muslims who would revive Islamic values based on intellectual bearing, spiritual experience, *Shariah* law and *Tariqah* or the Path. By teaching their students how to interpret *shariah*, they aimed to harmonise the classical *shariah* texts with current realities. The Deobandis were very conservative in their approach. They took a restrictive view of the role of women and rejected the Shias. Students coming out of these '*deeni*' *madrasas* (religious institutions) called '*talib*' constituted a cadre of Islamic zealots. Deobandis set up *madrasas* all over India.'²⁴⁴ The success of this school is not measured by the events at the mother school but by the spread of

regards beliefs, the sustentation of the power of certitude and the stability of true beliefs with right thinking in accordance to the laws and principles determined and codified through the method of the *ahl al-sunna wa l-ijma* and the *ashairah* and the *maturidya*; for without it escape from the doubts cast by the tergiversators and the conjectural innovation, superstitions and skepticism of the false sect is not possible. **(6) Defence against Tergiversators:** That is, defence against the mischief raised by bigoted cliques and tergiversators. Moreover, efforts with a crusader-like spirit for stamping them out, for without these the removal of the unlawful things and the protection of the sharia from the encroachment of the antagonists is not possible. It includes refutation of polytheism and innovation, confutation of atheism and materialism, correction of the customs of ignorance, and as per need, polemics, verbal or in writing, and the changing of unlawful things. **(7) The taste for Qasimism and Rashidism:** (founders of the Deoband Seminary, Muhammad Qasim Nanautawi and Rashid Ahmed Gangohi) Then the same tack, with its collective dignity, appeared after passing through the hearts and souls of the first patrons of the Darul Ulum, Deoband, and the feelers of the pulse of the community, it drew in the demands of the time in it and adopted the form of a particular taste which has been denoted with the word *mashrab* (disposition, nature, temper, conduct). [See Dietrich Reetz,(2006), '*Islam in the Public Sphere: Religious Groups in India 1900-1947*,' pp. 316-317).

²⁴³ Barbara Metcalf, '*The Madrasa At Deoband: A Model for Religious Education in Modern India*,' *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol.12, No.1, (1978), p. 134.

²⁴⁴ D. Bandhopadhyay, '*Madrasa Education and the Condition of Indian Muslims*,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 16, ((Apr., 2002), p. 1482.

Deobandi teachings²⁴⁵ through similar schools. The schools often submitted their records to Deoband for inspection, sought its approval of major decisions, and received its *ulema* as both external examiners and distinguished visitors. But they were never formally and fully integrated into a single educational system, largely because personal ties were so effective in maintaining contacts.²⁴⁶

Thus the study of Deoband School concludes with the following analysis:

“The Deoband School has been, throughout its existence, an orthodox religious movement professing its loyalties with some puritanical tinge, to the Hanafi school of Muslim *fiqh*.”²⁴⁷

‘A critical perusal of its “principles”²⁴⁸ gives an idea of the independent and democratic spirit embodied therein. The ‘*madrassa*’ was to be based on public cooperation. It had to be run by the method of the ‘*shura*’ and not by arbitrary decisions of a person or a group of persons. It rejected all possibilities of governmental interference. This independent attitude together with emphasis on mass contact has been a chief characteristic of the Darul Ulum.’²⁴⁹

‘The Deoband made contacts with the less exalted professionals desired to shed their low status and claim equality with the *ashrafs* in the religious domain. The Deoband

²⁴⁵ Deobandi teachings and goals were the same in all the schools with similar orientation: the propagation of reformed religious knowledge and training of young men for professional religious careers. (See Metcalf: 2004, 50).

²⁴⁶ Barbara D. Metcalf, ‘*Islamic Contestations: Essays on Muslims in India and Pakistan*,’ (Oxford University Press: New Delhi, 2004), p. 50.

²⁴⁷ Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi, ‘The Deoband School And The Demand for Pakistan,’ (Asia Publishing House: Bombay, 1963), p. vii.

²⁴⁸ As has been discussed earlier Maulana Nanautwi was the guiding soul of this religio-political venture. He laid down eight principles that formed the core of the constitution of the madrasa. They are: (1) The most important thing is that the authorities of the madrasa should always take utmost interest in raising funds from the public. The well wishers should never forget this obligation. (2) Constant and serious efforts were to be made towards a permanent and decent boarding for the students. (3) The body of councillors (‘*shura*’) responsible for the management of the madrasa should be devoted to its cause. Rigidity of views is undesirable. One should never try to maneuver in order to impose his opinion on others. Outsiders, who entertain a feeling of goodwill and have experience and intelligence, should be given an opportunity of constructive suggestions. (4) The teachers of the madrasa should be like-minded. (5) The curriculum and the method of instruction, after mutual consultations, should be strictly followed. (6) In matters of income and constructions there should always remain a certain lack of certainty of means. (7) The participation of government and rich people is also harmful. (8) The donations of people who want to remain unknown, is a source of ‘*barakah*’. Their sincerity seems more permanent means of income.

²⁴⁹ Ibid, pp. 26-27.

School accommodated such aspirations of the lower classes of Muslims, since apart from providing them with a social base, such a relationship also provided an opportunity to ‘reform’ the ordinary lay Muslims; to teach them to differentiate between ‘correct’ Islamic practice and what was called reprehensible innovation or *bida’a*.’²⁵⁰ This belief that the *ulema* only influenced the lower classes and were cut off from the “collaborating class” of government officials and big landlords is not the truth. Infact they themselves were *ashrafs* and primarily influenced their counterparts. Religious leadership was one of the specific responsibilities of the *ashrafs*, for Muhammad Qasim wrote in the proceedings of the school at Deoband, ‘God entrusted religious learning to these four *quams*.’²⁵¹ Thus, ‘permeation of diverse branches of society’²⁵², has been, historically characteristic of the *ulema*. It not only served the interests of individual families but also ‘enhanced the effectiveness’²⁵³ of *ulema*’s religious influence. The Deobandi *ulema*’s played an important role in the lives of Muslims of various classes. They generated many concentric circles of influence. It has been argued that “the *madrasas* get their students from rural areas, thus greatly extending the reach of orthodox Islam.”

Looking at the Deoband School from a more critical lens one would willingly conclude that though the Darul Ulum Deoband is the most influential and prestigious Islamic seminary, it had profound consequences. The main tenet of their teaching was the distinction between ‘religious sciences’ and ‘secular sciences’. The exclusion of physical sciences from their syllabi was because of the *ulemas*’ argument that life is short and knowledge is vast. Priorities must be set and pursuit of religious knowledge would be the highest priority. Even in the twenty first century, when media is all pervasive, the extent of Deoband’s isolation from the outside world is remarkable.

²⁵⁰ Arshad Alam, ‘Understanding Deoband Locally: Interrogating Madrasat Diya’ al-Ulum,’ in Helmut Reifield & Jan-Peter Hartung, ‘Islamic Education, Diversity and National Identity: Dini Madaris in India Post 9/11,’ (Sage Publications: New Delhi, 2006), p. 180.

²⁵¹ The four *quams* of the Deobandi ‘*ulama* were, the *ashraf*, that is, the ‘*ulama* who claimed descent outside India, the *sayyids*, that is, the descendants of the Prophet himself; the *sheikhs*, that is, the offspring of the Prophet’s companions; and as *Mughals and Pathans*, that is, the descendants of immigrant rulers and settlers of Medieval India. They shared the ideology that these four hierarchically ordered groups or *quam* were the social elite, and they guarded this status not only marriage within the *quam* but within the family. It should be noted that those who were learned were not isolated from others of the well-born. They and their families tended to engage in a whole range of activities, from religious to government and trade. [See Metcalf: 1982, 239].

²⁵² Barbara D. Metcalf, ‘Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband 1860-1900,’ (Princeton University Press: New Jersey, 1982), p. 239.

²⁵³ Ibid, p. 240.

Education at Deoband happens in an almost hermetically sealed environment.”²⁵⁴ Strict discipline was maintained; the students lived simply and frugally. English was prohibited. All classes were focused on Qura’nic studies, taught by mullahs who were specialists in the *hadith*. Elements of Naqshbandi Sufism were maintained, especially those which elevated the authority of the teacher and allowed favoured students to be initiated into the intense master-discipline relationship felt to be in imitation of the close bonds that had existed between the Prophet and his Companions.”²⁵⁵

‘The populist means of Deoband *madrassa* made them gain the support of the masses, leading the way among the several revivalist schools that came into being to provide young Muslims with new sense of identity and an alternative to the British model.’²⁵⁶ It is noted that towards the end of the nineteenth century the Deobandi teachings were dignified with the term ‘*salafi*’, or ‘following the forefathers,’ based on the ideal of emulating the early fathers as a basis for Islamic renewal first developed by the medieval Hanbali jurist Ibn Taymiyya, and those who followed them became known as *salafiyya*.”²⁵⁷ “Here the novices have no access to newspapers, magazines, radio, cinema or television. They use computers but without internet. Complete obedience to the *madrassa* is enforced; there is no freedom of enquiry or expression and any deviance is severely punished.”²⁵⁸

I think this understanding of the Deoband madrasa makes one wishfully believe that there has been no growth in the education system of the madrasa. Their main goal is to establish the pristine Islamic values and give impetus to old ideals. Their self proclaimed adherence to Hanafi orthodoxy makes them no less uncompromising and puritanical than the Wahhabis.

²⁵⁴ S. S. Gill, *Islam and the Muslims of India: Exploring History, Faith and Dogma,* (Penguin Books: New Delhi, 2008), p. 109.

²⁵⁵ Charles Allen, *God’s Terrorists: The Wahhabi Cult and the Hidden Roots of Modern Jihad,* (Abacus: London, 2006), p. 207.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 210.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid*.

²⁵⁸ S. S. Gill, *Islam and the Muslims of India: Exploring History, Faith and Dogma,* (Penguin Books: New Delhi, 2008), pp. 109-110.

‘This bastion of conservatism has exploited modern technology making the best use of the print medium to put out its message.’²⁵⁹ ‘The Deoband movement led to a seismic shift in the Sunni Islam of South Asia. It became increasingly conservative and introverted, less tolerant, and far more inclined to look for political leadership to the *madrasa* and the *madrasa* trained leaders committed to the cause of leading the *umma* back to the true path.’²⁶⁰

Conforming to Gills argument I argue that the pattern of education in a community should be a matter of the highest concern to its leaders and it is for them to realise that modernisation of madrasas would enable madrasa graduates to compete more successfully in job markets. (Gill: 2008, 110).

CONCLUSION: FROM PAST TO PRESENT

‘As it has been observed, *madrasas* and Islamic learning traditions are the embodiment of a variety of resistance patterns. On the one hand, they appear to be the local resistance forces arrayed against the universalising and homogenising notions of secular modernity as stipulated by the state, from above. On the other hand, they are exposed to the challenges of homogenising and globalising notions of Islam emerging within the religious discourses, that is to say, from below. These forms of resistance do have the potential to evolve into some radicalism. These forms also provide for creative alternatives allowing accommodation and appeasement from within.’²⁶¹

Madrasas at the minimum provide basic education; socialisation to certain norms of proper behaviour and knowledge; and a consciousness of an Islamic identity. ‘It is widely known that those who come out of the *madrasas* schools are not equipped to fit into modern, economically active and achieving society.’²⁶² This education is also being made available for girls who turn out to be “demure, self controlled, respectable women from the lower orders...skilled as a competent homemaker” and

²⁵⁹ Charles Allen, ‘*God’s Terrorists: The Wahhabi Cult and the Hidden Roots of Modern Jihad*,’ (Abacus: London, 2006), p. 209.

²⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 211.

²⁶¹ Jamal Malik, ‘*Madrasa in South Asia, Teaching Terror?*’ (Routledge: New York, 2008), p. 165.

²⁶² P. Parijahta, ‘*Madrasas and Muslims*,’ *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 10, (March, 2002), p. 984.

knowledgeable in her fundamental religious duties and rituals²⁶³ Qualified Muslims have attained position of importance in this country: air marshals, presidents, governors, home ministers, ambassadors, chairmen and managing directors of companies, heads of scientific research and development institutions, vice-chancellors, chief justices of the Supreme Court and high court, and others. Those who have only madrasa education surely cannot hope to attain these positions.²⁶⁴

There are many misconceptions regarding *madrasa* education to which we fall an easy prey. One obvious flaw in our reasoning is that we do not have the faintest idea of what *madrasas* are, and which categories of students attend to it. It is not that this information is not available. It is just that we tend to turn a blind eye to the realities that this strata of the Muslim society faces; and if we do not have an interest in understanding something we would not take the pains. 'Where a predisposition to debunk all religious education as a breeding ground for militancy and terrorism is so dominant, little would be gained by engaging in contesting our understanding.'²⁶⁵ It would be right to say that all those who come out of *madrasas* are characterised by narrowness of outlook and lack of critical imagination. 'Religious education, whether in the *madrasas*, the *pathshala* or a theological seminary, is carried out within the narrow and unquestioned confines of faith which is hardly likely to encourage critical imagination. Muslim *madrasas* are in this respect no different from other theological seminaries.'²⁶⁶

It is generally thought that Muslims do not prefer to send their children to school. They are more concerned about religious education and therefore are inclined to open more and more *madrasas*. There are many reasons for the expansion of *madrasas* other than the stereotypical reason of apathy towards secular education. It becomes important for us to conclude with an understanding of reasons that led to the rise of *dini madaris* in India.

²⁶³ Barbara Metcalf, 'Madrasas and Minorities in Secular India,' in Robert W. Hefner & Muhammad Qasim Zaman (ed.), *Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education*, (Princeton University Press: U.S.A., 2007) p. 99.

²⁶⁴ P. Parijahta, 'Madrasas and Muslims,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 10, (March, 2002), p. 984.

²⁶⁵ Tabereh Ahmad Niyazi, '*Madrasa Education*,' *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 37, No. 38, (Sept., 2002), p. 3967.

²⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

“Firstly, it should be noted that during Muslim rule in medieval ages these *madrasas* were centres of higher knowledge and these *madrasas* provided religious as well as then available scientific knowledge known as ‘*ulum-i-aqliyah*’ (intellectual knowledge). These centres of learning were naturally patronised by the kings, nawabs and ‘*jagirdars*’ (feudal lords). Thus what is known as *Dars-i- Nizamiyah*²⁶⁷ synthesised both religious and natural sciences of the time.”²⁶⁸

Secondly, “however, with the decline of the Mughal rule and establishment of British rule these centres of higher knowledge fast declined and were left with no resources to grow and imbibe the modern knowledge. Now small *madrasas* came into existence in different localities, which were run by donations from local communities and catered to elementary religious knowledge. The biggest institution of Islamic learning which came into existence in the post- Mughal period in north India was Darul ‘Ulum Deoband.²⁶⁹ The ‘*ulema*’ at the same time were more worried about religious identity and hence madrasa education flourished under their patronage.”²⁷⁰ Modern western education did not make much sense to them, nor could they afford it.²⁷¹

²⁶⁷ Mullah Nizamuddin is credited with having prepared a syllabus of studies based on a set of carefully selected texts for the students of Firangi Mahal. Named after him as the *dars-i-nizami*, it was heavily skewed in favour of the ‘rational’ sciences, providing students with the sort of education they needed for a job in government service. Today, the syllabi of almost all *madrasas* in South Asia follow the basic structure of the *dars-i-nizami*, although with significant modifications. The *dars-i-nizami* was heavily biased in favour of the ‘rational’ sciences. This does not mean that they were opposed to the ‘transmitted’ sciences. (See Sikand: 2005, 46-47). The fame of Firangi Mahal reached far and wide and it soon became a centre of Islamic learning. It produced a galaxy of great ‘Ulama’ of universal repute. It still exists but has lost its former position. [See Hasan Faruqi: 1963, 27-28).

²⁶⁸ Asghar Ali Engineer, ‘*Muslims and Education*,’ Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 36, No. 34 (Aug., 2001), p.3221.

²⁶⁹ This madrasa had come into existence during a period of great crisis for north Indian Muslims when Muslims were facing British wrath and the ‘*ulema*’ were in the forefront of anti-British struggle much before Indian National Congress came into existence and national freedom movement started. These ‘*ulema*’ remained steadfast in their struggle for freedom and also became allies of the Congress and firmly opposed two nation theory and partition of the country. These ‘*ulema*’ opposed modern education not so much because it was modern and secular but more so as it was British imperialist system. (See Engineer: 2001, 3221).

²⁷⁰ Asghar Ali Engineer, ‘*Muslims and Education*,’ Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 36, No. 34 (Aug., 2001), p. 3221.

²⁷¹ Many sociologists have pointed out that among Indian Muslims before independence there was either a feudal class or the poor class. Thus either there were very rich Muslims (mostly from feudal class) or very poor Muslims, the middle class was weak. The ‘*ulema*’ catered to the poorer classes by opening *madrasas* where free religious education was imparted and many *madrasas* also offered free food and clothing. (See Engineer: 2001, 3221).

Lastly, “the period immediately after partition was also full of crises for Muslims. The educated rich and middle classes migrated to Pakistan for greener pastures and poor illiterate masses were left behind. Once again it was madrasa education which came to their rescue and fulfilled their psychological and intellectual need. The government of India could not open even enough primary schools to fulfil the need for schooling for the poor. Muslims being among extremely poor had to fall back on *madrasa* education. And those who could make it to government schools dropped out before completing primary education as they had to supplement the family income.”²⁷²

An analysis of this contextual rise of *madrasas* makes it necessary to dispel the stereotype that Muslims resist modern secular education and opt for *madrasa* education only. Such stereotypes besides being unreal, also amount to harnessing communal attitudes. *Madrasas* are said to be centres of fundamentalism and centres of ISI activities.²⁷³ Such generalisations are dangerous impediments to the growth of the community.

“Since 9/11 *madrasas* have been portrayed as the vehicles for Islamic fundamentalism. However, *madrasas* as such are not the problem. *Madrasas* provide religious education and free lodging, essentially for poor people and have been supplementing the state education system especially in rural areas for decades. The western understanding of *madrasas* in Pakistan evokes ‘terrorist schools’ as they were set up to fight the soviets in Afghanistan and later provided the backbone to the Taliban regime. This highly oversimplified description does not apply to 90 per cent of *madrasas* across Pakistan and also India, as most of them teach children at primary level how to read and write as well as requiring them to study Qur’an. There are

²⁷² Asghar Ali Engineer, ‘*Muslims and Education*,’ Economic and Political Weekly, Vol. 36, No. 34 (Aug., 2001), p. 3221.

²⁷³ Support for such a presumption came from rather unexpected quarters after the January 22 attack on the American Centre in Kolkata. Immediately after the attack, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, West Bengal’s CPI(M) chief minister, warned the state’s ‘unaffiliated’ *madrasas* against carrying on anti-national activities. These are the ‘khareji’ *madrasas* that have not been recognised by the West Bengal Board of Madrasa Education and which teach mainly Islamic and Arabic literature. Bhattacharjee also spoke of the terror network being set up by the ISI in coordination with these *madrasas* on the porous India-Bangladesh border. Bhattacharjee made these remarks not once, but twice. He also went public about his worries over the unabated influx of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. Predictably, the Congress Party protested vehemently, as did many Muslim organisations; A little-known organisation, Jamait-i-Ulema-i-Hind, organised a demonstration in Kolkata and urged the chief minister to tackle problems such as unemployment plaguing the Muslim community instead of creating new ones. (See EPW, ‘*Spotlight on Madrasas*’: 220, 592).

different types of *madrāsas*, most focussing on basic literacy and religious education, and very few serving as religious universities. They are divided along sectarian and political lines.”²⁷⁴

“The two main branches of Sunni Islam in South Asia – Deobandi and Bareilawi – dominate this sector. Ahl –i Hadith/ Salafi Muslims have their own schools, as do the Shias, while the predominantly Sunni Jama’at i-Islami shuns sectarian tags and maintain *madrāsas* distinct from the sectarian ones. The religious, doctrinal differences of these schools are irreconcilable.”²⁷⁵

It is argued that ‘some *madaris* in Pakistan serve as recruitment grounds for young militants; and also socialise and politicise youth to a particular sectarian organisation’s perspective. Generally, however, *madaris* are institutions of caretaking and education, of a large population whose basic needs have been neglected by the state.’²⁷⁶ ‘Apart from the *madaris*, religious parties, such as, Lashkar –e Taiba, Jaish-i-Muhammad, preach militancy as they print militant literature which is circulated among the *madrāsas* and other institutions.’²⁷⁷

“The students studying in *jihadi* schools are totally brain washed right from the very beginning. The textbooks have been authored to provide one-dimensional point of view and restrict the independent thought process of children. Although, these parties have been banned, their members are said to have dispersed all over Pakistan, especially in the *madrāsas*. The *madrāsa* then may be the potential centre of Islamic militancy in Pakistan.”²⁷⁸

Reform of Islamic education must also recognise that the present “backwardness” of institutions of Islamic learning is a direct product of a highly polarised system of education, which is potentially dangerous. “The *madrāsa* students regard their

²⁷⁴ Marie Lall, ‘Education Dilemmas in Pakistan: The Current Curriculum Reform,’ in Marie Lall & Edward Vickers (ed.) ‘*Education as a Political Tool in Asia*’, (Routledge: Oxon, 2009), pp. 192-193.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Christopher Candland, ‘Pakistan’s Recent Experience In Reforming Islamic Education,’ in Jamal Malik (ed.) ‘*Madrāsas in South Asia: Teaching Terror?*’, (Routledge: London, 2008), pp. 104-105.

²⁷⁷ Tariq Rahman, ‘*Denizens of Alien Worlds: A Study of Education Inequality and Polarisation in Pakistan*’, (Oxford University Press: Karachi, 2004), p. 95.

²⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 96.

Westernised counterparts as stooges of the West and possibly as very bad Muslims if not apostates. The Westernised people, in turn. Regard their *madrasa* counterparts as backward, prejudices and narrow-minded bigots who put women under a virtual curfew and destroy all the pleasures of life as the Taliban did in Afghanistan.”²⁷⁹

“Unfortunately, the *madaris* are prisoners of books, some of which were written in the distant past to deal with the then contemporary problems. They have no relevance today, and yet they are taught to students, which only increases their irrelevance in the world. This is a disturbing situation which must change. The *madrasa* curriculum can be revised, and if need be, changed drastically.”²⁸⁰

It is sad to know that the madrasas have a retrograde system of education, which leads an individual to a stultifying existence. It is rightly acknowledged that some madrasas need refurbishment, as these institutions have refused the urgings of the new society and are not open to breaking new grounds. To achieve this successfully we need to realise the difference between stereotypes and ground reality. The ‘Ulama who run the madaris will have to be far-sighted and constructive in their approach to bring about change in the Islamic thinking of religious education; and to voice their opinion regarding the misperceptions. The restrictions and constraints, imposed by orthodoxy, should be obliterated to bring about academic and social change in the Islamic seats of learning. A mature reaction is the need of the hour.

The next chapter is based on the responses of the *ulema* to the recent trend of equating Islam with terrorism. It is a study conducted with the *ulema* of Lucknow, as this city forms an integral part of the rich history of political and religious culture of India.²⁸¹

²⁷⁹Tariq Rahman, ‘*Denizens of Alien Worlds: A Study of Education Inequality and Polarisation in Pakistan*,’ (Oxford University Press: Karachi, 2004), pp. 149-150.

²⁸⁰Ishtiyaque Danish, ‘*Muslims in India: Perceptions and Misperceptions*,’ (Global Media Publications: New Delhi, 2005), p. 120.

²⁸¹ Since Lucknow has been the seat of Islamic learning, for both Sunnis and Shias, from the time of Nawabs of Awadh. [See Cole: 1989].

CHAPTER FOUR

IMPACT OF RELIGION: REFLECTIONS FROM THE CASE STUDY

“[A] doctrine or an institution is genuinely Islamic to the extent it flows from the total teachings of the Qur’an and the *sunna* and hence successfully applies to an appropriate situation or satisfies a requirement.”

----- Fazlur Rahman

This chapter seeks to analyse the responses of prominent *ulema* in Lucknow on the issue of Islam and terrorism. It has been observed that the challenges of modernity have hit the *ulema* hard. ‘Mass higher education and the impact of print and other media have made deep in roads the *ulema*’s privileged access to authoritative religious knowledge.’²⁸² For the *ulema* the modern period has brought a serious erosion of their traditional power and authority. “Educational and legal reforms²⁸³ have greatly curtailed the dominant role of *ulema* in education and law, and raised serious questions about their relevance.”²⁸⁴

This study is done through the development of certain themes. There are five themes running in this present chapter. The first theme is a conceptual understanding of *jihad*, a term which has largely been accepted to be politicised and hijacked by the fundamentalist forces. The second theme is based on locating the responsibility for the terrorist attacks, with special reference to 9/11, after which the Western world became obsessed with extreme Islam. The third theme of the chapter is an unmasking

²⁸² Muhamad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*, (Oxford University Press: 2002, Karachi), p. 1.

²⁸³ The *ulama*’s sense of disenfranchisement has been heightened by the abolition of religious endowments (*waqf*) or their administration by government agencies, further reducing the economic independence and social role of the ‘ulama. The state by controlling revenues and paying salaries has increased its control of religious institutions and social welfare programmes. Moreover, the greater value placed on modern education has also resulted in the general tendency to hold the *ulama* responsible for the ills of Muslim societies. Among Sunni Muslims in particular, secularists and many neotraditionalists alike, the *ulama* have been regarded throughout much of the twentieth century as ignorant and obscurantist religious leaders incapable of providing necessary leadership. (See, Esposito in Rejwan: 2000, 45).

²⁸⁴ John L. Esposito, ‘The *Ulama* and Legal Reform,’ in Nissim Rejwan (ed.) *Many Faces of Islam: Perspectives on a Resurgent Civilisation*, (University Press of Florida: 200, Florida), p. 45.

the face of *mujahidins*, who against this backdrop are taken to be terrorists. The fourth theme is focused on madrasas. The persistent propaganda against madrasas as 'breeding grounds of terrorism' has forced *ulema* associated with leading madrasas, to voice their opinion in defence of madrasa education. The fifth theme is an overview on the 'Fourth Estate'²⁸⁵, that is, media portrayal of Indian Muslims in the present age of global Islamic extremism.

"Knowledge is power. It is a fact which the *ulema* must understand, for without it they cannot do any good to the society which they claim to be serving. The problem with the *ulema*, however, is that they do not realise the importance and power of the media. It is good to render selfless services without ever trying to take the credit for them. But when people are out with intention of showing you in a poor light, you have to speak the truth. When people condemn *madaris* as dens of terrorism, the *ulema* must tell the world what their institutions are all about, and how are they funded and managed."²⁸⁶ "Wahid al-din Khan offered a bold critique of the intellectual and political concerns of both the '*ulema* and the Islamists. He noted that the "criterion of power" has changed in the modern world: power is now measured in intellectual and technological terms, and this is the real basis on which western societies have risen to and maintained their position of dominance in the world. The *ulema* have tended to conceive of this dominance in exclusive political terms, without understanding the profound changes of which it is the result. They have remained so immured in a political view of the world that the significance of the other changes or the need to adapt themselves or their followers to those changes, has continued to escape them. The *ulema* see everywhere only 'injustice', 'conspiracy', and 'affliction', but not the new opportunities that are equally the product of the transformation of modernity."²⁸⁷

The *ulema* have continued to respond with varying degrees of enthusiasm to the challenges of changing times. In several contemporary states, both where Muslims are a majority and where they are a minority, the *ulema* have grown increasingly prominent in society and politics. This chapter is a field study of individual *ulema*

²⁸⁵ It is argued that the power of the press can be gauged by the use of the term 'Fourth Estate'. (See Wahiduddin Khan in Farouqui:2009, 253).

²⁸⁶ Ishtiyaque Danish, '*Muslims in India: Perceptions and Misperceptions*,' (Global Media Publications: New Delhi, 2005), p. 119.

²⁸⁷ Muhamad Qasim Zaman, '*The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*', (Oxford University Press: 2002, Karachi), p. 181.

representing the two main sects of Islam in India. This is a micro level study for a transnational phenomenon.²⁸⁸ It has been argued that the 'case studies held in social sciences are derived from, and are closely similar to, that of clinical studies in medicine and psychology. Such studies are contrasted dichotomously to experimental ones.'²⁸⁹ Thus, conforming to the concept of clinical studies, this field study deals with single individuals who, in this case are representatives of different sects of the Muslim community in India. The method and techniques used are more open ended and flexible; and proceeded by improvisation than by plan. A further reading of this chapter will reveal that the findings of this study are characterised as narratives and descriptive, giving a detailed portraiture.

This massive reach of the media has made *ulema* conscious of their responsibility that comes with their identity. They have realised that they are an integral and intrinsic part of the democratic Indian civil society. Their responses further leads to a discussion on the challenges faced by a people wrecked by intense debates on their identity. The building up of Islam and Muslims as the "new public enemy"²⁹⁰ has led the *ulema* to come out of their respective seminaries and campaign against the "ignorance of westerners about Islam and its history."²⁹¹

ULEMA: THE UNHEARD VOICES

The role of the Indian *ulema* can be divided into phases of 'activity' and 'inactivity'.²⁹² For a long time, post independence, the *ulema* did not have a prominent role in the society. They limited themselves within the confines of their religious seminaries, busy dealing with, matters of religious code of conduct and

²⁸⁸ A transnational phenomenon would include specific processes of and organizations for transnational integration, particular 'systems' of international politics, particular crises in international relations, and the like. (See, Eckstein in Greenstein & Polsby, 1975, 79). This work on 'Islam and terrorism' is a macrocosmic concern, but here the case study has been limited to the district of Lucknow, for the purpose of intensive field study; and also because Lucknow occupies a prominent place in the religious, cultural, political and social history of India.

²⁸⁹ Harry Eckstein, 'Case Study and Theory in Political Science,' in Nissim Rejwan (ed.) '*Many Faces of Islam: Perspectives on a Resurgent Civilisation*,' (University Press of Florida: 200, Florida),, p.81.

²⁹⁰ Susan B. Maitra, 'Islam and the West,' in Ather Farouqui (ed.), '*Muslims and Media Images: News versus Views*,' (Oxford University Press: New Delhi, 2009), p. 202.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² The phases of madrasas and 'ulama, are mentioned in chapter III of this dissertation. From the time of Mughal period to the present era of crisis, *ulema* have either actively participated in the social and political scenario or have reclined into their specific religious spheres.

striving towards a chaste life. "It has often been assumed that in the face of massive changes in the modern world, the traditionally educated Muslim religious scholars, the *ulema*, have become utterly redundant, a mere relic of the past, and therefore of little interest to anyone seriously in understanding the contemporary Muslim societies. In recent years movements of religious revival have forced a major rethinking of such attitudes. The religio-political activism of the "Islamists" has now come to receive extensive attention; and so have the Shi'i *ulema* for their leadership in the Iranian Revolution of 1979. But old assumptions have remained rather more entrenched in the case of the *ulema* of the Sunni Muslim world."²⁹³ It is pertinent to understand the importance of different *ulema* and their religious institutions in Lucknow. This study is based on the opinions of two Shi'i *ulema* and two Sunni *ulema*. Among the shi' *ulema* I have interviewed Sayed Hamid ul-Hasan, principal of *Jamia Nazimiya*²⁹⁴, Lucknow; and Sayed Kalbe Jawad Naqvi. Another group that has been interviewed is among the sunni *ulema*: Sayed Shah Fazlur Rahman, Imam, Mutawali of *Teeley Wali Masjid*, Lucknow; and Maulana Khalid Rasheed, Farangi Mahali²⁹⁵, Naib Imam *Eidgah*, Lucknow.

²⁹³ Muhamad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change*, (Oxford University Press: 2002, Karachi), p. 1.

²⁹⁴ Historical research provides us with the facts about shi' madrasas, dating back to the time of nawab Amjad Ali Shah of Awadh (1842-1847). The nawab is said to have been a devout shi'ite and an ardent follower of the religious leaders. Therefore he set up an institution of shi'ite theology called Jami'i sultaniyya or Shahi madrasa, 1843. The institution was originally accommodated in the mausoleum of nawab Sa'adat Ali Khan in Khaas Bazaar (later known as Qaiser Bagh). In 1857 the Shahi madrasa was abolished by the British after the annexation of Awadh. As a result the shi'ite studies in Awadh declined. The abolitio marked a very important point in the history of shi'ites, because it had put an end to the study of shi'ite students at the Firangi Mahall, thus opening up opportunity for the increase of tension between Sunnites and Shi'ites in Lucknow, which culminated in the riots of 1911. after the shut down of madrasa sultaniyya, the shi'ite 'ulama first continued religious teaching through private tutorage. In 1890 Mawlana Sayyid Abul Hasan Abbu Sahib founded Madrasa Nazimiyya and made Mawlana Najm al-Hasan the director of the madrasa. He had a new building erected for the madrasa on Victoria Street, Lucknow. At present the madrasa is run by Sayyid Farid al-Hasan, son of Sayyid Hamid al-Hasan, who was also the director of the madrasa a few years back and continues play an important role in the successful running of the madrasa. The madrasa is financially aided by the Uttar Pradesh government. But the higher section which is run by Mawlana Hamid al-Hasan, is unaided. The sources of income for the maintenance of the instruction are traditional shi'ite means. Admission is restricted to the Twelver branch of the shi'ite sect. (See Sayyid Najmul Raza Rizvi in Hartung & Reiffeld: 2006, 109-112).

²⁹⁵ From their arrival in Lucknow in the later seventeenth century down to the early twentieth century, the Farangi Mahallis had been able to ignore the Hindu world about them. Part of the sharif world of Muslim governing traditions, they taught in madrasas and served at the courts of Muslim princes. Only tow Hindus appear in their record in positions of honour, both in the early twentieth century. One was Raja Kishen Pershad and the second was Gandhi. (See Robinson: 2007, 157). Robinson introduces the Farangi Mahall family of learned and holy men as one which has lived separately from other religious communities but, equally, has been happy to coexist with them. When in twentieth century some shareable public spaces opened up, Farangi Mahallis were able to join other communities, though in small numbers and generally for a restricted time.

The first theme to be dealt with is the **conceptual understanding of *jihad*** as discussed by these *maulanas*. Sayed Hamid ul-Hasan pronouncing the *Sura-e- Al-Haj*²⁹⁶ (when for the first time the command for a war was given) explains the concept of *jihad*. “Allah and Prophet say: these people have been permitted to wage a war as they have been subject to abuse and oppression. With Allah’s blessings these men become mighty, people who have been rendered homeless and call Allah their God. And if Allah didn’t do away with the oppression of one against the other, then all the churches, synagogues, temples and mosques would have been demolished. All these religious structures are the one from where the name of Allah is raised high and heard. And of course Allah helps those who help His cause. Undoubtedly Allah is respectable and He possesses wisdom.” Hasan urges to clearly demarcate the difference between ‘*qitaal*’ and ‘*jihad*’, where ‘*qitaal*’ means to kill and *jihad* has varied meanings. He emphasises the need to escape from the view that confines the use of the term *jihad* from the Qura’an, to mean that Islam was spread by power. Infact ‘*qitaal*’ means ‘to kill’ or ‘to get killed’ in the process.

Moreover, in order to understand the relationship between Islam and sword, it is imperative to draw a comparison between *qitaal* and *jihad*, where *qitaal* gives a better understanding of whether Islam was spread by the sword or not. It takes time to understand the meaning of *jihad* which gives enough scope for arguments. On the other hand, understanding *qitaal* is easier and without any underlying meanings. In Islam wherever a mention of *jihad* is made, it is preferred to mean self-control, self denial. Other implication of *jihad* is ‘*jihad bil kalab*’ (pen). Yet another is ‘*jihad bil nisan*’ (tongue) and lastly ‘*jihad bil saif*’ (sword). The term *jihad* is mentioned in a number of places in the Qur’an. It completely rests on our sensibilities to limit our understanding of *jihad* to the last category and equate Islam with sword or power. We should seek to understand the meaning underlying this limited and narrow approach. ‘In the above mentioned verse it is observed that initially Allah commands His people

²⁹⁶ Maulana Hamidul Hasan quotes from the Qur’an, *Surah Haj* (The Pilgrimage) verse 39-40. It reads “Permission (to fight) is given to those upon whom war is made because they are oppressed, and most surely Allah is well able to assist them; those who have been expelled from their homes without a just cause except that they say: Our Lord is Allah. And had there not been Allah’s repelling people by others, certainly there would have been pulled down cloisters and churches and synagogues and mosques in which Allah’s name is much remembered; and surely Allah will help him who helps His cause; most surely Allah is Strong, Mighty.”

to wage a battle, and in the later half it is realised that the names of other religious institutions are mentioned. It becomes easy for us to understand that the command for *qitaal* is for self defense and not to force others. Had it been for force, other religions wouldn't have gained a prominent place in the verse, or rather no mention of other religions would have been made.

Syed Kalbe Jawad Naqvi agrees that the meaning of jihad is vast. It includes working towards the welfare of the society, seeking education, a labourer's tedious work, serving Islam and humanity. There is a need to keep all of these in mind while using the term. Moreover tolerance and forgiveness strengthen the international friendly relations and secondly, it prevents the international differences, he iterates. He conforms to Hamid ul-Hasan in enumerating the various types of *jihad*; that includes, *jihad* by pen, by the tongue, and lastly by the sword. Along with these, spending money for a good cause is also *jihad*. Differentiating between '*qitaal*' and '*jihad*', he argues that '*qitaal*' is a defensive mechanism and is applicable during the times of war. For 1400 years nobody had the right to use the sword. It was after 1400 years that the verse for using the sword was incarnated. Sighting from the Qur'an he says, '*you should fight with people who are fighting with you. Fight in the way of God and not for protecting your material belongings. In this fight one should remember to not to transgress the bounds of humanity. You should agree to come to terms if your enemy is willing to do it, and forgive him.*'

Sayed Shah Fazlur Rahman establishes that "Islam and terrorism have no relation; and this should be engrained in everyone's mind for progressive and peaceful living. Islam is religion of peace and co-existence. An in depth study of history gives us a clear understanding of the times before the coming of Islam, where barbarism prevailed and war was the order of the day. These wars lasted for forty years. After the coming of Islam these factions that were at war, came together and negotiated peace. *Surah 'Nisa'* in the Qura'n talks of conciliation between men '*and such settlement is best.*' Islam is a religion of distribution." *Jihad* is vast and it is necessary to have a conceptual understanding of the term. Generosity is also a form of *jihad*. He enumerates the different types of *jihad* as following, self-denial, (*Nafs-e jihad*), *jihad* by pen (*kalam ki jihad*), he argues that the power of pen is the mightiest, (*Haq aur Baatil*), *jihad* by the sword, (*Jihad bil Saif*). He further explains the situations where

the use of sword becomes legitimate. Fighting against evil, and fighting in defense of ones nation or country, is legitimate use of the sword.

In Rahman's words killing one person means an attack on humanity. Nobody has the right over an individual's life. In Islam, the culprit and the guilty should be punished. Terrorism is antithesis of Islamic teachings. In an act of terrorism, except the guilty, the innocent bear the brunt of violence. People who blame Muslims for terrorism are ignorant and refuse to understand the nuances of this dangerous link. This ignorance leads to bias. While talking of biases, Fazlur Rahman shares an analytical lens with Chandan Mitra, who while writing on Print media and Minority images agrees that 'most of the people working with the English media, including Muslims, do not know Muslim society at large. They know only the elite Muslims and at the most, the upper middle class Muslim strata. This bias, against the common Muslims, is a product of ignorance.'²⁹⁷

Maulana Khalid Rasheed in his attempt to explain the term *jihad* says that it is an implied term. Working towards education and eradication of polio are all part of *jihad*. Raising the sword is not an implication of *jihad*. It is a completely baseless argument that the Prophet spread Islam on the point of the sword. Before building such inadequate and erroneous arguments, a base should be provided. Since there is no proof there can be no stable base for this argument. There is no such history of Islam, where the Prophet raised or compelled his followers to raise the sword to spread Islam. Such arguments reflect the distortion of history. This misrepresentation of Islamic history not only devoids the religion of its authentic historical past but also makes 'history' a mere tool in the narrators hand. *Khalid Rashid in his attempt to nullify the relation between Islam and terrorism questions the writing of history.*²⁹⁸

²⁹⁷ Chandan Mitra, 'Print Media and Minority Images,' in (ed.), Ather Farouqui, 'Muslims and Media Images: News versus Views,' (Oxford University Press: New Delhi, 2009), p. 97.

²⁹⁸ True, history being a narrative in its very form is subject to the element of subjectivity which implies history being coloured by individual preferences and biases. This even questions his understanding of Islamic history as E.H Carr argued facts do not speak for themselves. It is the historian who makes them speak. (See Carr: 'What is History?') However, it is the task of the historian to balance the element of subjectivity. Only careful and critical enquiry of the sources can answer the question of whether Islam was spread by the sword or not. That there is no such evidence anywhere in the history of Islam is argued by many distinguished Western historians who have attested this fact. [See, Thomas W. Arnold 'the Preaching of Islam', M. G. Hodgson, 'the Venture of Islam', and Ira Lapidus, 'History of Islamic Societies',] These historians give substantial evidence to the contrary of what is widely believed in the western world.

He propagates that during the time of war or any conflict no innocent life can be the target. The lives of innocent people cannot be a medium to achieve one's religious political end. Blaming Islam for something like this just reflects one's ignorance. It should be well understood that Islam as well as no other religion perpetuates violence of any kind. The Qur'anic verses say that Islam has no relation with violence. "Allah dislikes those who sow the seeds of dissension." Like other *ulema*, Khalid Rasheed also iterates that an attack on any one innocent life is an attack on the entire human race, an assault on humanity. Allah's Prophet said, "*Al khalqu Aya'l ullah*", meaning "All mankind is one family." One of Prophet's *hadith* talks of Allah's mercies. "You will receive Allah's mercy for being merciful to your fellow people on earth."

The second theme runs around **locating the responsibility for the recent terrorist attacks with special reference to 9/11**. While questioning the *ulema* on 9/11 I could notice different kind of responses. The response given by Hamidul Hasan, and Khalid Rasheed was a sombre one. Maulana Kalbe Jawad sounded terse and sarcastic in his response against the American-Taliban nexus. The other response given by Fazlur Rehman was full of contempt and angst. This anger was accompanied by the willingness to clear the doubts. It seemed it was the most awaited issue to be discussed. The common response running in all the interviews was that the event of 9/11 has exploited Islamic teachings and history to suit the political ends of the perpetrators.

Hamid ul-Hasan goes back to history and says, "The concept of *jihad* that has come down the generations has unfortunately been linked to Islamic history, where the kingdoms and their governing processes have been given Islamic colour and has come to mean *jihad*. Basically, it has no relation with the Qur'an or the practical life of Prophet. Consequently, wherever Muslims have felt oppressed they have impulsively and blindly reacted to it. This blind reaction has got nothing to do with Islamic teachings (*talimat*) or standards of humanity. These reactions failed to satisfy either of the two. And with the passage of time this came to be referred as 'terrorism'. The Islamic *sharia* discusses *qatil* and *maqtool*, where preference is given in forgiving the one who is responsible for bloodshed. Nowhere does the Islamic *sharia*

gives a person the right to take revenge against the *qatil* where there are chances of losing innocent lives.”

Hasan sights an instance from Prophet’s life to show the relevance of forgiveness in Islam, and to further understand and explain the preference of forgiveness over revenge. He quotes the incident: “there was battle between Muslims and non-Muslims for self defense, where Muslims emerged victorious. Among the prisoners was a girl who was brought before the Prophet. She said that her father was a generous man. He gave clothes to the deprived, food to the starved and rendered selfless service to the disabled. (this girl was the daughter of the famous *Sakhi* Hatim Tayi). What would have Rasool said to a prisoner of war on the Arab land, where woman were given low status and was also a non-Muslim woman. After listening to her, Rasool said “Set her free because her father was a noble man with a strong character. She should be sent back to her tribe with respect and security.” Qur’an says “Hold to forgiveness: command what is right but turn away from the ignorant” (*Surah Aara’af, Verse 199*)

Maulana Hasan says that this decision made by Prophet was not an emotional one because listen to what Qura’n has to say, “If a non-Muslim asks for shelter you should give him one. This person after listening to Allah’s words (*kalaam*) should be sent back to his destined place because he belongs to a *quam* that is unaware of everything.” Hasan quotes from the Qur’an, “*Wa in hadum minal, mushriki nas tajarakh, wa ajirho, hatta, yasma, qalamallah, fumma abligho ma manah. Zaleka bw an nahu qaumul laye alamoona.*” (*surah tauba*)

Discussing the battles that occurred during the times of Prophet, Maulana Hasan says that “The battles that occurred in the times of Rasool were the ones that happened when Rasool left Mecca for Medina. After travelling 440km, the people of Mecca attacked Rasool and his troop that was accompanying him. It became essential for Prophet to respond to this attack by participating in this battle.” The participation of Prophet in this battle is justified because it was fought in defending himself and his tribe. Hasan asks us to widen our horizons for a better contextual understanding of an incident while making judgements. He says that in the above mentioned incident we can decide for ourselves that who is responsible for this attack and what does *jihad*

imply here. Hamid ul-Hasan is of the view that “every incident that occurs should be contextually analysed.”

He further discusses battles and their relation with Islam. He says “Later in history when battles are discussed one should equate and analyse them in the light of the real spirit of Islam. 1400 years back Islam gave the order to crush terrorism, which has been put down in very clear and distinct words, and is still applicable now. It was said that if a person attempts to kill an identity by killing a person who is innocent and has never killed anyone, it would mean that he has killed the entire human race. Taking one innocent life means an attack on humanity. Now if we see terrorism and violence in this light of the Qur’an then we will not mistake Islam for terrorism.”

Maulana Hamid ul-Hasan has extensively quoted from the Qur’an and incidents from the life of Prophet to substantiate his argument. He did not outrightly name any individual or group for the terrorist attacks. What I could understand from his response was that he was only bothered about the present image of Islam. He has urged the educated civil society to open up minds while reading Islamic history and analysing situations.

Maulana Kalbe Jawad while talking of the recent menace of terror attacks says that “it is a dense nexus. One should know the intricacies before maligning a religion.” He holds Taliban and Al-Qaeda responsible for all this. He further says “all this is possible with American and Israeli support. And this is not new to world politics, it has been happening ever since America needed Afghanistan support in its fight against the Soviet Union. Now when the situation is out of control they are blaming the Muslim community. Here it is understood that their main agenda is to spoil the image of Islam.”

He also asks us to look into the ideology of Wahhabism, which is venomous not only for non-Muslims, but also for Muslims who are not their followers. They consider both Shia and Sunni as their infidels and hypocrites, who have distorted the essence of Islam that is, spreading Islam by force. He argues that for Wahhabis all those people who refuse to conform to our ideology should be killed. He puts his argument forward “Muslims are divided and this is working against them. 9/11 is the brainchild of

America and Israel. They want to wipe out Islam from the face of the globe. The Taliban *Maulvis* have links with Israel.”

Maulana Kalbe Jawad was quick in responding to this issue. His terseness in locating the responsibility was evident. He has actually drawn an impenetrable link between America-Israel-Afghanistan. He urges to pass through this impassable network to unravel the truth, which has been simplified and distorted.

The anguish seen in Maulana Fazlur Rahman needs to be clearly stated. He says that ‘post 9/11 Islam and Muslims have gone through painful tribulations. Something that they didn’t deserve, the Israeli lobby is responsible for this. The unprecedented Islamic terror is the result of American Israel conspiracy.’ Quoting from the Qur’an he says it should be rightly understood by all that “Force and religion are two opposite entities. Force cannot be used in matters of religion.”

He asks the educated individuals to look into the loopholes and questions still hanging unanswered. 9/11 is America’s brainchild. It was possible with Israeli support. Why 3,000 Israeli were not present on that day? It was manipulated and secretly acted upon. Crumbling of this huge American building has been simplified; an understanding of the intricacies has been avoided. Stating the reason behind 9/11 he says, “Muslims are progressing. Defaming them is the only means to pull them down. Muslims fear going to America and this would result in lack of growth and development.”

American’s fear that if all the Muslims would unite their power would crumble. United Islam is a threat to American power. Post 9/11, in one of his speeches, Bush said that 9/11 is a crusade between Christianity and Islam. Rahman questions why hasn’t this speech been covered by the media?

Fazlur Rahman ends with this question on media bias. Among all the *‘ulema* I interviewed he seemed to be most assertive in proclaiming the responsibility for 9/11 and other global terror attacks. With acerbity and derision he remarks on America’s attempt to show itself meek in the hands of Islamic fundamentalists. Why is America forgetting the fodder provided to Afghan *Mujahidins* in her war against the Soviet

Union? Rahman says that the Afghan *Mujahidins* or the Islamic fundamentalists were trained by the CIA and now the wrongs done should be met with fairness.

Maulana Khalid Rasheed responds to the subtext on responsibility for these attacks. He argues that “the responsibility doesn’t rest on Muslims. It’s only the game of politics and power. One has to understand this intricate web designed to trap Muslims to hinder their growth, both in India and the world.” Reflecting on the past position of Indian Muslims he argues that “when India was a British colony, then Indian Muslims had better government employment opportunities. During colonisation 37% Indian Muslims were in government jobs, but now in Independent India only 2% Muslims work in government sector.” To this stark change in the employment of Indian Muslims in the government sector Maulana Rasheed raises questions that he considers pertinent to understand the social, economic and religious milieu of India. He asks “Why is an Indian Muslim seen only as a Muslim, why not an Indian? Why are identities restricted to religion?” These questions makes one ponder over the multiple identity debate given by Amartya Sen, where he argues ‘that internal diversities should not be overlooked and religious identity should not be given singular attention in assessing an individual.’²⁹⁹

Maulana Rasheed comparing government sector with the private sector argues “Open economy and private sector has been a positive thrust in the growth of Muslims.

²⁹⁹ Amartya Sen argues that giving an automatic priority to the Islamic identity of a Muslim person in order to understand his role in the civil society, or in the literary and professional world, can result in profound misunderstanding. He further argues that the increasing tendency to overlook the many identities that any human being has and to try to classify individuals according to a single allegedly pre-eminent religious identity is an intellectual confusion that can animate dangerous divisiveness. An Islamist instigator of violence against infidels may want Muslims to forget that they have any identity other than being Islamic. To Sen, what is surprising is that, those who would like to quell that violence promote, in effect, the same intellectual disorientation by seeing Muslims primarily as members of an Islamic world. The world is made much more incendiary by the advocacy and popularity of single-dimensional categorization of human beings, which combines haziness of vision with increased scope for the exploitation of that haze by the champions of violence. Sen iterates that the people of the world can be classified according to many other partitions, each of which has some—often far-reaching—relevance in our lives: nationalities, locations, classes, occupations, social status, languages, politics, and many others. While religious categories have received much airing in recent years, they cannot be presumed to obliterate other distinctions, and even less can they be seen as the only relevant system of classifying people across the globe. In partitioning the population of the world into those belonging to “the Islamic world,” “the Western world,” “the Hindu world,” “the Buddhist world,” the divisive power of classificatory priority is implicitly used to place people firmly inside a unique set of rigid boxes. Despite our diverse diversities, the world is suddenly seen not as a collection of people, but as a federation of religions and civilizations. (See, Sen: 2006)

Looking at the private sector we can say that it has helped Muslims to come out of their economic and social backwardness.”

While discussing 9/11 Khalid Rasheed said that there is no trace of Muslim involvement in this act of terror. He says “There is no such entity called Osama. I fail to understand where do these arguments come from? How an identity is created and then runs into oblivion? How something like Afghanistan, a state bereft of education, technology and progress, blast America’s twin towers? America is claimed to be both technologically and militarily powerful, then why is it unable to find Osama, a mere mortal?”

Like all other *ulema* Rasheed also blames the American-Israeli nexus. These power holders have their interest in the oil rich countries.

The third theme is an understanding of *mujahidin*. Here the *ulema* discuss the meaning of *mujahidin* to help obliterate the misunderstandings associated with the term. In his attempt to explain the meaning of *mujahidin* Hamid ul-Hasan goes back to his discussion on *jihad*. He argues that “the best form of *jihad* is to be of help to someone, materially or through physical assistance. Poor, deprived and disabled people should be given service. But if you have to defend yourself and you have no option but to take to force, then force becomes a legitimate weapon. This would also be called *jihad*. Quoting an example he says, recently, Israel attacked Palestine. This attack by Israel was based on the pretext that the power holders of Gaza bombarded Israel, where a few people (3-4) were injured and few others died. To this it was said that Israel’s attack was in retaliation and justified, as it was in self defence. This reactionary attack led to the destruction of the city where thousands of children, men and women lost their lives; and huge city buildings were brought down to rubble. In this modern age, the excuse given by Israel should be seen in the light of the order given by Islam where nobody has the right to kill innocent people.” This is also a terrorist attack because the life of innocent people is a means to achieve the political ends. This attack was posed as a threat to Palestine. Illustrating this he explains, “terrorism has no face, no religion. It can be called portrayal of corrupt intentions. It is nothing except this. If people belonging to this religion identify themselves with

specific Islamic names, (this *mujahidin* or that *mujahidin*) they should not be equated with Islam. This would be wrong and unjust.

Adding to Hasan's argument Maulana Jawad goes on to say that "a *mujahidin* is one who fights in the way of God." He further says, "the saddest thing is that now the terrorists are also called *mujahidins*, who fight in the name of God. Why something that is associated with a religion be equated to something that has no religion and has its own political ends to achieve?" He believes that in the present age of technology religion has faced extreme exploitation. "One should look into the planning, which is to kill Muslims and put them against each other. High technology is used; Taliban cannot do this single handedly because they are ignorant. It implies that America and Israel, the technologically powerful countries are using the Taliban in achieving their ends."

Maulana Fazlur Rahman's concern revolves around the young Muslim generation that has been deliberately pulled into this political game. "I am worried that the youth is being drawn into the terrorist activities. Post independence the Indian Muslim youth has played an important role in the progress of the community as well as the nation. Why is the identity of the Indian Muslim questioned? How should an Indian Muslim prove his allegiance to the nation? Speaking on their behalf he says, "they are nationalist and consider India to be their nation. The purpose behind maligning the youth is to crush the community economically. The purpose behind terrorist action is to crush Islam and its culture." He analyses the present situation and argues that the Indian State should be involved more constructively in finding a solution to the problem and should not aggravate the situation with its hostile attitude.

"*Mujahidins* are the ones who help in spreading Islam," iterates Maulana Kahlid Rasheed, ironically. "This is a hyped definition of *mujahidin* which has been so easily created and presented by the media. This understanding is complacently accepted by the masses." Here he raises the question "Why doesn't the civil society and the intelligentsia use their critical faculty before coming to conclusions?" "What prevents them from investigating the truth by reading the texts?" He asserts "there is no such thing as Indian *mujahidin*. Minorities are the target here. Israel is playing a very important role in conspiring against the Muslims."

The fourth theme discusses the role of the media. This is something that has aggravated the *ulema* the most. Realising the importance of media Hamid ul-Hasan says that “the media has a very crucial role to play and should present the truth with intelligence. A wound caused by a gun or a sword is visible and can be healed, but the one caused by the power of pen goes down to generations and its repercussions are visible later.” Comparing the two, Maulana Hasan understands the power of electronic media which is all pervasive and goes on to say, “the electronic media is more powerful than the print, as it reaches across sections.” He urges the fraternity within the media houses to be sensitive in presenting the truth and argues that it is “their duty to do justice while portraying the real picture.” Quoting an incident where a huge demonstration was held outside the BBC Centre in London for not presenting the truth Maulana Hamid ul-Hasan says that “the media holds a very responsible place in the society but most of the times it evades this responsibility. This is what BBC does – the so called ‘neutral media’. Other media houses should realise their responsibility, and be just in presenting the truth.”

Maulana Kalbe Jawad was quick to say that “the media is actually busy with false propaganda and so doesn’t have the time to show the truth. This false propaganda of Islam’s war against the West is hyped and sensationalised by the media, not realising the repercussions of this presentation.” Another swift response came from Maulana Fazlur Rahman, according to whom media’s role has been very painful. Elucidating media’s role he says, “the media talks and presents baseless things. The real issue gets lost in sensationalising an event. Realisation is the key term to bring the media to its right track: of presenting the truth.”

The media’s negative role is also discussed by Maulana Khalid Rasheed who seemed disenchanted with the media. His view was that “the hype of Muslim physical identity is created by the media. Every person with a beard, moustache and a skull cap is made to stand into the witness box to prove his innocence. This erroneous presentation is going down the generations leading to hostility among the youth. The involvement of a *purohit* in a recent terror attack was not extensively covered by the media. Why true and proved cases like this, the violence against the Christians in Orissa, Israeli attack on Gaza are not sufficiently covered? Why doesn’t the media play a neutral role? I

fear too much of blaming and pushing could lead to Muslims becoming violent.” Defending the most extremist ideology within Islam, Rasheed says that “there is no end to allegations. The allegation on wahhabism for preaching terror is also false. One needs to be sound with facts. If a Muslim is involved in a terrorist activity it is his personal choice and it has nothing to do with the community or religion.” Here he differs from Maulana Kalbe Jawad who believes that wahabbism is the most dangerous ideology, as they are not only against non-Muslims but also preach lethal sectarian biases within the community.

This debate on wahhabism ends with questions that open up the most contested paradigm within Islamic extremism. This difference in opinion is not only among the *ulema* but also among scholars in the academic world.

The fifth theme discusses the issues confronting the Indian madrasas. “Scholars and journalists alike may be able to garner evidence for Muslim efforts at recovering or maintaining medieval Islam, or an effort at Islamizing Muslim masses perceived to be erring from orthodoxy, or even some evidence for the ‘proliferation of separatist attitude’ among the impressionable youth of the Madrasas, but is this view of Madrasas entirely right?”³⁰⁰ *Are Indian madrasa harbouring terrorism or are they victims of maligned campaign?* Addressing these questions the *ulema* attempt to focus on ground realities tracing it back to history.

Maulana Hamid ul-Hasan argues that the *madrasas* that are suspected to be preaching extremist militant ideologies should be brought out in open; and should not be categorised within the *dini madaris*. “The *madrasa* that indoctrinates its students with radical extremist teachings should be called a *duniyai* institution and not a *dini madrasa*.” Conceptual clarity about any religious institution is a must. “Making innocent people victim of their power is neither Islam nor the teaching of any *dini madrasa*. Though they may keep Islamic names, they will not be called Islamic *madrasas*.” Before judging an institution, its structural and functional processes should be well understood. He argues that ‘historically, since 1400 years no *madrasa* is found where except Islamic *sharia* anything violent is taught.’ Hasan’s response

³⁰⁰ David Emmanuel Singh, ‘*The Independent Madrasas of India: Dar al ‘Ulum, Deoband Nadwat al-Ulama, Lucknow*,’ p.1

draws a distinction between a *dini madaris* and a *dunyai madaris*; one that serves religion, and caters to the religious needs of the Muslim community; and the other that serves its own political ends.

Maulana Kalbe Jawad urges to expose *madrasas* aided by Wahhabi sources. He says that the *madrasa* that need to be put to question are the ones in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Baluchistan, which are very conservative and rigid. He focuses on the contemporary realities of the *madrasa* space and exemplifies the fundamentalism found in institutions working under Islamic names. He concluded by saying, “*madrasa* is a centre for religious teaching, primary being an understanding of the Qur’an, which says ‘*La Tufse Du Fil Arz*’, meaning ‘Allah has forbidden to indulge in mischief on earth.’

The other two *ulema* attempted to speak against the smear campaign against the madrasas, and the *ulema*, who not only run the madrasas but also represent the Muslim community. Khalid Rasheed nullifying the anti-campaign against the two religious bodies says, “no *ulema* has ever said to claim the world territory by spreading Islam. A Seminar, ‘*National Convention against Terrorism*’ was organised last year. All the *ulema* and Muslim organisations actively participated in it to reiterate their point that there is no relation between Islam and terrorism. Earlier *ulema* never came out in open condemning terrorism but now they make a conscious effort to come out in open and dispel the wrong perceptions.”

Turning his argument towards Islamic states he goes on to say “Only Saudi Arabia has an Islamic state and no other country, not even Pakistan is an Islamic state.” This statement given by Maulana Rasheed raises the following questions, *what is an Islamic State? Why does he refer to Pakistan as a non-Islamic state? Is Islam the basis of Pakistan, if yes, then what interpretation of Islam is its source of establishment?* An answer to these questions will actually define Pakistan's identity. “Pakistan claims that it is an Islamic republic. As a homeland for the Muslims, the nationality of the majority of its inhabitants is found on Islam, their common spiritual aspiration, rather than commonness of race, language or territory. As an Islamic state, ideologically, it is neither national, nor territorial nor fully sovereign. But in reality it conforms to the well established norms of International Law applicable to modern

nation-states and is for all purposes a national, territorial and sovereign state. The distance between ideology and reality is the main cause behind Pakistan's quest for identity.³⁰¹

Here I would like to say that the Qur'an and the Hadith do not talk of an Islamic State. Even the term Dar-ul-Islam was coined by later jurists. I think it was with time, that the seizure of territorial power and its prolonged dominance in that particular territory led to the consolidation and hegemonisation of power, and enforcement of law by the then wielder of power, thus resulting in Islamic States.

Maulana Rasheed concludes by saying, "If Indian Muslims desired an Islamic Indian state then they wouldn't have struggled against the British rule for an independent secular Indian state. Moreover, the Mughal rule would have made it easier for Muslims to make India an Islamic state." Resting the blame on America and Israel he iterates, "Islam is an easy tool for American and Israeli power holders to achieve their political ends. Why is a religion becoming a tool in acquiring political supremacy? Politics should be dealt politically and not through religious means."

This study has opened new grounds for contestation and debate and calls for an enquiry of the questions thus raised. I would raise the following questions that still need to be answered. Is there a concept of Islamic state in real or is it a Muslim aspiration? What role does the pre-Islamic history play in determining the national identity? Is jihad, as propagated by Al-Qaeda and other militant groups a result of a non-historical, parochial and selective approach to the Qur'an?

³⁰¹ Javid Iqbal, 'Islam and Pakistan's Identity,' (Vanguard Books: 2003, Lahore), p. 5.

CONCLUSION
CRITICAL ISLAM

“Everything which is known is known not according to its own
power but rather according to the capacity of the knower.”

Boethius, *The Consolidation of Philosophy*

Understanding Islam has become increasingly imperative in view of 9/11, which was largely viewed as an Islamic terrorist attack. This debatable subject has been thoroughly discussed, both in its history and its repercussions. In this new century, civilisations are almost on a collision course. As a result of inadequate understanding, confusion and discontentment, the dynamics of dialogue seem bereft of elements of reasoning and rationality. This dissertation establishes that Islam is a heterogeneous religion, and has nothing to do with terrorism. Fundamentalism primarily has nothing to do with terrorism, but when allowed to be the tool of terrorists; its manifestations assume gruesome dimensions. Terrorists have no religion and no religious toleration. Fundamentalists are believed to have nurtured irrational ideas based on extremism and fanaticism. Muslims tend to fall within either of the two trends, liberal or fundamentalist. But this classification doesn't end here. There also appears to be diversity within the fundamentalist version of Islam. It should be noted that Shi'i Islam is different from Sunni Islam, and within this, Deoband orthodoxy differs from Wahhabism.

In the words of Plato the beastly desires 'bestir themselves in dreams when the gentler part of the soul slumbers, and the control of reason is withdrawn. Then the wild beast in us becomes rampant and goes in quest of what will gratify its own instincts.'³⁰² Thus, terrorism is the result of an individual's depravity; his desperate and despairing response to suit his own philosophy. The perception of Islam has been exceedingly confused and misleading. The faulty impressions have been propagated by the

³⁰² Iqbal S. Hussain, *From Skin Scratches to Civilisational Clashes*, (Meraj Printers: Lahore, 2005), p. 375.

Western media and biased political lobbies. The blame also rests on the fundamentalist forces, who with their parochial approach have exploited the religion to achieve their ends. These extremists commit acts of terror and are not territorially limited. Their allegiance to Islam cannot be a valid manifestation of Islam³⁰³.

It is equally true that throughout history it is the religions that have been blamed to be the cause of so much hatred and discord, resulting in all sorts of conflicts and wars, though only certain fanatic followers indulge in such practices. "Religions are based on faith, and faith, if taken literally and outwardly, dissociated from the inner spirit and humanistic essence, very easily turns into fanaticism which is essentially the very negation of faith. The difference and distance between faith and fanaticism has never been so ominously sharp and sickening as it is today, when the entire world is waging a war on the worst form of religious fanaticism can take, viz., terrorism. And the irony of the situation is that the religion which is being associated and identified, though wrongly, with terrorism, is Islam. This distorted projection of Islam is obviously because of the doings of certain overzealous and misguided adherents of faith who are using this divine message of universal humanism to settle scores with certain systems which they think are against Islam and Muslims."³⁰⁴

It is argued that "Muslims are confronted with attacks and accusations, which have debilitated its fragile socio-cultural, political and economic structures. The situation became serious after 9/11. As the conditions harden, the prediction of Friedrich Nietzsche appears to be translating into real impressions. "There will be wars as never before" has begun to advance by ordered stages. "How could the human mind cope with the spectacle of civilisations turning against one another annihilating their own integral elements in an orgy of organised destruction?" The questions of clash of civilisations, fundamentalism and ideological confrontations have become the core issues of modern age."³⁰⁵

³⁰³ Akhtarul Wasey, *Islamic Response to Contemporary Challenges*, (Shipra Publications: New Delhi, 2008), p. 50

³⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 51.

³⁰⁵ Iqbal S. Hussain, *From Skin Scratches to Civilisational Clashes*, (Meraj Printers: Lahore, 2005), p. 375.

In the dimension of Islamic continuity and change, the 1970s was a time when the dominant adaptationist style was significantly challenged by a more fundamentalist form of Islam.³⁰⁶ One of the significant developments of the decade was the emergence of a new, radical style of fundamentalism during the process of interaction and conflict between adaptationism and fundamentalism.³⁰⁷ 'The fundamentalist style has the potential for leading in a variety of directions. Fundamentalists criticise existing institutions and ideas of society, judging them on the basis of an independent analysis of the Qur'an and the *Sunna*. There have been two general streams of Islamic fundamentalism. One was the more traditional in its tone and organisation, with direct lines of continuity to the earlier, militant fundamentalist movements. The most visible of this type of fundamentalism is the Saudi monarchy. There was a period when the fundamentalist style also assumed a radical form. Expressing allegiance to the Qur'an and the *Sunna* and rejecting existing institutions and medieval tradition, the radical fundamentalist engaged in profound reorientation of the Islamic tradition. It emphasised mass participation, participatory control, small unit identity, and the elimination of old socio-political distinctions. This type of fundamentalism was seen in Libya.' "Fundamentalism has been more a tone within movements than a foundation for distinct organisations."³⁰⁸

In the present world there appears to be a conflict between obscurantism³⁰⁹ and an evolutionary outlook. So long as religions are limited by traditional perspectives, no

³⁰⁶ The decade of the 1970s marked a time of major transformation and reorientation. Islam was in the midst of a new range of dynamism. There are elements of both continuity and creativity. On the broadest level, this resurgence is the product of developments within modern society and the continuing appeal of the Islamic tradition. (See, Voll: 1982, 275).

³⁰⁷ John Obert Voll, *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World*, (Westview Press: U.S.A, 1982), p.347.

³⁰⁸ *Ibid*, p. 263.

³⁰⁹ Here obscurantism means an attitude of mind which resists the spirit of free enquiry and prefers to remain confined within narrow limits of tradition, even when it hampers further growth and development of a personality and inhibits intellectual, interpersonal communication. This attitude engenders mental apathy, opposition to the notion of change and a love for the irrational. It gives rise to the idea that the entire truth has been spoken in one particular moment of past history and that no such novel situation could arise which calls for a new approach fundamentally different from the usual one. This attitude violently resists the notion that further advances in human knowledge may require us to alter our views about the destiny of the universe and mankind. Any advance in human knowledge which directly or indirectly implies a need to revise norms of thought and action is resisted. It is on this account that each historical epoch in which such a need was felt had its own peculiar variety of obscurantism. There was hardly an age which did not witness a conflict between the forces of enlightenment and obscurantism. Human history is a record of the struggle of reason to overcome unreason and to expand the area of scientific and philosophical knowledge. (See, Khundmiri: 2001, 273).

common future can emerge out of the chaos of history. It is argued that pride assumes the form of arrogance, and it is this arrogant attitude towards the past that generates an obscurantist mind³¹⁰. “In India’s situation, what is tragic is not a pride in the past but an arrogant attitude, which often becomes anti-historical. Almost all the revival movements in India manifest this attitude of an anti-historical arrogance. The situation becomes more tragic when it is remembered that attempts are not being made to revive a common past of all the elements of Indian society but that a section is trying to revive its own sectarian past. It is widely believed that man derives his real humanity from belonging to a certain religio-cultural group, outside which the concept of humanity has not much relevance. The idea that man ought to belong to a human community which transcends religious or tribal divisions is still an alien idea in Indian society and hence the weakness of the secular idea. It is not an easy task – at least for a detached observer – to apportion blame to a single factor or community in the present obscurantist situation of our country. Some of the problems of the Indian Muslim community emanate from this situation. There are elements in the Indian situation which foster a tendency in Muslim minds to close themselves into a shell and withdraw partially from the contemporary social reality and consequently deny to themselves opportunities of further growth as a part of the Indian community. Instead of self transcendence, self limitation has become their immediate end, and instead of growth, continued existence as a separate self-contained group has become their objective in their collective life. This doesn’t solely rests on their inertia, but also in external challenges which come from the extreme chauvinistic elements of Hindu society. It is a pity that modern education has not made any positive contribution towards the eradication of such a romanticisation of past; instead it had further romanticised this idea.”³¹¹

It is noted that “in the historical epochs which succeeded the ‘glorious’ days, the principle of a golden past became the dominating passion of the Muslim community. It still remains a dominant passion of the activist elements in the world of Islam, whether it is Jama’at-i Islami or the Ikhwan al-Muslimun. The activists are able to get the support and sympathy of non-believers because there is a tacit consensus on the

³¹⁰ Alam Khundmiri, *‘Secularism, Islam and Modernity,’* (Sage Publications: New Delhi, 2001), pp. 272 – 273.

³¹¹ Ibid, pp. 275-276.

superiority of the golden past over the other epochs of history among almost all believers, which, in a sense, inclines normal believers, at least slightly, towards ‘abnormality’ because this notion of the inherent superiority of a golden past – a lost utopia – creates, or is at least capable of creating, a tendency of regression. It rather arouses the passionate believer to ‘force’ the past to return; and the ideological return to the past soon transformed into an atavistic ideology of the return of the past. This backward looking utopic mind is averse to using any contemporary phrase.”³¹²

“The organisation that claimed responsibility for 9/11, Al Qaeda, has termed it as *jihād* to gain respectability within the Muslim communities of the world. Those who have been led to jump to the conclusion that these activities represent the truth or essence of Islam have not cared to understand either the mind of Al Qaeda or the fact that the majority of Muslims in the world have not only not supported Al Qaeda but have outright condemned killing of innocent human beings. If there is no enthusiastic effusion in favour of America the reason is American polity itself; it is using the ‘war against terrorism’ and ‘promotion of democracies’ as slogans to justify its policy of economic-political domination of the world. Under the cover of those slogans it is trying to gain control over oil-rich Muslim countries of West Asia, North Africa and Central Asia. The world has seen its gory manifestation in Iraq as also in Afghanistan.”³¹³ It becomes necessary to understand the Taliban and Osama bin Laden in order to understand the lack of response to the call for *jihād*, and it is necessary to understand the USA and its objectives to understand the American public’s response to Muslims and Arabs.³¹⁴

This dissertation has provided an understanding of the Islamic world, through its analysis of the unfolding of the Islamic experience in its spatial and temporal context – especially the development of global Islamism and the view of Muslim clerics. Within Muslim societies and also internationally, Islam’s role has evolved in response to socioeconomic and political developments and the dynamics they set in motion. “The process of socioeconomic modernisation, the changes that it has triggered, and

³¹² Ibid. pp. 261-262.

³¹³ Akhtarul Wasey, ‘*Islamic Response to Contemporary Challenges*,’ (Shipra Publications: New Delhi, 2008), p. 12.

³¹⁴ Rosemarie Skaine, ‘*Neither Afghan nor Islam*,’ *Symposium on 11 September 2001: Terrorism, Islam and the West*, Ethnicities: Sage Publications, 2002, p. 5.

Islam's encounter with the West have influenced most strongly the evolution of Islam's social and political role, including the emergence of a new brand of militant ideology."³¹⁵ It is concluded that power emerges as a most crucial and fundamental value in the present conduct of global politics. 'One must come to terms with the fact that supremacist puritanism in contemporary Islam is dismissive of all moral norms or ethical values. The one prime and singular concern is power and its symbols, all other values are made subservient.'³¹⁶

This dissertation opens up new paradigms for further argument. Pondering over the debate on continuity and change I would like to raise the following questions: *Has the political culture of Islam remained static throughout history? How far the dynamism of plural traditions has its influence on political Islam? Are there any historical evidences on the differences between early political Islam and the one presented by Islamic radicals today? Is the term 'world of Islam' limited to mean a collective group of States sharing their identity with the terrorists? Are the present terrorist attacks an attack on the West or also against moderate and democratic Muslims around the world? Is Taliban the true face of Islam or is Islam being Talibanised in this process of supremacy for power?*

³¹⁵ Shireen T. Hunter, *The Future of Islam and the West: Clash of Civilisations or Peaceful Co-existence?* (Praeger Publishers: U.S.A, 1998), p. 168.

³¹⁶ Khaled Abou El Fadl, *Islam and the Theology of Power*, Middle East Report, No. 221. (Winter, 2001), p. 33.

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