RELIGION AND POLITICS IN INDIA: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SUFI TRADITION AND TABLIGHI JAMAAT MOVEMENT

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DECLARATION

I, hereby declare that the dissertation entitled, *"Religion and Politics in India: Comparative analysis of Sufi tradition and Tablighi Jamaat movement"* submitted, at Jawaharlal Nehru University, in partial fulfilment for the award of the degree of *Master of Philosophy*, is a bona fide work. This dissertation has not been submitted for the award of any degree of this or any other university.

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CERTIFICATE

It is hereby recommended that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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Chapter 1:   Mapping the Strands of Sufism

In contrast to various projections of Islam, mainly in the media as an extreme and rigid form of religious belief, the Islamic concept of spiritual mysticism known as Sufism or *tasawwuf* provides an immensely complex yet a sublime variation of Islamic belief system. It starts with the belief that people have the potential to form a certain level of communication with God in a spiritual sense and since unlike Christianity there is no concept of priesthood in Islam officially, forging such a bond is possible on a personal level. But seeking guidance from certain individuals who already have trodden this path of spirituality and been recognized by the people for the same, often treated with respect and provide the guidance to those who seek their suggestions to quench their own spiritual thirst.

As far as the beginning of Sufism as an Islamic belief system is concerned it is said that *tasawwuf* had its source in the life of the prophet and his companions. Khanam (2009) writes that the Prophet led an extremely simple life. He avoided all luxuries. Any valuable presents received by him were immediately disposed of in charity. His personal possessions, even at the time when the whole of Arabia acknowledged his supremacy, comprised of no more than an ordinary matters to sleep on and a pitcher to keep water in. he fasted for months on end and slept little preferring to spend the major portion of the night in prayers (p. 9).

It is interesting to acknowledge that many contemporary scholar who have written on the topic of Sufism, have grappled with the origin of the term Sufism because interestingly this specific term is not mentioned in Quranic or hadith texts, yet it has immense popularity within and outside of Islamic tradition. This specific term came much later and as Farida Khanam (2009) elaborates that the term sufi, or *tasawwuf*, was not used in any writing before the 8th century AD. The sufis were obviously more concerned with their personal piety than the propagation of their views (p. 41).

It is widely held that a few people who were oriented towards God rather than the material world, they used to wear a single clothing made of wool known as "*suf*" so that the roughness of the cloth would produce a feeling of unease and make a statement of

rejection of worldly comfort. And from this word *suf* another very significant word of sufi epistemology, *tasawwuf* came in to being which means the one who wears woolen dress. Respecting this famous and much accepted view, Dr. Israr Ahmad (2003) reserves his own opinion that the origin of the term *tasawwuf* has its origin in Greek word *sophia*, which means "wisdom" and used to denote the "wise" people (pp. 9, 10). Recently Julian Baldick (2000) accepted both the claims as possibility for the origin of the term *tasawwuf* proposing a third possibility that it may come from the combination of the outset of the terms *suf* and *sophos* (p. 5). Another contemporary scholar Reza Aslan (2011) also seems to be drawn towards the analogy of *suf* wollen cloth of the early sufis as a symbol of detachment from the world (p. 203).

Describing the word Sufism further, Trimingham (1971) explains that Sufism essentially promotes those inner tendencies of Islamic practices which enable a person to have direct link with the God. Such tendencies are the result of accumulated experiences of spirituality which are again the outcome of the common Islamic consciousness developed over a long period of time. Such experiences have deep Islamic connections as they derive from Quran and hadith and can only be understood within the framework of Islamic law and practices (p. 1).

Trimingham applies this term to anyone who believes that it is possible to have direct experience of God and willing to take the spiritual or physical exercise and hardship in trying to seek closeness to Allah (*ibid.*, p.1) however the majority of the scholars are of the opinion that the word sufi comes from the word suf, or wool. This is because most of the early pious people were inclined to asceticism and wore undyed, coarse woolen garments. The rough cloth symbolized voluntary poverty and renunciation of the world with all its pleasure (Khanam 2009, p. 8).

One contemporary and very well known sufi Islamic scholar and Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri[1] takes issue with the view that the root word for the word Sufi is not mentioned in the Quran and hadith. He is of the opinion that word Sufi has more than one origin while fully agreeing to the origin of the word from *suf* (rugged woolen cloth) he also mention

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[1] Video link of the lecture is given in references.

that the root word for Sufi is also found in the Quran and supporting his statement he cites the example from Quran chapter 22 verse 36 which describes one scene where the animals are standing in the line to be sacrificed in the name of Allah. Here the word *sawafah* is used for 'lined up' for those animals, so he consequently draws the inference that it is for those who lined up standing ready to be sacrificed in the name of Allah are the Sufis and the root word for Sufi or Sufism is *sawafah*. Sufis are those people who sacrifice their life for the sake of Allah and their hearts join together in a line directing towards the almighty. And they are the people whose heart are always at the remembrance of Allah even if are engaged in day to day worldly affairs.

Sufism and Islamic Theology

Tasawwuf or Sufism is inherently an Islamic concept. Islamic scholars insist that in order to seek closeness to God, one has to go through a transformation and this cannot be done in a random manner. One has to have well grounded faith in God and adhere to some prescribed Islamic practices made clear in Islamic texts and life practices of Prophet Muhammad and other renowned sufis.

However it is also true that at least at an initial stage Sufism is characterized by many different philosophies and religious trends such as Judaism and Christian monasticism but Islam as claimed by renowned Muslim scholars such as Javed Ahmad Ghamdi[2] that is not an entirely new religion but the extension of one Abrahamic faith that includes, recognizes and respects Moses and Jesus as prophets sent by God to show the true path to their own people and Muhammad is the last prophet in the long chain of several other prophets. In this case it is not unusual to notice the shift of certain characteristics from one version of religious belief to another. For example, Baldick (2000) refers Arthur Voobus, a historian of Christian asceticism, putting particular emphasis in the Christian literature of Middle Eastern region, on a covenant between God and men: which is very much visible in classic Sufism. These members of the covenant are not the clergy or monks but the ordinary believers who are engaged in devotional practices to subdue their bodily desires. Same way the Sufis in Islam are often quite conspicuous for their disdain

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[2] Video link of the lecture is given in references.

of the over indulgence in to the worldly affairs while living among the people and society (p. 12).

Nonetheless, non-deviation from the mainstream Islamic teaching and practices is given much emphasis by Islamic scholars like Maulana Masihullah (n.d.), Islamic scholar known for his understanding of *tasawwuf*. He quotes early great Persian sufi Bayazid Bastami advising the people not to get deceived by someone who performs the miracle of flying in the air but to trust him only if you find him steadfast on practicing Islam and following shariat. For Maulana Masiullah the most important attribute of a sufi is not his ability to do the miracle, on the contrary it (ability of performing the miracles) could just be a form of deception the ultimate test or attribute for a sufi (someone who has forged the connection with the God) lies in his commitment towards the Quranic and prophetic laws and duties (p. 21, 22).

Further quoting the well known sufi saint of the Indian subcontinent Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti, Maulana Masiullah (*ibid*) says that the one who establishes his faith on shariat (basically the teachings prescribed in Quran and prophetic tradition), obeys and respects the Islamic teachings, his stature (in the eyes of God) keeps growing but all this is guaranteed only if his Islamic faith has deep roots in the shariat (p. 21).

Another famous and respected Islamic scholar of the Indian subcontinent Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanvi (n.d.) considers *tasawwuf* as an integral part of one's Islamic religious belief and defines it as controlling/correction of one's *nafs* but at the same time makes it very clear that in order to do so one does not have to abandon important worldly affairs in the form of social duties and responsibilities. And anybody who believes otherwise is an ignorant on the topic of *tasawwuf* (p. 41).

Western scholars like Martin Lings (2005) also believe in exclusiveness of Sufism to Islam while recognizing its universality at the same time. He maintains that the book (Quran), the prophet (Muhammad), Islamic doctrine and methods are inseparable of Islam and thus to Sufism also (p. 23).

As long as nonconformity of Sufism to Islam and its religious practices is concerned we have one illustrated historical example of tenth-century man in Baghdad named Husayn

ibn Mansur al Hallaj who repudiated Islamic practices labeling them as just an external edifice and not the essence of the religion eventually he claimed himself to be God publicly as a result he was accused of heresy and was imprisoned for years. He was finally executed by the religious authority. So was Al Hallaj a sufi or a heretic? Arguing in favor of al Hallaj, author Reza Aslan (2011) considers that Al Hallaj was also on a path of spiritual journey of self reflection as any other sufi individual, known as *tariqah* and considering the possibility of existence of more than one path to the divine reality through self reflection, Al Hallaj path was different than those which were approved by the religious authority of that time and that was the reason one great and respected sufi scholar Al Ghazali did not did not comment on Al Hallaj's religious views but objected to his public display of a 'mystic revelation' which he gained after a long journey of inward reflection (p. 210).

Despite the example of Al Hallaj and the possibility of experiencing divinity without confirming to the Islamic shariat and practices, *tasawwuf* or Sufism as mentioned earlier remains largely an Islamic concept as many established sufis, as well recognized as Khawaja Moinuddin Chishti acknowledges the need to adhere to at least the basics of Islamic *shariat* and practices because a total deviation from it takes away the essence from the *tasawwuf*.

Conceptualizing *tasawwuf*

In order to follow its stated commitment to give equal if not more importance to the insiders' viewpoints present paper takes up the a few Islamic religious personalities and their understanding regarding the concerned concept. Israr Ahmad (2003) says that topic and concept of *tasawwuf* are basically Islamic. Conceptualizing the topic he describes that *tasawwuf* is firstly an attempt to escape from ignorance and striving for acquiring knowledge, meaning that since a Sufi is always seeking the god (ultimate form of truth). This search automatically separates him/hers from ignorance and by being consistence in his search he moves from darkness to light i.e. from ignorance to knowledge. Secondly it requires burning one's ego and illuminating the heart with the light of Allah, this description suggests that negation of self (distancing oneself from worldly temptation not renunciation from social duties and responsibilities) is the key aspect of Sufism; it creates

the space for the light of Allah in ones heart by eliminating the 'self' from it. Thirdly it is about having sincerity for Allah, meaning that any aberration from the commands of Allah and prophet cannot lead to the right path. So submitting sincerely to the will of God almighty as directed by him in his book (Quran) is the way to attain His favor. And lastly it involves serving the mankind (p. 8-9).

Another well known sufi Islamic scholar Tahirul Qadri[3] delivered a one and half hour long very elaborated keynote lecture in international sufi conference held on 20th march 2016 in New Delhi's iconic Ramlila ground.

Qadri not only shed light on the origin of Sufism its ideology and etymology but very importantly he talked about the various stages a sufi experiences when he decides to tread on the sufi path. According to him the state of being a sufi is not static the sufi travels, traveling is a prominent feature of Sufism. Traveling (in a spiritual sense) in Sufism is known as *sulook* and MaulanaTahirul Qadri explained the different stages (ten stages) within the journey of Sufism. A brief description of these stages would shed more light on the topic has not been properly examined yet.

Spiritual stages of Sufis

> **Stages - *Tazkiah enafs* (purification of self)**: this stage can be described as an overhauling of self or transformation/control of oneself where a person'sbasic instincts change to spiritual instincts because he learns the method of controlling his self (ego).

> *Tasfiya* **(refinement of self):** Journey of heart, this spiritual state is marked by a heart getting freedom from worldly worries and sorrows towards the 'truth' which is the source of real pleasure and happiness.

> **Takhliya (to vacate oneself of worldly affairs):** This state signifies with removal of strange or *gair* (ungodlyin this context) elementfrom within thus making enough space in heart to invite the God in it. This state can be best described in Urdu poetry as_

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[3] Video link of the lecture is given in references.

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"hartamannadil se rukhsat ho gai, ab toaajadilmeinkhalwat ho gayi"

(All my worldly desires have left my heart, come to my heart o God it (the heart) has enough space for you now)

***Tahliya* (adornment of self)**once the heart gets cleansed the person's attributes transforms from human to godlike or '*rabbani*' attributes. Sufi becomes the giver not taker (a God like attribute).This stage is about shedding of human attributes and gaining of god's attributes.

***Tajliya* (gaining spiritual heights)**the sufi while physically remains on earth but at spiritual level he is on the skies(in the heights), i.e. near god, where he sees god's manifestation.

***At'tadanni* (getting closer to God)**the sufi reaches the high level (spiritually speaking), where he receives the close attention of god at this stage.

***At'tadalli* (receiving holy care)** After receiving the blessings from Allah, sufi travels back from the skies to the material world then he remains under the supervision of God.

***At'taraqqi* (status upgradation in the eyes of God)** After gaining the previously mentioned special status the sufi always improves his place in the eyes of Allah, always in upward motion.

***At'talaqui* (receiving the blessing)**Sufidirectly receives from Allah his blessings or *ata*. Allah speaks through him in the sense he always speaks the *haq*, the truth.

***At'tawalli* (under God's protection)**At this stage the Sufi comes totally under the supervision of Allah and he becomes immune to all the human vices here no space left for anger, hatred or strictness, every time the movement is towards God and as the Sufi gets closer to god, he tries to makes others close to god as well

The way of the *Sufis*: *Tariqat* Sufi orders *and Dhikr*

Islam does not have the concept of established priesthood as opposed to that of Christianity. In mosques, to lead the Islamic prayers (*namaz*), an appointed priest (*imam*)

is not necessary but any ordinary Muslim can lead the prayer but of course the seniority and piety of that person matter foremost. But in order to attain the higher level of spirituality one needs to be more disciplined and required to be guided on the specific path of spirituality by some spiritual personality or *shaykh/murshid.*

Trimingham (1971) regards *tariqa* as a practical method to guide a person, who is in fact a seeker of divine reality by training him in a particular way of thought, feeling and action through a succession of spiritual stages and psychological experiences by his *murshid,* a sufi master (p. 3-4)

"The disciple or *salik* receives the rite of initiation (of spirituality) from his shaykh or *murshid*, who in turn has received it from his *shaykh* and so on, with the chain of transmission spiritual influence (*barakh*) going back to the prophet himself. The sufis believe that the prophet conferred this right on only some of his companions, in particular the caliph Abu Bakr and Ali, who in turn passed on to their followers. In this way, the right has been passed on in unbroken succession up to the present day" (Khanam, 2009, p. 14).

This tradition of transmission of spiritual influence forms a chain of succession known as *silsila*. There are many such *silsila* in Islam but all of them find their spiritual roots back to the mentioned two companions of prophet who had been initiated in to it by prophet himself. This transmission of spiritual knowledge is based on master-disciple relationship, consequently this relationship could be defined as a brotherhood of sufis who have a common pedigree of spiritual masters in which elders sufis initiate disciples in a particular sufi order and give them formal permission to continue a common school of thought and practice by initiating other in the sufi order when they have received the required spiritual training.

Tirmingham (1971) also comments on the possible origin of Sufism and sufi *silsilas*. He explains that one of the primary sources to give birth to sufi doctrine and practices is that it emanates from collective religious experiences, it developed as a philosophical system in a later stage but essentially it is a way for 'self purification'. Gradually its practical aspect got developed and spread throughout the Muslim world with different ways of

practices through the religious orders. Different orders adopted different ways to explore the path of 'self purification' under the guidance of a sufi master, who already had had the experience of the journey of the self purification. So for a seeker of the 'righteous path of self purification' it was only natural to accept the experienced sufi as his master or guide. This chain of master-disciple forms a chain of sufis, an order (pp. 3-4)

Though in the early days of Islam many *shaykhs* had their followers but then this master-disciple (murshid-mureed) was not institutionalized, this happened much later when the number of disciple grew. This relationship of master-disciple is based on an oath of allegiance (*bay'ah* in arabic) taken by the disciple which is basically accepting the shaykh as his spiritual guide. In the words of Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanwi (n.d.), bay'ah is in fact seeking the spiritual knowledge under the guidance of a more experienced person so that the disciple not only stay away from the dangers of the route but also travels with comfort in other words the disciple should hand himself over to the master as a patient gives himself under the supervision of a medical specialist and followers his suggestions (p.59).

Khanam (2009) says that the main objective of the sufis is gaining closeness to Allah and one specific method they adopt is that they resort to remembering Allah in a prescribed and particular manner. This specific devotional *act* of remembrance is called *dhikr* (p. 16) though in its wider sense it involves a range of remembrance activities and finds it mention in the Quran itself –

> And remember the name of your lord and devote yourself to him with (complete) devotion (Quran 73:8).

> And remember Allah often that you may succeed (Quran 62:10).

To date it is not uncommon to see a devout Muslim person to do the act of *dhikr* (utterance of god's name or other holy words) using a prayer beads or simply fingers. Though the scope of *dhikr* is certainly to go beyond the mere utterance of certain words, it is meant to awaken the devotional aspect within a person and to ensure certain discipline and order in his spiritual quest.

"Early Muslims used to remember god even while going about their worldly chores. They believed that they receive a reward for discharging their duties to their fellow men while keeping God in mind and acting in accordance with His will. The underlying idea was that anything done in the name of God and conforming to his commands amounted to remembering god or performing *dhikr*."(Khanam, 2009 p. 17) it is also clear that remembrance of God does not involve any retreat from the normal worldly affairs but the important thing is the consciousness of God, which can be described as *taqwa*. In times when Sufism became more structured, the remembrance of God or *dhikr* became confined to a specific way of reciting the name of God. "In most sufi orders *dhikr* sessions are held at regular intervals. Under the guidance of the shaykh or his representative, the disciple, or murid engage in *dhikr* for an hour or two. This may be done either silently or loudly, and might take the form of a chant" (*ibid*., p. 16).

At times the importance of *dhikr* is emphasized so much so that it seemingly supersedes the obligatory form of prayers like daily *namaz*. It is noteworthy here that the *dhikr* in its narrower sense (chanting the name of God) has never been given priority over the obligatory form of Islamic worship but specifically categorized as *nafl* or supererogatory form of prayer.

Concept of *Taqwa* and Sufism

In his last sermon, this is widely held that prophet of Islam, Muhammad, laid down the criterion for achieving excellence in the in the eyes of supreme God. Setting aside differences of race and nationality, he emphasized that superiority rested on grounds of piety or *taqwa*: "Definitely, in the sight of Allah Ta'aala, the honorable one is the one who is more pious." (Azmi, 1998; p 26)

In the sermon, the prophet is clearly mentioning the criterion for achieving excellence in the eyes of the Supreme God which is not based on nationality or race but solely based on *taqwa*. The meaning and significance of *Taqwa* is mentioned in the holy book Quran on many occasions as fear of Allah[4] (the one and supreme God), piety[5] and self restraining[6].

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[4] Quran 2:189

Each of these are described in the Quran and considering their importance in the light of the importance of the farewell sermon, fearing Allah is about following the orders of Allah (shariat and tariqiyat) piety is doing good deeds and self restraining is controlling oneself (ego or *nafs*) in order not to disobey Allah.

Sufism laid stress on *taqwa* as a way to achieve the nearness of God. And if we put aside all the etymological debates over the term Sufism for a while, it is clear from this explicit historical hadith that Sufism's philosophy and core teachings have always been part and parcel of the Islamic history and tradition.

In short, Sufism certainly has an unquestionable and overwhelming aspect of spirituality which includes many features mentioned above such as seeking the true knowledge, self negation, *dhikr, taqwa* etc but we also need to keep in mind that ev

ery phenomena exist in a certain socio historic circumstance and bound to respond accordingly. In this regard the time period of post Mughal Empire and ascent of British rule in India proved to be a watershed moment for the fate of Muslims and Islam in India. We see over a period of time many well established sufis, thus Sufism took a political stand and strived for the values they stood for, and the legitimacy for it often sought from the religion, in this case Islam. This study would focus on the important socio-historical events which led to the formulation of religious authorities and institutions having deep spiritual foundations taking a call for the political stand.

Tracing the Sufi elements in Tablighi Jamaat

Among many Islamic revival movements of twentieth century, Tablighi Jamaat as a movement as well as a religious group has gained widespread attention perhaps because of its presence in every part of the world where Muslims are in significant number. A more detailed analysis of the circumstances around Tablighi Jamaat origin and ideological roots will be discussed in the next chapter. Here we focus on the a few specific teachings and guiding principles of Tablighi Jamaat in order to check its closeness and distance from the teachings and principles of Sufism mentioned earlier.

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[5] Quran 49:13
[6] Quran:2:183

Founder of Tablighi Jamaat, Maulana Ilyas was himself a religious scholar, studied from the seminary at Deoband and a disciple of Deobandi sufi and scholar, Rashid Ahmad Gangohi. His influence as a sufi is very much visible in the spirit and functioning of the TJ to this day which will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

In order to check the affinity between the two, sufi thought and the philosophy of Tablighi Jamaat, we need to look at the six numbers/points of Tablighi Jamaat. In the Tablighi circle these six numbers is the name of an effort. These points have been verbally articulated by Tablighi Jamaat's current leader Maulana Saad Kandhalwi. Although Tablighi Jamaat does not seem to believe much in producing literature of their own but as an exception, considering the practical necessity Maulana Saad's sermon was given the booklet form named in urdu '*chhay number ki mehna't*. In this booklet the Maulana has identified six crucial points or principles to follow by the Tablighi members in order to properly run the movement. These guiding principles are seen as a form of effort through which the attempt is made to change one's previously held impure belief system and adopt the uncontaminated Islamic. These six point principles are –

1. *Eman* (to implant the significance of *Kalimah*, i.e. staunch belief in one god and in the prophet hood of Muhammad)
2. *Namaz* (to abserve and maintain daily obligatory prayers)
3. *Elm o zikr* (acquiring Islamic knowledge)
4. *Ikram e muslim* (respecting fellow Muslims)
5. *Ikhlaas e niyat* (to purify one's desire and striving to remain sincere)
6. *Dawat o tabligh* (taking part in missionary activities among Muslims)

Eman- It is about believing in the first Islamic *kalmia, ilaha illa'llah Muhammadur Rasulullah*. This is basically accepting onenesss of Allah and prophet hood of Prophet Muhammad in an undoubted manner. *Kalmia* is regarded as more of a pledge between a man and his creator (Allah) where the man required honoring this pledge by not indulging himself in to anything which has been prohibited by Allah and his messenger.

Namaz- Namaz is an Islamic meditation in the form of obligatory Islamic prayer and one of the pillars of islam. It involves a certain physical exercise as commanded by prophet. It

should be done with a belief that the person performing namaz is doing so in front of Allah himself.

Elm and zikr- InTtablighi Jamaat terminology *elm* or knowledge is the state of being aware of or having the knowledge of what Allah wants from a human being, his creation. Allah wants his creation to gain prominence in his eys and in order to achieve this state certain methods are prescribed by Allah through prophet. The one who knows and shapes his life according to those commands are the true knowledgeable person.

Zikr is literary the remembrance of Allah. It includes chanting the names of Allah and performing namaz etc in order to seek closeness of Allah and make the heart pure and filled with faith.

Ikram e muslim- it is regarding the treatment of other people (muslims and non muslims alike) with the love and respect considering them as fellow human being created by the same creator. It is also about the acknowledging that every person has the same rights and Allah does not like those who infringe upon the rights of other people.

Ikhlas e niyat- this could be simply translated as sincerity towards Allah. A person who acts upon the will of Allah following the ways as directed by the prophet, solely for the purpose of seeking the closeness and favor of Allah can be said to have the purity of intention, which is a very important factor in order to achieve the status in the eyes of Allah.

Dawat o tabligh- following the prophet's footstep in order to correct our own beliefs and conducts while putting serious effort to call other people to the rightful path of Allah and his prophet. This is particularly about sparing time for missionary activities among Muslims and withdrawing from worldly commitments. It is a responsibility to call people and help each other to in to following and practicing the faith with more conviction and rigor (Malik, n.d., pp. 4-27).

The *Tabligh* in Tablighi Jamaat

These six principles suggested by Tablighi Jamaat also form the essential edifice of Islamic faith system. These suggested points are mainly comprised of morals and

religious beliefs such as having unflinching faith in god and his messenger, carrying out prayers, inner purification and being good to others though one particular point regarding *Dawat o tabligh* may seem a bit incongruous here as it requires not just belief and prayers but a very socially significant act of travelling different places, interacting with people all over and convincing them of a certain way of belief system as form of a *da'wah* , a call to faith for the Muslims.

The emphasis of Tablighi Jamaat on *da'wah* activity is quite conspicuous as it has become a common sight on the roads, streets railway platforms and airports in India and in several other parts of the world to come across group of Muslim men dressed in coarse and distinctly simple clothes, carrying their bags and beddings in their hands and shoulders, always in haste to reach their scheduled place to spread the message of Islam to the local population. This preaching method of *daw'ah* or call to faith is exclusively for the Muslims as Tablighi Jamaat does not seek converts from other faiths but asks Muslims to adhere to the 'pure' form of Islam and shun the mixed or syncretic cultural or religious practices as Jammat sees them as not part of their version of 'pure' form of Islam.

Tablighi Jamaat's focus on *daw'ah* activity gives it a very distinct place among several other Islamic movements and organizations, the practice forms the backbone of this movement and plays the most crucial role in the foundation of Tablighi Jamaat. Prior to the formation of Tablighi Jamaat, the subcontinent had witnessed a few Islamic revivalist movements such as a passionate revivalist Deoband movement led by a group of religious scholars and a high spirited emancipatory Aligarh movement led by a modernist Muslim sir Syed Ahmad khan. The former movement resulted in to the establishment of famous religious seminary of Darul Uloom in Deoband region of Saharanpur district of western Uttar Pradesh whereas the reputed university of Aligarh, Aligarh Muslim University culmination of the latter one. The achievement of Tablighi Jamaat in comparison is perhaps to produce groups of wandering common people who are affected so deeply by the teachings and philosophy of Tablighi Jamaat that they not just finance their own travel but choose to stay out of the comfort of their homes for several days

(generally three days or forty days) or in some cases even a few months for the purpose of *tabligh*.

"The world *tabligh* is derived from the Arabic root *b-l-gh,* which means 'to reach one's destination', 'to achieve an objective, 'to come to hear' or 'to come to age'. Tabligh means 'to convey' or 'to communicate' a message" (Sikand, 2002, p. 65).

Maulana Ilyas came to believe that merely opening up of different madarsas would not serve the purpose of training common people in the 'purist' form of Islam as the around the region, the Mewatis were indulge into several syncretic cultural practices, which were not considered Islamic to the *ulema*, so Maulana Ilyas started to visit the vicinity in order to preach them his version of Islam, that was the right form of Islam for him.

Tabligh: A 'Reformist' mission

It is also important to point out here that Tablighi Jamaat initially was just one among the many other *tabligh* movements sprang at a particular time period primarily as a reaction to one revivalist Hindu group Arya Samaj *shuddhi* movement which sought to convert or reconvert Muslims in to Hindu fold because of their belief that most of the Indian Muslims were the descendents of the native Hindus who converted to Islam during the hundreds of years of Muslim rule yet the more fundamental reason lies in the fact that the British rulers in the late nineteenth and in the beginning of the twentieth century started granting more participation to educated Indians in their bureaucracy and electoral bodies on the basic of the numerical strength of both Hindu and Muslim communities. Since the share in the state privilege was linked to the numerical strength both the communities needed to show the followers of their respective religions higher in number. The Hindus upper caste elite who had traditionally been less concerned about the miserable social condition of the larger 'lower caste' groups in particular to the Dalits, now not just started to unite the Hindus of different caste groups and going a step beyond also strive to win the converts from the Muslim fold.

Tablighi Jamaat derives its inspiration from Deoband school of thought and from the tradition of Syed Ahmad Shahid (d: 1831), a warrior sufi. Tablighi Jamaat founder Maulana Ilyas had been a student of seminary of Deoband and influenced by their

'reformist' stand. He believes that Muslims must adapt to the proper beliefs of Islam as described in the Islamic text of Quran and hadith, for Maulana Ilyas that was the meaning of 'reform' and this reformist massage must reach to those Muslims who do not practice the Islam in this manner, a stand earlier taken by Deonand and individuals like Syed Ahmad shahid (Mayaram, 1997, pp. 222-223)

Research Problem

This study deals with the concept of Sufism and religious movement that draws its inspiration from the Sufi ideas. Instead of taking into account the long and ancient Sufi tradition, this study focuses upon the eighteenth century historic context, when the British started gaining control and many Islamic religious scholars, *ulemas* perceived it as a threat to their religion as new rulers had their own language, religion and culture.

This could be a matter of debate whether the arrival of foreign rulers poses a threat to the local culture and religion or not, but in colonial India, it sure was perceived as a threat by the Muslim *ulema* prompting them to react in a certain manner. Sometimes appeals were made to the Muslims of India to be cautious of such forces and remain united in faith, sometimes direct confrontation with the opposing forces took place and sometimes the reaction was culminated into religious institution building and organisation formation. This diverse reaction was mainly influenced by the historic context of that time period, and therefore, the present study has sought to explore two problems – first, an enquiry into the socio-historicity of the context when the religious reaction took place, and second, how solidarity was constructed around the religious symbolism, mainly through the oath of solidarity from the co-religionists.

Objectives

Tablighi Jamaat is a socio-religious movement seeking to bring the Muslim *ummah* on the path of righteousness. The epistemology of the Jamaat lies in purism, and through different ways, it preaches and propagates scripture-based Islam, and tries to reach as close as possible to the Islam as it was practised in seventh-century Arabia. This study concerns itself with tracing the lineage of Tablighi Jamaat and its ideology, and tries to locate its roots. At the outset, links between Tablighi Jamaat and Sufism appear. This

study has also attempted to check if these initial assumptions are true or not, and to what degree. As there are different traditions within Sufism itself, it investigates as to which kind of Sufism it is congruent with. In order to find those linkages, it also becomes necessary to trace the genealogy of Sufism in India. On the basis of these, the following objectives emerge –

- – Understanding the influences of Sufism on the ideology of Tablighi Jamaat
- – Finding out the extent to which the activities of Sufis and Tablighi Jamaat are enmeshed in contemporaneous social and political situations.

Research Questions

In order to address the objectives, the following questions surface through which the study can navigate and take form –

- – What constitutes Sufism? Traditions and practices.
- – Which particular tradition within Sufism has influence, if any, over Tablighi Jamaat?
- – What are the *modi operandi* of the Tablighi Jamaat?

Methods and Conceptual Framework

Both Tablighi Jamaat and Sufism in India have a long history. Both have been parts of many cultural, social, and political processes, and thus, have impacted the unfolding of historical processes, and vice versa. This study uses historical method as a tool to investigate such spatio-temporal junctures where Sufism and Tablighi Jamaat have played crucial roles in unfolding of the events, and to understand how the larger societal and cultural changes have impacted Sufism and Tablighi Jamaat. This method has been used because it offers an understanding towards the evolution and development of social processes and helps in contextualising them.

Explaining social phenomena in academic terms requires conceptualisation. In case of Tablighi Jamaat, coming together of people and forging allegiance to it has played critical role in its formation and development. In this context, Durkheim's idea of solidarity is appropriate to analyse the development of Tablighi Jamaat and its functioning.

Relevance of the Study

Sufism has been studied by various scholars, each one placing emphasis over one aspect or the other. Some have studied it from a purely historical point of view; some others have looked at its cultural aspect, while still others have gone deep into its 'reformist' leanings. Tablighi Jamaat, though not as exhaustively studied as Sufism, has also been studied from various perspectives. Barbara Metcalf, who has studied the Deoband movement, has studied it from a historical evolutionary perspective where the roots of Tablighi Jamaat lie but she doesn't give place emphasis on the Jamaat itself. Yogender Sikand, on the other hand, has analysed the Tablighi Jamaat movement from socio-historic perspective giving little attention to its deep Sufi background. The present study has attempted to find out how Sufism has transcended from individual to institution and from institution to organisation, and has eventually culminated in the conception and evolution of the Jamaat.

Scope and Limitations

Sufism, both as a concept and as a movement, covers a vast area of academic studies. For the purpose of the present study, it seemed practical to locate it in a historical timeframe beginning from post-Mughal India to the late 1920s, a time slightly after the formation of Tablighi Jamaat. This time period has been taken because the decline of the Mughals coincides with the British starting to gain power and rule in India. The British education and culture posed a threat to the prevailing cultures in India and subsequently, it was seen as a threat to Islam by the contemporary *ulema*. For safeguarding the Muslim *ummah* from the onslaught of a foreign culture, and for fighting the British colonialism in India, the *ulema* of a certain bent of mind, came together and established Darul Uloom Deoband, a seminary. Later, responding to the threat of the *shuddhi* movement of the Arya Samaj, an alumnus of the seminary formed Tablighi Jamaat. This study doesn't cover the events that took place long after the genesis of the Jamaat and takes the late 1920s for its closure point because it was found that not much has changed in its basic structure and its ideology although it has grown immensely in size. Also the main focus of the study would be on what one may call on the 'reformist' form of Islam which

emphasis more on the text based Islam and its sufi practitioners as it plays a crucial role in formulating the religious identity of the Muslims of subcontinent.

Chapter plan

In this introductory chapter which primarily deals with defining and analysing the concepts of Islamic Sufism I have referred not just the secular modern scholars of the specific area of the concerned subject matter but also the Islamic religious scholars who have written mostly in Urdu to present the broader and "insider" perspective. I have also chosen quite contemporary and well recognized Islamic scholars such as Tahirul Qadri, Maulana Wahiduddin Khan and Dr. Israr Ahmad to put the latest Islamic understanding on the topic. Besides, first chapter also offers the basics of Tablighi Jamaat and its operational mannerism based on applied principles of Sufism.

Chapters two talks about the socio-historical circumstances of post Mughal period up to the formation of Tablighi Jamaat in 1924, for letting the religious as well as political formulation to take place, firstly amongst the Islamic scholars/sufis, perhaps Shah Waliullah Dehlvi (1703-1762) was the first to propagate and popularize it, and then amongst the Muslim masses. This process manifests itself in the some military adventurism led by Syed Ahmad Shahid Barelvi (1786-1831) and afterwards. Then after the famous mutiny of 1857 against the British and its despairing aftermath for freedom seeking Indians specially Muslims led to the formulation of Deoband movement with its primary aim to safeguard the Islamic culture and practices against the onslaught of modern British education and culture but its political activism was also very evident in the form of supporting india's freedom struggle in the form of Khilafat movement and its alliance with congress party. Furthermore the chapter also looks into the socio-historical narratives of the emergence of Tablighi Jamaat movement which was an extension in the same line of phenomenon as those of started by sufis like Shah Waliullah and his disciples; and deoband movement. It also focuses on tablighi jamaat's founder maulana ilyas life to show how he responded to the growing threat of conversion of neo Muslims to Hinduism by *shuddhi* movement led by Arya samaj. The chapter also shows in detail the motivations and some specifics of Tablighi Jamaat as a prerequisite for a mass movement. Here too, I rely on both academic references as well as religious ones, as

conventionally Tablighi Jamaat does not believe in propagating its views through literature or other mass media but it sure has specific regulations and guidelines with elaborated religious narrations which provide somewhat an ideological platform and motivation for its members to take actions accordingly.

The third and last chapter of the study would deal with the Durkheim's concept of social solidarity with reference to the sufi movement of eighteenth century India, its manifestation in the orgnisation building such as seminary at Deoband and lastly reflection of sufi idealogy on the Tablighi Jamaat movement, which is the latest movement emerging from the geneology of Sufism. Another very important sufi concept of *bay'ah*, oath of allegiance, as a display of solidarity is also discussed as it has played a significant role in the formation and development of sufi identity.

Chapter 2   Religion and Politics: the Sufi way

Second chapter focuses upon the rise of 'reformist' sufi thoughts and its connection with the socio-historic time period. It would explore the circumstances and its impact on the founders of certain religious institutions and orgnisations as an attempt to identify the transformation of sufi thoughts over a period of time and furthermore the impact of sufi principles on the Tablighi Jamaat movement.

Historian Irfan Habib cited by N.R. Farooqi (2006) writes about the 18th of India as a time period of "reckless rapine, anarchy and foreign conquest" this period could well be described as a period when the dominant political order was in sharp decline, interestingly the same period witnessed the beginning of a reformist Islamic socio-religious movement, which has had a deep impact on lives of the Muslims of India. Its impact can be seen on the political, moral and religious aspects of lives of Indian Muslims right up to our time (pp. 289-90).

The Sufi involvement in political affairs could be traced to Shah Waliullah and his Islamic reform movement as he Shah Waliullah was the chief architect of the reform movement and a prominent sufi who lived during 1703 to 1762. As noted by Ayesha Jalal (2008), Shah Waliullah was deep perturbed by the decline of the Mughal Empire and the rise of other political powers such as Marathas and Sikhs. He was also disturbed by the ethical degradation and destitute of the Muslim masses and in desperation viewed the situation of 18th century India as an "age of social disorder" (pp. 42, 45, 53).

Shah Waliullah's relevance to the Indian Islamic reform movements is tremendous. His political understanding and social consciousness shaped his overall Islamic thoughts. During his life time Muslims of subcontinent were facing several political and socio-religious challenges in such an environment Shah Waliullah played an important role in protecting the Islamic theology and practices from outside influences in order to preserve the religion in its pure and unadulterated form thus setting an example for the later generation of *ulema* to follow his footsteps.

The Sufi involvement in political affairs could be traced to Shah Waliullah and his Islamic reform movement.Shah Waliullah was a prominent sufi who lived during 1703 to 1762 his father Shah Abdur Rahim,was himself a very well known sufi who assisted in drafting *fatawa e alamghiri*—a compilation of Islamic law at the behest of emperor Aurangzeb. It is said that Shah Abdur Rahim, had refused to join the royal court of emperor Aurangzeb as it was not suitable for a *derwesh* like him to be found on such worldly places. Instead, he founded a religious seminary madarsa rahimiya in Delhi to spread the message of Islam. Shah Waliullah inherited this well established sufi tradition.

His period saw the decline of the Mughal empire and the emergence of British suzerainty in India. With the understanding that Muslims of in the subcontinent were facing several political and socio-religious challenges Waliullah spearheaded the reform movement. The movement aimed to protect and preserve the religion in its pure and unadulterated form thus setting an example for the later generation of *ulema.*

A well known Islamic religious scholar Maulana Manazir Ahsan Gilani (2003) wrote a biography of Shah Waliullah where he describes him as an Islamic thinker who keenly observed the Islamic psychology and belief system of his time and concurrently kept an eye on the political situation and development. And as a result of this intellectual observation he (Shah Waliullah) was able to present a well designed Islamic theoretical framework for the individuals and groups (p.11).

That was the time when Muslim elites were lacking in clear foresight and Muslim masses were totally unaware of the situation, he wrote many letters to the different sections of Muslim namely the Muslim princes and feudal lords, Muslim elite class, Muslim army personnel, other affluent Muslims, different sufi groups etc. In those letters his religious and political standing of that particular turbulent time becomes very clear. He appealed to the Muslim political leaders/rulers to raise armed resistance against the invading forces of British, Sikhs and Marathas in order to reinstate the Islamic system to its previous glory and to appoint fair and neutral smaller rulers for different regions with moderate political power. In his letters he warned the Muslim of God's wrath and blamed them of being indifferent to the various kinds of moral perversions taking place in the society. Becoming more specific about the moral degradation he accuses them of being interested

only in enjoying good quality food and fornication, and having shifted their focus toward worldly ostentations like erecting tall buildings to live and wearing expensive clothes (*ibid*, p. 66).

His letter also reminded the muslim soilders working in various armies, of true duty of a soilder, which in his own view was to take part in religious wars. He admonished them for shaving off their beards and not offering regular *namaz*, prayers when in battlefield or in travel.

In the letter to the Muslim business fraternity, he said that many Muslim traders are into un-Islamic business such as in alcohol business or act as procurer despite of the facts that there exist many other legitimate businesses that Allah has allowed to do and which are enough for a person to earn his living in an Islamic manner.

He also wrote addressing the successors of the earlier sufis and Islamic scholars, he pointed out the situation where the successors of sufis were divided into many groups, and each section is in the race for winning followers for their own section rather than directing peoples' attention towards the true massage of Quran and Hadith. Such self proclaimed sufis cannot guide people to the path of tasawwuf as the real aim of tasawwuf is to gain excellence in the eyes of Allah he stressed. (*ibid*, pp. 66,68).

These writings in the form of warnings and suggestions shows the concern of Shah Waliullah had for the Muslims of India, who in his view were drifting away from the teachings of Islam so there is a need to awaken them somehow or the threat from non-Muslim forces, which were growing in accumulating power, would be eminent. Seeing these letters, we get to know the troubling mental situation Shah Waliullah was going through.

Influence of Shah Waliullah on Religion and Politics

Shah Waliullah through his writings and thoughts inspired many prominent Muslims in days to come; one such famous personality was Sayid Ahmad Shaheed (1786-1831) whose family had a close ties to the family of Shah Waliullah.

According to Sanyal (2005) Syed Ahmad came to Delhi to study in madarsa Rahimiya, from 1805 to 1811, where he studied under Shah Abdul Qadir, who was Shah Waliullah's second son, after completing his education he left Delhi and joined as a cavalryman in the army of one *nawab* Amir Khan of Tonk region in central India. But after seeing the closeness of *nawab* Amir Khan to the British, he came back to Delhi, then from delhi with his followers he went to perform the pilgrimage to the Arabia, there he took the *bay''ah* oath of allegiance, of his followers as after returning to India they planned to wage holy war against the non-Muslims rulers of India. (p. 31)

Sayid Ahmad not just influenced people but also advised them and he himself engaged in physical exercise as he was familiar with them as a result of his tenure in the army of Amir Khan. This kind of training exercise to their disciples by a sufi was done out of the necessity as explained by Syed Ahmad otherwise such a phenomenon was quite unheard of before. Metcalf (1982) points out that despite the fact that Syid Ahmad joined an army and preached jihad but he was a practicing sufi in the sense that he advocated the centrality of Quran and hadith and initiated people in the sufi orders. What he opposed were certain practices held to be virtuous by the people such as the believing an intermediary between God and the man, repeating the name of saints hoping it would fulfill the requirement or ritualistic performance with unnecessary spectacle. "He held that the common *Fatihah* ceremony, consisting of Qur'anic readings and distribution of food at shrines or graves, be performed simply, without lights and without restrictions as to the date or kind of food or condition of the participants" (pp. 57-58).

It can be said that he promoted the internal spirituality of Muslims knowing well the necessity of a legitimate army to prevent the decline and restore the political hegemony of Muslim of his time.

Other than this the influence of shah Waliullah was tremendous among his several followers who after his death according to Barbara Metcalf adopted two main directions one section of shah Waliullah followers put focus on the scholarly work of Islamic *fiqh* (legal code) and other related topic such as issuing and teaching of Islamic judicial opinion (*fatawa*) for the fulfillment of the religious need of common muslim masses, one

notable point here is that shah Waliullah himself laid much emphasis upon the *hadith*, a crucial component for drafting *fiqh* and subsequently *fatawas*. His interest in the study of hadith brought him the title of a *hadith* scholar or *muhaddis*. On the other hand the other section of the shah Waliullah followers drifted towards a more romanticized idea of creating an Islamic state through violent clashes much like Syed Ahmad Shaheed so it was the farmer group which in the later period grew into famous reformist *ulemas* who believed that restoration of Islamic political leadership does not seem to be a reality in British rule but turning towards the study of Islamic law and *hadith* would create religious scholars who would play the role to put Muslim masses in to the path of religious obedience and unite them (*ibid*, p 46-47).

While exploring the trail of the Waliullahi and subsequent sufi/ *ulema* influence on the later development of the few important Islamic religious movements, acknowledging the role of an important institution known as Delhi college, which was basically a *madarsah* of Mughal emperor Shahjahan's period becomes indispensable.

It was this Delhi College where many Muslim students first saw the organization and working of a western style institution as the college was restarted by the British government in 1925. "The school was launched with a British principal, and expanded with the substantial *waqf* endowment of Nawwab I'timadu'd Daulah of Oudh in 1828. There were two branches of the school: an English branch where English language and literature and modern European sciences were taught; and an Oriental branch in which not only Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit were taught but geography, history, mathematics, and science as well."(*ibid*, p. 72-73).

With its diverse atmosphere with respect to its teachers and subjects taught there, Delhi College provided a unique experience to the students specially those who came here from other places to study.

It is also notable here that a sizable number of students who came to study were Muslims "ranging from one-third to one-half of the total of three to five hundred. An important group of them came because of the presence of the head Arabic teacher, Maulana Mamluk 'AIi. Mamluk 'AIi was closely associated with the Waliyu'llahi family, and came to Delhi explicitly to study from them. His own teacher was Maulana Rashidu'd-Din

Khan, a student of Shah 'Abdu'l-'Aziz. Rashidu'd-Din was the first head of the Arabic department at the college, and Mamluk succeeded him in 1833."(*ibid*, p. 74)

Molvi Abdul Haq (1989) says that Maulana Mamluk Ali was a great scholar. He was head of the Arabic department and a very well known figure for his scholarship not just in Delhi but also in far off places. He was so popular among the students that after the college would get over many of them visit his home, surrounds him to be benefitted intellectually from him as he had authority over not just his subject but over other subjects also (pp. 161-62).

Metcalf (2002) on Maulana Mamluk Ali writes that he was a close associate of shah Waliullah family. He came to Delhi to study under Maulana Rashiuddin Khan who was a student of Shah Abdul Aziz and first head of the Arabic department. When shah Muhammad Ishaq (successor of Waliullahi tradition and grandson of shah Abdul Aziz) and his brother Maulana Yaqub were going to Hijaz (part of modern day Saudi Arabia) in 1842, Maulana Mamluk accompanied them there (p. 74)

It is important to recognize here the impact of shah waliullah and his thoughts which has continuously been transmitted to the following generation through teacher/*murshid*-student/*murid* relationship.

The Mutiny and the *Madarsa* at Deoband

In order to understand the founders of seminary of Deoband and socio-political environs of that time we need to look into the colonial condition of British era. It is important because the religious scholars who initiated the seminary at Deoband were primarily anti-British and many of them fought against the British in violent confrontation. They had a clear political stand at that time and that was their anti-British stand. Deoband founding members such as Qasim Nanotwi and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi were sufi disciples yet they participated in the battle against the British so without analysing their political stand and activism in colonial India we may not be able to thoroughly understand one essential aspect of the study, which is to look into the political and religious ideas and standings of these sufis.

Maulana Mamluk Ali received two distinguished pupils at Delhi college, Qasim nanautawi and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, who later on became instrumental in establishing the renowned Madarsa at Deoband in Saharanpur.

Qasim Nanautawi was born in 1833 a religious family at nanauta *qasbah* in Saharanpur vicinity. Even in his childhood he was introduced to the doctrines of Sufism by one family friend and sufi named Imdadullah. After receiving childhood religious education at his birthplace and in neighboring Saharanpur he was taken to Delhi at the age of thirteen years by Maulana Mamluk in order to get higher education. In Delhi the child Qasim met Rashid Ahmad, whose family had ties with Shah Waliullah family, in fact his father was taught by members of Shah Waliullah family.

Both Qasim and Rashih Ahmad studied under the guidance of Mamluk Ali. There is another common thread that tied Qasim to Rashid Ahmad and that is Haji Imdadullah, a renowned *sufi* of his time. Both Qasim and Rashid Ahmad became his associate by initiating *bay'ah* (oath of allegiance) at his hand, though they were two among hundreds who had taken the oath of allegiance at the hand of Haji Imdadullah, this only shows his acceptance as a *sufi* guide among the Muslim masses.

In order to better understand the personality of Haji Imdadullah, syed Nafeesul hussaini (2003) writes about him mentioning a few of his life events, when around 1820 syed ahmad shaheed was roaming around the region, hordes of people were visiting him as an act of showing respect and admiration to a great personality of Islam during that time Syed Ahmad Shaheed took few small children out of affection, one of them was child Imdadullah and when he grew up he often would describe this incident as a blessing for him. Another important event of his life was when he saw a dream, in that dream he says that "I saw that Prophet Muhammad is holding the hand of Syed Ahmad Shaheed and I am standing a bit far Syed Ahmad calls me and gives my hand in the hand of Prophet Muhammad as a manifestation of oath of allegiance".

He was also enthusiastic about the fighting for the cause of his religion, when his spiritual master Syed Nasiruddin Dehlvi went to Afghanistan to fight against British forces, Haji Imdadullah could not accompany him because he was attending his ailing father. His spiritual master died while fighting the British in the battle of Ghazni in 1839.

Haji Imdadullah was not just a passive *sufi* aloof from the prevailing situation of his time rather he along with his followers took active part in initiating a fight against the British during the famous revolt of 1857. In that endeavor both Qasim and Rashid Ahmad's role was also significant. In fact they confronted the British troops directly. In this regard Darul Uloom Deoband in its introduction booklet states –

> Mawlana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi and Mawlana Muhammad Qasim Nanautwi and their dependents settled down here at Thana Bhawan since their services were required by Haji Imdadullah in the discharge of his magisterial and religious-judicial duties. *Shaykh al-Islam* Mawlana Husayn Ahmed Madani points out that Mawlana Muhammad Qasim was appointed as the Commander while Mawlana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi was given charge of the magisterial-judicial duties. These great men openly participated in the 1857 War of Independence and fought against the British Army in the battlefield of Shamli. (p. 11)

Hussaini (2003) writes about one such confrontation, once a British troop was passing through Shamli district with artillery and ammunition, upon hearing this news people of the area got worried, then Haji Imdadulah appointed Rashid Ahmad as group leader over thirty or forty people (*Mujahidin*) to deal with the situation. Rashid Ahmad with his group hid in an orchard, when the British troop was marching through, the Mujahidin fired at them, and soon the British troop fled leaving behind their artillery and ammunition.

Though after the mutiny it was widely felt all across including the anti-British *ulema* that the British power had increased so exponentially that a direct confrontation with them is not possible that was the time of growing British influence, increasing proselytizing activities of churches and further dwindling of Muslim political clout. According to Metcalf (2002) the disenchanted *ulema* left "their beloved but desolate Delhi behind in favor of the *qasbahs* in which many of them had their roots. The places they chose, such as Deoband, Saharanpur, Kandhlah, Gangoh, and Bareilly, were less touched by the British presence and were, increasingly, the centers for preserving Muslim cultural and religious life."(p. 85)

Along similar lines the madarsah Deoband writes in its booklet of background and achievement of the institution–

> When, however, the news about the loss of Delhi and the arrest of Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar was received, these brave men were forced to give up fighting. As soon as the upheaval of 1857 came to an end, they began to concentrate their attention on the protection and preservation of the Islamic faith. They began to think about the problem of saving the community and the nation from the onslaught of atheism, "Nature" worship and Christianity that had come in the wake of the British rule. They did so in order to prevent the so-called ― "Modern"culture and civilization from distorting their religious beliefs and conduct, actions and ways of thought. (p.11)

After the mutiny of 1857 when *ulemas* returned to their towns, the main concern for them was the preservation of their faith in that trying time. Setting up an Islamic religious seminary in a small town of Deoband was part of their effort towards that direction. Madarsah at Deoband was started modestly in the year 1866 which later on achieved the status of one of the leading Islamic institutions of the Indian subcontinent and produced many prominent Islamic scholars.

The seminary of Deoband was different from other existing seminaries in the sense that it operated itself in a much professional manner. Metcalf (2002) observes that it was an independent institution run and owned by the Muslim community itself rather than being dependent on financial aid of affluent nobles or royal patron. It had modern institutional features such as proper class rooms, well designed syllabus, library and professional teachers and staff; gradually it also developed a chain of informally affiliated seminaries at different places where graduates from the main seminary could join as teachers.

It wouldn't be wrong to ascribe either wholly or at least significantly the modern professional approach adopted by the newly founded Deoband in its teaching practices and functioning to the aforementioned Delhi college which had already set the precedent

for it and produced individuals receptive enough to embrace the new ideas and practices appropriate for their own purpose.

Tabligh Movement

We know that when shah Waliullah and sufi warrior Syed Ahmad Shaheed saw the downfall of Muslim empire and rise of British rule as a threat to Islam, they reacted in trying to create a solidarity among the different strata of Muslims similarly the Deoband movement was started as a reaction after the failed mutiny of 1857 to preserve and restore the Islamic faith in its pure form following the lines of Quran and hadith.

When in the early twentieth century and afterwards some Hindu groups tried to convert Muslims in to Hindu fold in the form of a mass movement which came to be known as purification or *shuddhi* movement as there was a reason for such an effort to win convert for Hindu faith. Subsequently Muslims also resisted by initiating their own movements. Sikand (2002) writes that the main reason for *shuddhi* movement was the British colonial policies. It was the first decennial census of 1871 when peoples' religious identities were very clearly defined for the first time. The census data was used later to grant participation to educated Indians in the British government and in other representative bodies. Such policies were primarily aimed at strengthening colonial rule on the basis of numerical strength of religious communities. More the number of a particular community, more were the opportunities in jobs and council seats (p. 25).

This British policy in a way proved to be the main catalyst for both Hindus and Muslims to show their respective co-religionists in greater number in order to reap more and more government benefits for their own community members. Though it was also obvious that such opportunities were mainly reserved for the educated Indians, in other words for those who were the elites of their respective communities but since those elites were very few in number so it was necessary for them to accept lower caste or class people as their own.

The efforts of *shuddhi* movement led by the Arya samaj met with nominal success in its endeavor of converting Muslims to Hindu fold though one exception was the conversion of the Malkana Rajput Muslims of districts across what is today western Uttar Pradesh. Sikand (2002) writes about them as a group who converted to Islam under the influence

of Muslim rulers of their region who also had granted them extensive land but they were half Muslims half Hindus as they followed both Hindu as well as Muslim customs.

A prominent Indian Islamic scholar Nadwi (n.d.) wrote a famous biography of Tablighi Jamaat founder Maulana Ilyas, where he quoted from a government gazetteer written by British official who served in the region Major Powlett, in the alwar gzatteer he described the socio-religious condition of the Meos, or Mewatis as people who were Muslims but only in name. they worship some Hindu village deities and observe Hindu festivals alongside Muslim festivals. Many a times they had mixed Hindu-Muslim names. Their dress is Hinduised as they wear *dhoti-kurta* and ornament. Most of them were ignorant of the basics of Islam such as recitation of *kalima*, an Islamic recitation. They also do not observe *namaz* and only very few had attended any madarsa (p. 24-25).

That was the condition of the Meo Muslims a loosely Islamic community still sharing much of the customary practices of their non Islamic background but putting it more appropriately this community was in the transition phase as it seems that after their conversion to Islam they keep themselves isolated from outside influence and in addition they were not on the priority for the Muslim elite to engage with them in order to teach them the practical aspect of their religion. But this situation was about to be changed.

Agarwal (1969) further explores the historicity and social condition of the Mewatis. Mewatis were basically from the *kshatriya* caste of Hindu social order who got converted to Islam in fifteenth century as a result of forced conversion from nearby Muslim rulers. But they retained many cultural practices of their ancestral religion such as *jajmani* system and inviting Brahmans to performance *puja* on auspicious occasions (p.1677).

Mayaram (1997) traces the religious transformation process of the Mewatis. Earlier Mewatis, rather than affiliating themselves to a religion, more associated with the *Jatis* and indulged even in the purity-pollution practices, even before the formation of Tablighi Jamaat, the region had many *sufi dargahs* and sufis. That vicinity helped them not to forget that they were basically Muslims.

In Delhi be in name only, yet Maulana Ilyas gained little success in spreading his version of 'reformist' Islam, Mayaram refutes Nadwi's position that Mewatis joined Maulana Ilyas in large number soon after the beginning of the movement, for her the reason lies in

the partition of India in the year 1947, when like several other refugees, Mewatis were also living in camps in and around Delhi, then Tablighi Jamaat leaders visited those camps and reminded them of the reasons for their misfortune lies in the fact that they were not good Muslims and only if the turn to God their they would be saved. Such visits and constant intervention of Tablighi Jamaat members turned Mewatis to more 'reformist' form of Islam (pp. 227-228).

Regarding Mewatis identities and religious transformation, similar thoughts were expressed by Asghar Ali Engineer (1991) he stressed that the reformists' succeeded in influencing their less Islamised co-religionists only during and aftermath of turbulent period of partition, otherwise the Mewati Muslims had kshatriya identity and practiced much of the Hindu tradition (p. 1036). Yet we know that ultimately the 'reformists' had their impact on the common masses who were earlier deep rooted in the mixed local culture.

Present study will looks into the circumstances which gave birth to the movement of Tablighi Jamaat, it would briefly talk about the personalities and processd invoved in starting an important 'reformist' movement. Nadwi (n.d.) describes about Maulana Ismail, father of maulana Ilyas as a person "who never bore a grudge against anyone. His detachment with the world was so complete that it had made him attached to everyone. All the persons who came into contact with him were impressed by his piety, sincerity and selflessness. Leaders of different warring groups of Delhi held him in highest esteem and put an equal trust in him, though they dislike each other so much that none of them was willing to offer *namaz* behind the other."(p. 4)

The contact with Meo Muslims was established by Maulana Muhammad Ismail. Perhaps it was the first instance of Meo Muslims coming in contact with Muhammad Ismail that is reported by Abul Hasan Ali Nadwi, once Maulana Ismail did not have any other Muslim to offer the namaz in congregation so he went out of the mosque to find a few Muslims and take them into the mosque so that they could offer namaz, outside he happened to meet a few Mewati Muslim labourers who were going for their labour work, on asking they said that they were going for the work in order to get the daily wage.

Then, Maulana asked what if I give you the wage here? The labours agreed to it and Maulana took them to mosque and taught them the method of namaz and offered namaz with them. Maulana Nadwi further writes that since that day the labours kept coming to the mosques and developed a habit of it. At that time who knew that this interaction between Maulana Ismail and few Mewati labours would sow the seeds of a historical global religious movement in days to come. Later on the mosque turned in to a small madarasa as more people specially Mewati kept coming in. "Such was the beginning of the madarasa of Bangle wali masjid, and these labourers were its first scholars. After it, about ten Mewati students always remained in the madarasa."(nadwi p 7). Later on we will see the transformation of this humble Bangle wali masjid in to the international headquarters of a global Islamic revivalist movement, the Tabblighi Jamaat.

Maulana Mohammad Ilyas

Maulana Mohammad Ilyas was born in 1885 and spent his childhood at his maternal grandparents' home in Kandhla and at Nizamussin basti in Delhi with his father. He belonged to a highly religious family, Maulana Hasan Ali Nadwi presented a vivid picture of the religious/sufi environment in which Mohammad Ilyas grew, he writes that in his family at Kandhla, members both males and females were so much religious in nature that it may seem impossible to many people as a large part of their time would go to *dhikr* and recitation of Quran. Recitation and teaching of Quran was regular in the family and religious personalities such as Shah Abul Aziz and Syed Ahmad Shaheed were part of their conversation. Maulana Ilyas's mother was a *hafiz*, learnt the Quran by heart and used to recite whole of Quran everyday in the month of Ramzan, apart from it on normal days she used to recite the praise of prophet Muhammad and several parts from Quran (nadwi p. 6-7).

Furthermore Maulana Ilyas also stayed at Gangoh, with his elder brother Maulans Yahya who was a student of Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi, one of the founding members of Madarsa Darul uloom at Deoband. He stayed with him for almost nine years. He was not just his teacher but his spiritual mentor too. Maulans Ilyas, while being a student was permitted to take oath of allegiance at the hand of Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi, which was not the norm as only those who completed their education were allowed to

take the oath of allegiance, but because of his exceptional merit Maulana Gangohi permitted Mohammad Ilyas to take the oath at his hand. After the death of Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi, Maulana Ilyas went to Darul Uloom madarasa at Deoband and studied under the guidance of Maulana Mahmood Hasan. (*ibid*, p. 9)

Above description about Maulana Ilyas shows the religious/sufi environment he grew up, he also had a teacher like Mahmood Hasan and a spiritual mentor like Maulana Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi whose teachings had a great influence over him. Furthermore he was trained at the Deoband seminary, so it is safe to say that he was a Deobandi scholar who rather than taking the conventional route of establishing seminaries or serving as religious teacher or imam in a mosque, chose to initiate a new religious endeavor which proved to be unprecedented, both at the level of its global outreach and its numerical strength.

Personality and Charisma

While looking at the crucial sociological concept of authority and domination, Max Weber identifies three types of authority, which he describes as rational legal, traditional and charismatic authority. Here we will only take charismatic authority into consideration.

For Weber "the charisma is a form of a special power, defining the term he says- " the term charisma will be applied to certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and treated as endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities" (as cited in Hansen, 2001, p. 102).

This definition also has the overtone of the role of society and its people who agree to acknowledge the person as charismatic one.

Weberian idea of charisma is provides us with a sociological tool for analyising certain social situations where we see an emerging leadership, it can also be used to see any such phenomena which had taken place in the past. As the interest and purpose of this study revolves around the phenomena of religious movements, and its charismatic personalities, in particular Tablighi Jamaat movement, we will briefly discuss the personality of

Tablighi Jamaat founder Maulana Ilyas from charisma perspective and see what role a charismatic personality plays in initiating and running a religious movement.

It seems only rational for a person to be recognized as a charismatic personality, to be in touch with the general people in order to receive their recognition and approval to his charismatic personality. Coming directly to the case of Tablighi Jamaat, much before its formation, the circumstances for its future birth started to take shape when Tablighi Jamaat founder Maulana Ilyas' father, Maulana Ismail came into contact with some Mewati labourers at a mosque in Delhi's Nizamuddin area. Here he managed to establish his position as a person of great piety in the eyes of those Mewati who would come to him. After his death, the Mewats insisted upon Maulana Ilyas to come to Delhi and join the Masjid at place of his father as they respected the family for their religious orientation (Nadwi, n.d. p. 18), people respected Ilyas though they did not know him but they knew his father who was a great religious man, here we see a clear transfer of the 'revered' feeling to Maulana Ilyas, once held for his father.

Maulana Ilyas also impressed them with his simple life style and love for god, though when he decided to choose a different way to preach his version of 'reformed' Islam amongst the Mewatis who were culturally more drawn to the syncretic practices, he faced much resistance from the community as recognized by Mayaram (1997) but he proved to be much adamant and kept on doing his work, he was already a respectable person and his constant interaction with people and his humble approach towards them added to his personality as a pious religious man. On one accession when someone threatened to hit him as Maulana Ilyas accidently touched his shoulder while preaching him, Ilyas is said to have bent down touched his feet instead (ibid, p. 222).

Through his humbleness and commitment to the religious cause, Ilyas indeed got followers within the ranks of Mewatis who may not consider him, in weber's term, as 'superhuman' but sure he had an impact on them at emotive level because of his personality. Notable point here is that Ilyas started his preaching project simply with the stress on strengthening faith, and spreading awareness and practice of basic Islamic ritual obligations (Sikand, 2002, p. 69).

It makes it clear that at times it is the charismatic appeal of the leader is more important rather than the ideology of the movement, though ideology certainly has its role to play, but initially it requires an appealing personality to spread the ideology to the masses. Other than the Ilyas' effectiveness to engage people through his personal characteristics, historical events also play major role to either diminish or strengthen a movement. in the case of Tablighi Jamaat, after the death of Maulana Ilyas, to As long as the development of Tablighi Jamaat as a charismatic movement is concerned there could be reasons other than Maulana Ilyas' personality, as expressed by Mayaram (1997, p. 227) and Engineer (1991, p. 1036) especially the horrific events during the partition when the mewati refugees were approached by the Tablighi Jamaat members in the their refugee camps and talked to them about religion.

Documented by Wahiduddin (2009) Khan the first and foremost driving force for Maulana Ilyas was his sincere devotion to the work of tabligh. He could walk across rough uneven stretches of Mewat for as far as twenty five miles at a time without taking any food and water. His hectic life left him no time to look after himself. When someone enquired after his health he wrote back "how does health matter? One can be said to be well if one is able to properly perform the task for which one was born."

For Maulana Ilyas nothing else mattered other than the task of tabligh, a task he believed to be ordained by God to the Muslims and there is no escaping it. This sincere devotion is the utmost example of his inclination towards the sufi tenet which is an absolute devotion to the will of God. For Maulana Ilyas the will of God is not to pray in solitude but to preach and propagate the name and teachings of God and he stuck all his like to this belief often at the cost of his health.

Another very strong driving force for Maulana Ilyas, acknowledged again by Wahiduddin Khan (2009) was his absolute trust in divine succor. Maulana Ilyas often preached his followers to seek direct help from God; he had a deep conviction for receiving divine help. Below mentioned event is enough to see his and his followers' conviction to divine intervention.

> Once a mewati asked to narrate some event during his preaching career,
> said "the Maulana once dispatched a Jamaat (group) consisting of three

men, to Moradabad, I being one of them, on reaching the city he went to a mosque and stayed there. After the Maghrib (evening) prayer, we made an announcement that people should stay for a while after the prayer so that we could discuss some religious issues. But, much of our astonishment, not a single person stayed after the prayer. We waited for the next day. At the same point we made a similar announcement, but to no avail. Once again all the worshippers got up and left without showing any interest. This incident reminded us last thing that Maulana had done. He made us promise that in times of any difficulty we would go away from human settlement to some lonely place and turn to god in solitude. So we stayed that night in the mosque, as soon as the day broke, all three of us went out of the settlement to prey. We prayed the whole day and returned in the evening to the same mosque. After the Maghrib prayer, the same message was announced, at this point the Mewati paused, as if he was going to unravel some mystery. A mystery it was indeed. They all seemed rooted to the spot. Not a single soul stood up to leave. My friend, this is the way our work shall continue, with the help of God (p. 18).

The incident of people not leaving the mosque on the third day of course could be a mere coincidence, but for the tabligh people it was a clear act of God's intervention who listened to their prayers they offered in their solitude. The incident also shows Maulana Ilyas influence over his followers and his emphasis on obeying God and seeking help only from him directly, though this concept had been challenged by Barelwi scholar Ahmad Raza khan, who supported the need of sufis as intercession between God and common man, the position of Barelwis will also be discussed in the same chapter.

Sufi influence on Tablighi Jamaat

The six principles of Tablighi Jamaat, which manifest the ideals of *tasawwuf* or Islamic sufism have already been mentioned in the previous chapters. In this chapter I will be exploring and analysing the methods and orgnisational structural of Tablighi Jamaat and its relevance to the teachings of sufism.

Barbara Metcalf (2003) states about Tablighi Jamaat and its foundning father's (Maulana Ilyas and his supporters in his endeavor) sufi lineage and its scholarly tradition`–

"Those who began this movement (Tablighi Jamaat) were themselves 'ulama linked to the reformist seminary at Deoband. Typical of the Deobandi ulama, they were also part of Sufi networks, devoted to their sheikhs from whom they received initiation and charismatic blessing, engaged in sufi disciplines and inner purification, cherishing the genealogy of holy men whose links passed back to the Prophet Muhammad himself" (p. 137)

Much like the Sufism where the spiritual authority of a sufi personality is established on the basis of merit and seekers of spirituality gather around him, in Tablighi Jamaat, there is one leader or *amir* to oversee the matters and affairs of the orgnisation, the *amir* is elected for the life time and assisted by a team of twenty senior members of the Jamaat. The global headquarters (commonly known as *makaz*) of Tablighi Jamaat is located at the same place where Maulana Ilyas's father maulana Ismail started his madarasa at Nizamuddin Basti of Delhi, at Bunglewali Masjid. (Sikand 2002, pp. 80-81).

In India, where there is a substantial Muslim population, generally there are regional headquarters in the capital cities of the states. There is also a state leader nominated by Delhi *markaz* authorities. Similar orgnisational structures are replicated at smaller cities and town level (ibid).

It is an observable fact that despite having orgnisational structure there is little or no power politics as such within the ranks of Tablighi Jamaat, barring one or two such instances in recent past (Okhla Times, 2016), especially at the level of city or town level orgnisational structure. I, myself witnessed one such incident where one small Jamaat at my home town was leaving for another location, outside of the mosque, two senior members of Tablighi Jamaat were requesting each other to take the role of *amir* and spare him the responsibility of leading the preaching group.

The working of Tablighi Jamaat is simple door to door and mosque to mosque preaching in groups. The groups are formed by the people coming to mosque to offer prayers. The Tablighi members orgnises meetings in the local mosques where they persuade the people to join the preaching groups for religious tour generally for a minimum of three days or for a maximum of four months, a middle range duration of forty days is also one

of the options available for the participants. One remarkable point here is that every participant bears his own expenses during the religious tour. Once the enough people agree to be part of the group or *jamaat*, they leave for their destinations.

Every participant carries their own bedding and cook their own food. Though visiting places, staying in mosques, interacting with local Muslim population and preaching them about the fundamentals of Islam are the main tasks of the group but besides all the group members are advised to observe simplicity. In spare times group members learn about Islam from the elders, many new members are those who do not know the rules and regulation of offering namaz or other such religious practices learn from other experienced members. They are also advised to observe the *sunnah* of the prophet Muhammad. Such environment is created so that the spirituality would prevail over the worldly affairs in the minds of the people. During their stay all the participants must engage themselves in to obligatory as well as optional or discretionary prayers. All the work is done jointly by the group members. (Sikand 2002, p. 70)

In short, the Jamaat provides an experience of a spiritual journey where all the members try to be a good practicing Muslims, they learn and teach about their faith among themselves and preach it to others. Also by staying close to each other and participation in several activities gives group members a feeling of brotherhood and solidarity.

As a result of their working methods Tablighi Jamaat has done work of great socio-religious significance for example when the preaching group or *jamaat* ventures out to any new city or locality, it stays in the local mosque and operates its activities from there. In fact for Tablighi Jamaat members mosques are a prayer hall but they regard as commented by Maulana Wahiduddin Khan as a place where the prophet Muhammad would teach his companions about the faith and it was in the mosque that they learnt how to purify their soul. Same way the Tablighi Jamaat believes the mosque are the place where even today Muslims could benefit as did the prophet's companions. Interestingly the Tablighi Jamaat also find its new members from the mosques, as at the time of prayer local people gather in the mosque, when the prayer ends members of Tablighi Jamaat asks people to stay for times for some religious talks. In the sermon Tablighi Jamaat persuades the local population to form a group of their own and take the religious tours.

This religious tour turns the mosques in to a place for social gathering and Jamaat also fulfills its purpose of initiating new groups.

Another very socially significant activity of Tablighi Jamaat is taking a religious walk or *ghasht* around the locality where they stay at the mosque. This walk aims at interaction with the people of locality and talk with them about the importance of basics of Islam such as importance of *dhikr* and reality of afterlife etc.

Tablighi Jamaat does not believe in publishing of any literature. Some of its instruction manuals are available in the market where one can know their methodology and conducts as well as some do's and don'ts. Though such information has been neglected by the many academicians, I think they provide us with an insider's understanding of the movement. I will be mentioning and analyzing a few such points as to further highlight the sufi influence over the Tablighi Jamaat.

Tablighi groups follow the directions of their local leader, *amir* , who responsibility is to manage and control the group members, he is also advised to consult all the group members before taking decisions, also he is one to sort out the problems or tensions among the group members. He holds the authority to assign duties to the group members. The manuals also describe the qualities of group members which they are advised before they start their tours. The manual demands from the Tablighi members to have firm belief in God that their preaching would be effective and would touch the heart of the listeners, they are also expected to make adjustments during the tour as it may not be a very comfortable journey or stay so one must have the humbleness of making some sacrifices.

During their stay at the local mosque the *Jamaat* or group is advised call the locals, invite them in the mosque to be part of a small sermon they orgnise after the prayers. Also in the sermon the group members persuade the locals to join the preaching group. They are also instructed to say as much prayer as they could do besides *dhikr* which is an important feature of the Tablighi Jamaat.

In the instruction manual the members are advised to spend less time on things such as sleeping, eating, frivolous talking or being out side of mosque.

Under the 'do not do' heading, the group members are advised not be extravagant and not to use the belongings of fellow members without his permission. A certain code of conduct depending upon the circumstance is to be adopted.

The Tablighi Jamaat's inclination towards the simplicity and their humble approach brings them closer to the sufi doctrine. Similarly their emphasis on *dhikr* and basic Islamic practices also resemble to that of the Sufism.

Tablighi Jammat: a non sufi possibility?

Generally the term Sufism evokes the imagery of a shrine, music and celebrations. Thanks to the dynamic character of sufism it is only one aspect of it which is most popular and visible. For the purpose of this study we are more concerned with that aspect of Sufism which is far less visible, but far more widespread and in the form a transnational movement Tablighi Jamaat. So far we have covered Tablighi Jamaat's sufi background and influence on its ideology and functionality. We also know that Tablighi Jamaat founder, Maulana Ilyas studied from Darul Uloom Deoband and considers its founder Rashid Ahmad his spiritual master. Though when he had to choose his path for religious activism, instead of being a *madarsa* teacher or establishing *madarsas* himself, he adopted travelling and preaching among those people who, according to his views, were far away from the scriptural Islam.

Maulana Ilyas was himself from the Chistiya order of Sufism and belongs to the sufi lineage of his family. Sufi practices such as *dhikr* and Islamic practices are very much part of Tablighi Jamaat's members everyday activities. For academicians such as Marc Gaborieau (2006), Tablighi Jamaat is not a sufi movement rather it is part of Deobandi movement which is, at least outside India, especially in places like Afghanistan and Pakistan, is known for its affiliation with the militants who call themselves 'Jihidist' (p. 60).

Gaboroeu also raises serious questions about Tablighi Jamaat's "apolitical" status as for him the movement since its beginning was not free form politico-religious agenda as it started mainly as a reaction to the *shuddhi* movement in the twenties to counter the that conversion movement, furthermore it, unlike the Jamaat-e-Islami movement founder Abul Ala Maududi who had a clear political agenda, Tablighi Jamaat has a very far futuristic agenda of accumulating political power by making Muslims of the world more

religious in nature and in practice so that attainment of political power would come easy (*ibid,* p.61).

The questions raised by Gaboroeu are reasonable ones as it is a historical fact that Maulana Ilyas and then other members of Tablighi Jamaat were against many 'mixed' cultural practices adopted by the Muslims. And as a matter of fact Tablighi Jamaat is responsible for ending many such syncretic practices found among the Muslim villagers in and around the Mewat and they can be called a 'reformist' movement in the sense that they promote only the scriptural based practices.

Gaboroeu does not seem to consider the *shariat* and *tariqat* based belief as part of Sufism, I have elaborated upon the point in the first chapter of present study that for many mainstream Islamic scholars and sufis, *tasawwuf* or Islamic Sufism emanate from Quran and *hadith* only and for those religious scholars other practices which are not part of Quran or hadith cannot be part of Islam, and thus for *tasawwuf*.

But there is another aspect of Sufism, which is known as Barelvis or *Ahle Sunnat*, among the Muslim sufis. They are shrine based and focus more on the reverence of dead saints, they are more engaged in *dhikr* and more inclusive in the sense that their shrine based celebrations are syncretic in nature and participated by people from all the sects and religions, musical performances are also frequent occurrences in such ceremonies. But considering only the Barelvis as the sufis is a wrong assumption as many Deobandi scholars belong to the sufi orders and they oath of allegiance on the hand of a *peer*.

As far as Gaboroeu's apprehension regarding Tablighi Jamaat's futuristic goal of making Muslims more religiously practicing in order to gain political power in the future, is concerned, I would say it is a hypothesis with a shaky ground because Tablighi Jamaat focuses totally on the ritualistic (scripture based) aspect and train people in that manner only so as far as their present functional aspect is concerned, it is overwhelmingly religious in nature.

Responding to the apprehension held by Gaboroeu, I would say that at least in India where there is a functional democracy and constitutional secularism which ensures the rule of law proves to be the biggest obstacle for any unconstitutional misadventure. One

such example of transformation is Jamaat-e-Islami in India. Jamaat-e-Islami was essentially a political orgnisation based in the subcontinent. Its faction in Pakistan is active in the political field as well. In India, as documented by Irfan Ahmad in his 2010 book, *Islamism and democracy in India: the transformation of Jamaat-e-Islami,* Irfan Ahmad did a thorough study of jamaat-e-Islami in India and found that due course of time Jamaat-e-Islami had gone through an ideological transformation when they faced a democratic state.

Farish (2010) comments on the apolitical position of the Tablighi Jamaat as a movement which seeks to 'purify' Indian Islam of its Hindu influences and that is the reason they are often criticized by fundamentalists of Hindu right as they regard them as a subversive force. Perhaps the only *jihad*, struggle they are doing is to wondering and staying outside of the comfort of their homes (p. 711).

Schism among Sufis: The Barelvis

As Deoband movement was associated with formation of a *madarasa* at Deoband, The movement led by Ahmad Raza khan of Bareilly is known as Barelvi movement (also *ahle sunnat* movement). Ahmad Raza Khan was born in Bareilly, in the western United Provinces, in 1856, just a year before the great Indian Revolt.

Ahmad Raza Khan's family had not always been associated with religious learning. Ahmad Raza's ancestors were Pathans who said to have migrated from Qandahar (in present-day Afghanistan) in the seventeenth century; they served in Mughal rule as soldiers and administrators. One family member eventually settled down in Bareilly, where he was awarded a land grant by the Mughal ruler. Ahmad Raza's grandfather Raza ali chose to be a religious scholar and sufi rather than joining army or administration. Ahmad Raza's father, Naqi 'Ali Khan (1831–80), followed the footstep of his father and became an Islamic scholar (Sanyal 2005, pp. 52-53)

In his childhood Ahmad Raza was educated by his father and later on he took oath of allegiance or *bay'ah* at the hand of a renowned sufi Shah al- e Rasul of Barkatiyya family

which belonged to Sayyids, or descendants of the Prophet through his daughter Fatima and son-in-law 'Ali.

Ahmad Riza's main scholarly works are his *fatawas* and the main reason for his opposition to the Deobandi scholars are his position on the intercession of saintly persons with Allah on behalf of the ordinary believer. Ahmad Raza was in favor of such belief where as Deobandi scholars were either opposed to such ideas or extremely cautious in matters regarding the intercession of sufis on behalf of a man with Allah.

Ahmad Raza was also a supporter of the ritualistic celebration of a pir's deathday (*'urs*), he himself conducted on the birth and death day (both being on the same day) of Prophet Muhammad. Such practices were "frowned upon by 'ulama from groups such as the Ahl-e Hadith whom Ahmad Riza called "Wahhabi."Others, such as the Deobandis, held that it was in order as long as the celebrations did not involve any forbidden activities such as singing, dancing, and the use of intoxicants."

Ahmad Riza Khan accused many of the Deobandis as well as other *ulema* of being the leaders of heresy, among Deobandis, its leading *ulema* such as Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi and Ashraf Ali Thanawi were the attacked severely by Ahamad Raza khan in his fatwa written in 1902. In fact Ahmad Raza khan used the term wahhabis to describe some of the Deobandi *ulema* also. He used the term as a highly pejorative one.

The term wahhabi has a deep historical connotation derived from the name Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahab (1703-1792) a religious leader of Nejd (part of modern day Saudi arabia) in the words of Voll quoted by Usha Sanyal (2010)–

> Muhammad ibn abd al-wahab. . . vigorously rejected the whole structure of
> sufi devotional practices as being unwholesome innovations. He proclaimed
> that veneration for any human, however saintly, constituted shirk or
> polytheism… [He] replaced the pantheistic style of sufi theology with a
> renewed emphasis on the interpretation of tawhid, the oneness of God, that
> stressed God's transcendence. In that interpretation, there was emphasis on
> strict obedience to the word of God and on the fill responsibility of the
> individual believer. . . . Implicit in the position is a rejection of the

> unquestioning acceptance of the medieval scholarly authorities, and blind taqlid or imitation was rejected in examining the importance of the Quran and the sunnah…. [T]he Wahhabi position insisted on the right of an informed independent analysis of the fundamental sources of faith (ijtihad)
>
> (p. 240)

As mentioned, for Ahmad Raza, veneration of saintly figures and their shrines are parts of accepted religious practice and he did not see them as forms of polytheism as deemed by Muhammad Ibn Abd al-Wahab, on the contrary he encouraged such practices by participating in them in a celebratory manner. We find here a stark contrast between the belief systems of the two individuals. These seemingly unimportant differences in fact prove to be a much deeper ditch as these differences many a times determine the kind of faith system of a person holds in the eyes of others.

It was in this backdrop Ahmad Raza Khan accused them of denigrating Allah or his Prophet in some way.

His views on prophethood to justify this position

Another prime target for Ahmad Raza was Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908) of Qadiyan (in Punjab), founder of the Ahmadiyya movement. Ahmad Raza condemned him as a person inspired by satan himself, his opinion about Mirza Ghulam Ahmad was based on the claims made by him, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad reported to have claimed that he was 'like the messiah' (Jesus Christ), and that he still received the revelations from Allah as did earlier prophets.

Ahmad Raza severely criticized Mirza Ghulam Ahmad called him liar as he claimed to be the Prophet but as per the belief held by overwhelming majority of Muslims Prophet of Islam, Muhammad was the last prophet and no new prophet would come ever again. On that basis Ahmad Raza was vehemently against him.

Finality of prophet hood has been a very sensitive topic among the Muslims. Very often any objection to the Prophet Muhammad's finality of prophet hood is enough to invoke *fatawas* from the conservative *ulemas*. In the case of Mirza Ghulam Ahamd he was charged by Ahmad Raza Khan as posing an open challenge to the finality of Prophet

Muhammad. In the same light Ahmad Raza khan charged other *ulemas* mainly mualana Qasim Nanautawi, founder of madarsa Deoband and a sufi "with denial of the finality of Muhammad's prophet hood in a recent work. Nanautawi was quoted to the effect that although the ignorant were under the impression that Muhammad is the last prophet in time; the discerning knew that prophetic superiority was unrelated to either first and last in time"(Sanyal, 2010, p. 236).

Ahmad Raza also accused Rashid Ahmad Gangohi of having belief that Allah is capable of telling lies and satan's knowledge was greater than that of prophet Muhammad.

In the light of the accusation made by Ahmad Raza it is quite evident that his basis for charging other *ulema*, other than reverence of sufis and shrines, was basically the belief held by them regarding the Allah and Prophet Muhammad. He doubted the Deobandis of their reluctance to accept the superiority of prophet and belittling the greatness of the prophet, a charge that has been vehemently denied by Deobandi *ulema*. For Barbara Metcalf (pp. 266-267) the rise of Barelwi *ulema* is more of a reaction to the different groups that emerged at that time, rather than bringing about any change in the practices and belief held by common Muslims, in contrast to the Deobandi style of sufism which was more focused on scriptural based, simplistic form of master-disciple relationship, Ahmad Raza and his followers embraced more custom laden, shrine bound, syncretic and ceremonial form of Islam.

Political views

As mentioned earlier shah Waliullah and his family inspired much of the Muslim population across the spectrum, interestingly the same family proved to be the source of inspiration for both opposing religious Islamic groups the Deobandis and Barelwis (ahle sunnat). But his son Shah Abdul Aziz is held in higher position as Ayesha Jalal (2008) comments that though shah Waliullah is considered a respected personality for Barelwis, his son shah Abdul Aziz is considered as a *mujaddid* (a renewer) of his time and draw inspiration from from his teachings and thoughts (p. 146).

In order to know the political standing of the followers of *Ahle sunnat* movement, let us look in to one Fatawa issued by Shah Abdul Aziz in 1803, it was the year Delhi was

occupied by the east India company. He was asked by someone whether it is right to give or receive the interest under the British rule, shah Abdul Aziz response was that in a land ruled by Muslims interest is prohibited.(sanyal p 29 30) One could say that Shah Abdul Aziz's moderate position was more compatible with the political reality of that time.

Taking a cue from Shah Abdul Aziz, Ahmad Raza and his followers never actively opposed the British rule. During the Khilafat movement when many of the Deobandi *ulema* joined hands with Congress and stood with Mahatma Gandhi against the British rule, Ahmad Raza and his followers did show sympathy towards the plight of the Turkish Muslims but did not participate in the movement against the British.

In this regard a *fatawa* of Ahmad Raza was published in 1920 in a newspaper, though it was originally written back in 1880, the fatawa says –

> In Hindustan ... Muslims are free to openly observe the two'ids, the azan, ... congregational prayer ... which are the signs of the shari'a, without opposition. Also the religious duties, marriage ceremony, fosterage ....There are many such matters among Muslims ... on which ... the British government also finds it necessary to seek fatawa from the 'ulama and act accordingly, whether the rulers be Zoroastrian or Christian. ... In short, there is no doubt that Hindustan is dar al-Islam (Sanyal, 2005, p.82).

This chapter thoroughly explores the different manifestations of sufi practices and belief systems. It analysed the impact of sufi ideology on individuals and movements. The chapter also looked into much debated issue of nature of Tablighi Jamaat with reference to Jamaat being political or apolitical in nature. A much celebrated form of shrine based Sufism has also been analysed in relation to its 'more puritan' sect the Deobandi.

Chapter 3   Faith and Solidarity

The theoretical purpose of this chapter is to attempt to understand the relation between social context and the concept of solidarity as proposed by the eminent sociologist Emile Durkheim with reference to Islamic sufi solidarity. The questions we are concerned in this chapter are i) What is the social context for the formation of social solidarity ii) importance of the formation of solidarity at that particular time and why do people come together to form a solidarity and the iii) effects of social changes on the nature of social solidarity.

Emile Durkheim's major work *The Division of Labour in Society* published in 1893. This work mainly deals with the maintenance of social order through emergence of solidarity among the people. Though Durkheim basically talks about transformation of a primitive society to an industrial one and the kind of solidarity both the societies produce which are necessary for maintaining a cohesive society. In addressing these questions I will seek to verify Durkheim's theoretical propositions with the Islamic concept of Sufism and its reflections on to Islamic movements such as Tablighi Jamaat that shared several features with the concept of solidarity, especially the Islamic concept of *bay'ah* which is basically an oath of allegiance to a sufi, religious personality as a manifestation of solidarity.
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For Durkheim, to hold a society together a form of social solidarity is required. That solidarity largely emanates from the commonness of the people's beliefs and sentiments shared by the people themselves. Though he classifies both society and solidarity, consequently as pre-industrial medieval societies and industrial modernist society; and solidarity in to mechanical and organic solidarity. The solidarity which finds its origin in societies where members share common belief and practices and form a collective consciousness around them is called mechanical solidarity a feature of rather simplified pre-industrial society where as interdependency and forging of spontaneous consensus among the individual members are main reasons for organic solidarity in a modern, more industrial and diverse society (Coser, 1984, pp. xv-xvi).

In modern industrial society industrial mode of mass production gradually replaced the previously prevalent form of production mostly done by craftsmen or artisans meant for small and local consumption. This new mode of mass production which caters to the ever growing demand requires large number of people assembled at a particular workplace and assigned to specialised tasks which are coordinated to produce large sum of production. This changing phenomenon is finishing off the individual artisans and their crafts thus affecting the whole social relationship and social solidarity spectrum. Both new and older form of productions produce two different types of solidarity of their own. Older and simplified society is engaged in primitive form of production pprocess.. (*ibid*, pp. x,xi)

Dukheim on Religion

Durkheim focuses upon the study of ancient religion to unravel the sociology of religion, yet in front of him were the more structured religions. It highlights the fact that there is something common and inherent in the religious belief that fulfills an important function of the society that keeps them relevant in modern societies as well. If we look at the definition of religion proposed by Durkheim–

> A religion is a unified system of belief and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden. Beliefs and practices which unite in to one single moral community called a church, all those who adhere to them (Durkheim, 1995, p. 44).

So for religion Durkheim's position is that religion is a product of society and it is essentially a social phenomenon. The idea of religion revolves around the concept of sacred and profane, and beliefs attached to them. Belief and practices are source of solidarity as they are publically performed, bringing people close to each other strengthening the 'we' feeling amongst them. This feeling is shared by the members of the society such feelings influence people's behavior and promotes integration which helps the society to function as a system. A religious society, in order to maintain the

unity and solidarity, essential for social cohesion and comfort, resorts to social control by exercising punitive laws as any sort of deviation is perceived as a threat to the social solidarity of the society. So for Durkheim, the main function of religion is to serve the society by addressing people's need to get attach to a social system taking care of their social and physical need.

Bayáh: an Islamic concept of Solidarity

There is little doubt in safely assuming that the function of religious or sacred ceremonies and rituals is as according to Durkheim is to bring about the unity among the individual members of the society. By orgnising such an event where people come together and interact with each other provides ground for social solidarity to grow which is an essential ingredient to hold society together and helps develops a common consciousness. Islamic concept of bay'ah is an important and conspicuous example of solidarity manifestation within Islamic tradition; Bay'ah is basically an oath of allegiance given to a person of political or spiritual significance. Though the practice of giving oath of allegiance finds its roots in pre-islamic Arabian society as well but this concept and its practice gets prominence throughout Islamic history and tradition. In Quran the word is mentioned several times and ordains the people to give their oath of allegiance to the prophet of Islam, Muhammad. This tradition of bay'ah continued even after the death of Prophet and later on Prophet's successors kept this tradition alive by taking such oath as a manifestation of seeking loyalty from their subjects and and to assert their legitimacy. Since prophet of Islam, Muhammad and his companions both were distinguished religious and political personalities so the nature of such oath is also both spiritual and political (Marsham, 2009. pp.41, 67)

The significance of such oath is so deep rooted in Islamic tradition that the main Islamic text, the Quran talks about a covenant which can be seen as an oath between God and souls of all the human beings at the beginning of the creation. In that God asked the souls before raising them as humans "Am I not God and the souls replied yes we testify to that" (Quran 7: 172). Such allegiance is sought for political purposes too. An anecdotal

account says that during Abbasid period (A.D. 750 to 1258), caliph al-Muqtadir (d. 932) asked his troops–

> I claim from you the oath of allegiance (*bay'ah*) which you have
> affirmed time after time. Whoever has sworn allegiance to me
> has sworn allegiance to God, and whosoever violates that oath,
> violates the covenant with God (Malamud, 1996).

Islamic rulers, in order to run the divine order of God in the Muslim society, in the capacity of God's viceroy required its troops and subjects to be loyal by showing the solidarity with the rulers and obey the orders as disobeying the rules was tantamount to disobeying the God because he (the ruler) was doing his divinely ordained duty to protect and promote the divinely system. Outside of royal courts, in Islamic spiritual training, the oath of allegiance to a sufi personality was sine qua non. Oath of allegiance to a sufi was an agreement of submission to sufi master as he only could show the right path to a novice, a path from darkness to a spiritual illumination. The spiritual patronage of a sufi is considered so important that often for the disciple the sufi was no less than a father figure. As a father figure the sufi was a source of discipline and spiritual authority to the disciples (Malamud 1996, pp. 94, 103).

Tirmingham (1971) also comments on this display of allegiance to a sufi which he considers a form of manifestation of solidarity by verbal attestation to the religious spiritual personality or a sufi order for the purpose of achieving spiritual maturity. The link which is formed through the oath with the sufi or his sufi order, the *silsila*, has an exclusive character. When the seeker of the spiritual knowledge takes the oath of allegiance and submits to the tutelage of the sufi master he receives some secret Islamic recitations which are said to have the power to spiritually awaken the seeker. The recites them as per direction of the sufi master (p. 10-11).

Islamic scholar Masiullah comments on the ceremony of Bay'ah as a visual display and verbal attestation of disciples to the sufi masters. The ceremony involves the act in which a sufi master takes the hand of the person (a soon to be disciple) in his own hand and

declares the initiation of Bay'ah. In case of several people willing to take Bay'ah on the hands of sufi, a human chain starting with the sufi himself at one end, is orgnised and initiation is verbally accepted by all the disciple in unison. Women also take oath using a piece of cloth held by the sufi at the other end. Generally Bay'ah requires the disciples to hold together by prescribing moral and Islamic acts such as offering extra prayers, following the *sunnah* of prophet Muhammad and adopting a simpler life style other than that dhikr or Islamic recitation is highly recommended which must be followed under the guidance of the sufi master (Masiullah, n.d. pp. 25-26).

To answer the question whether the Bay'ah is obligatory for every Muslims, theologian. Tahirul Qadri calls it a misconception to believe that every Muslim person has to take Bay'ah, as it is not obligatory upon them. He calls spirituality as an art form and states that as only the admirer of arts seeks to learn the arts other people do not aspire to tread on the sufi path. For them there are obligatory prayers, fasts and *sunnah* of the Prophet, they must stick to them, it is sufficient for them as Prophet Muhammad himself is the biggest sufi for all the Muslim.

Observable points in the above Bay'ah related references are mainly that it demands from the disciples respecting certain rules and guidelines by holding them in high regards furthermore bay'ah also seeks to confirm to the spiritual authority by showing unity behind them through the bond that disciple forge with his sufi master. And bay'ah is necessary for the Muslims in the sense that even if they are not part of a sufi silsila, they must know that they are part of the covenant with the Prophet so they are supposed to perform all the basic essential Islamic practices as in order to such practices are generally done in public with the society members to promote the integration and felling of belongingness to that society and its individuals. We see here the importance of an oath of allegiance which is another word for an oath for the solidarity.

Rituals: A form of solidarity

We know that the bay'ah ceremony is orgnised for both political and spiritual purposes but the commonality is that both seek loyalty and obedience from the people which is an essential factor to the unity of a society so it is done in a ceremonial way to convey the

message of power and legitimacy of the society. Bell (2009) sees such ceremonies as a method to define power as in such ceremonies there is use of symbols and actions to depict a group of people as a social unit bound together by the common shared beliefs and values. Also the societal values and traditions are projected as essential part of societal life (p. 129).

The forging of solidarity in Sufism

The idea of unity amongst the Muslims of India as envisaged by Shah Waliullah or Syed Ahmad Shahid was an exclusionary project as they wanted to unite in particular *sunni* Muslims against the Marathas and Sikhs who had grown in power in eighteenth century. Furthermore, they were against the religious practice of *shia* Muslims considering their ritualistic practices as un-Islamic in nature. As mentioned earlier Shah Waliullah, sought solidarity from different strata of Muslims against the surge of Sikh and Maratha power, the call of his impact was so strong that one member of his disciples chain, Syed Ahmad Shahid fought 'holy wars' and for that purpose, and to influence people he travelled to the Muslim areas and preached them the religion in order to forge religious based solidarity. Both shah waliullah and Syed Ahmad Shahid were the sufis who would take bay'ah or oath of allegiance from the people seeking the spiritual awakening, this oath taking ceremonies were great spectacles for the formation of socio-religious solidarity. Both the sufis had many people as their disciples or followers. So when the historical occurring of the eighteen century India was viewed by Shah Waliullah as a downfall of Islam in the wake of rising of others power, he tried to unite the Muslims to check the 'degrading' status of the Muslims.

Durkheim's (1984) idea of mechanical solidarity takes in to account mainly small static societies, who live mostly at the same place, When the society grows new solidarities of organic kind emerge.. Shah Waliullah and Syed Ahmad Shahid, on the other, sought solidarity for the cause of Islam from a scattered Muslim society. This was not an easy task.Every member of the society was not known to each other and therefore building social bond amongst them a difficult proposition.

Solidarity and Institution Building: Case of Deoband

After the failed mutiny of 1857 and the rise of British power and influence, many *ulema* got concerned to see the turn of event. For them, the biggest challenge was to keep alive the traditions of their religion they deemed as pure form of Islam. In order to pursue the endeavor of preserving the Islamic culture and practices, few *ulema* turned to establish religious seminaries. So a very humble Islamic seminary came into being at Deoband in western part of today's Uttar Pradesh. As per their website there is another big reason for the establishment of the seminary. The necessity of such an institution was acknowledged by the Islamic scholars as when the East India Company got control over much of India, Christian missionaries also came with them they built Bible societies at different places in India and tried to convert Indians, in particular Muslims because they saw that most of the Muslims were particularly against the British rule so if they get convert to Christianity, their loyalty would change automatically thus would pose no threat to the British rule (Darul Uloom Deoband, n.d., http://www.darululoom-deoband.com/english/, date accessed: 2017, 07, 24).

Establishment of an institution especially when its founders feel that they are under attack by some other foreign group, is an interesting phenomena as generally institutions require huge material and mass support. In the case of seminary at Deoband, it was started in a very humble manner, its founders mainly Rasheed Ahmad Gangohi and Aasim Nanotawi sought public support and started the seminary. This institution itself became a site for unity and solidarity for the Muslims as produced many religious scholars who participated also in the India's freedom struggle against the British and formed a leading Islamic orgnisation Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind with political standing.

Strict religious or ideological institutions are the places where there is much room for the solidarity especially mechanical solidarity, using Durkheim's classification; to take place. Such institutions are governed by the archaic rules because behind the formation of such institutions there is a will to preserve the culture and heritage of a particular religious or any other community which demands conformity from its members so that the solidarity the institution is seeking would be maintained. Darul Uloom Deoband's initial purpose was to train the common Muslims in their religion so that they should not fall for

Christian missionaries who were gaining hold at that time. Every society and its institutions are the product of its time and circumstances. Thehe relevant question here is that does the purpose of an institution in a transformed society remains the same or it adopts to the challenges of the modern day?

Solidarity and Orgnisation Building: The Tablighi Jamaat

After the realization that Islamic seminaries or madarsas have limited influence on the people, Maulana Ilyas came up with the idea of travelling to the places for religious preaching among the Muslims especially among those who followed the syncretic cultural practices'Maulana Ilyas, , to an extent seems to have succeeded in his aim of 'reform' the Mewatis in the sense that to turn them to more scriptural form of Islam from the syncretic practices they were following which were considered un-Islamic by *ulemas*. According to Shail Mayaram, the 'reformed' Mewatis during the life time of Maulana Ilyas started to lead the Jamaats (preaching groups) to various places.,. Ashraf Ali Thanwi, a famous Deobandi scholar was heartened to see the condition of the Mewatis as earlier they proved to be a tough nut to crack but due to the constant effort of Maulana Ilyas, a religious solidarity among the Mewatis emerged(Mayaram, 1997, p. 226)

In fact the unity and solidarity is so important for Tabighi Jamaat member that their unique religious tours also promote that. Tablighi Jamaat resorts to small group formation for the preaching purpose where people travel together and spend time with each other, they also meet people in the locality they visit urging them to come to the mosque for the prayer and join the next religious tour. This intermingling of people among the group and then with the people of the locality they go, provide them a chance to develop unity and solidarity. In this chapter we have discussed Durkheim's idea of solidarity and its connection with the religious beliefs of the people.We have looked into the importance of religious functions and ceremonies for the cohesion of society. Islamic concept of solidarity which comes with a name, *bay'ah*, is also discussed which is both political and spiritual as they are big rallying points for people to group together, develop affinity around the spiritual and political ideals which further lead to solidarity and social bonding. Sufi ideas with political inclination proposed by people like Shah Waliullah and Syed Ahmad Shahid were critical considering its socio-historic context. Effort of

solidarity formation among the scattered Muslim population was an important feature of that time period. The exclusionary nature of solidarity formation as against to the rival forces was another aspect.

The seminary at Deoband is part of the movement which sought preservation of religion and culture by invoking the need for the same in the Muslim society. In short time period the seminary became a site of solidarity for the Muslim society as more and more branches were opened in different parts of north India and people joined them in large number. Its members also participated in the political struggle of India against the British alongside Congress, widening the scope of solidarity formation as in earlier case of Shah Waliullah and Syed Ahmad Shahid, the scope of solidarity was limited to *sunni* Muslims.

The importance of social solidarity is conspicuous in both in the formation and function of Tablighi Jamaat. It was a movement to 'reform' the non-practicing Muslims and to 'save' them from the proselytizing force of *shuddhi* movement. Firstly it sought the support from the same community it targeted to 'reform' it. It received some success there then after the formation of the orgnisation, it incorporated the activities which promote social cohesion among its members such as travelling together, living together, dining together etc as a result members developed shared experience and feelings. This worked as social adhesive for the individual members and the entire community.

Conclusion

I began this study of a 'reformist' sufi tradition by insisting on the significance of taking the 'insider' as well as academic perspectives. I read much of the literature in the Urdu language in order to take into account some less touched aspects of the tradition. Also I tried to show a connection mainly among the three stages of a religious tradition. When I was dealing with the initiator of the 'reformist' sufi tradition, I took the frontrunners of sufi reformism in India, Shah Waliullah and Syed Ahmad Shahid, and analysed their ideas and personality in their socio-historic location. For me the distinction between the reformist Islam or scripture based Islam and syncretic form of Islam was important because in Indian society we witness the manifestation of both the forms and among Indian Muslims a wide range of Islamic diversity exists, sometimes it comes out as a movement and its leaders claim to reform the 'ailing' community by appealing the Muslims to follow their version of the religion.

The study also traces the link of Deoband movement that emerge in colonial times, to one generation old reformist sufis. This was an interesting development as the ideals set by individual sufis were transferred in to an institutional setup. This institution building phase was preceded by a time period of conflicts between the colonial power and the freedom seekers. After much of mayhem the British emerged as victorious, then for the freedom fighter *ulema*, the option for violent struggle also ended, that was a turbulent time for the *ulema*, for them perhaps the only doable thing was to preserve their religion and culture, which in their own view came under an existential threat as they could only imagine the future of their society under the British rule. All the worries and concerns of the *ulema* were channelised to the building of an Islamic seminary in order to protect their culture and tradition. Though interestingly the seminary also contributed to India's freedom struggle and stood up with congress party and Mahatma Gandhi against the British.

The next tipping point of the reformist journey came, when, an individual reformist *alim*, a scholar tried to put his reformist ideology supreme to the syncretic local cultural

practices. Though the effort has now taken the shape of probably the world's biggest religious movement.

Since the topic was affiliated to religion and its practices, the study also looked into the Durkheim's concept of social solidarity as for Durkheim society is religion and solidarity among the individuals are the main building block of society. While exploring the ideas of solidarity, the study takes care of a very core sufi idea of *bay'ah*, oath of allegiance, which is a very strong form of public display of solidarity. One could wonder if only Durkheim would write on such a powerful ceremonial display of social solidarity.

A brief introduction of Tablighi Jamaat founder's personality with reference to the Max Webers's concept of charisma is also looked into as it is surely a matter of academic interest to look into reasons for the influence over the masses a person could exercise. The study focuses upon the sufi impact on Tablighi Jamaat and its manifestation in the practices of its members. It has always been a matter of academic discussion to solve the enigma whether the Tablighi Jamaat is political or apolitical in nature? The study also briefly tried to look into this matter but insists that the role of state is very crucial to determine the nature of any given movement by citing the example of Jamaat-e-Islami, India, which had to change not just its political but also cultural position when faced with a reasonably functional democracy of Indian state.

Likewise, the seminary of Deoband too did not hesitate to issue *fatawa* and a public declaration, consequently in the year 2008 and in 2009, addressing two burning issues of country, terrorism and the status of India in the eyes of Indian Muslims. In the *fatawa*, Deoband seminary rejects any form of violence (TNN, 2008) and in another instance it declares India a Muslim-friendly country. How can a country where you choose your own government be *Dar-al-Harb*, abode of war?" the seminary's vice-rector Abdul Khaleque Madrasi said (Haq, 2009).

Here we see that the position of a movement or orgnisation is directly affected by the nature of a state, we know that the same reformist ideals react in different manners. Post Mughal period and a feeling of loss of the Muslim community's position led to the violent conflict, whereas powerful British rule, pushed the reformist *ulema* to safeguard

their religious identity by opening up seminaries. And then the 'obligation' of spreading what the reformists may call the puritan beliefs alongside other factors such as the partition factor, to the common masses led to the beginning and development of Tablighi Jamaat movement.

Tablighi Jamaat, since its beginning, till now stands for religious orthodoxy or scripture based practices; its founding father and ideological founders belonged to the specific sufi 'reformist' tradition which dedicated the movement to 'correct' many socio-religious practices of the Muslim masses. Tablighi Jamaat finds its ideological roots in the Deoband seminary but it is different from them in the sense that Deobandis are primarily educationalists, whereas Tablighi Jamaat stresses that it is incumbent upon each Muslim to convey the word of God to the fellow Muslim and to do so one does not need to be a scholar in the matter of religion. Simple practice of preaching with conviction in the heart would bring people closer to the teachings of Islam.

Today, the Tablighi Jamaat movement has spread all across the globe, other than its birth place in south Asia it has substantial presence in Europe and Africa as well. It has members from all strata of society including elite business communities, but majority of Jamaat members consists of ordinary Muslim males from lower level of society, Jamaat accommodates them all as it lays emphasis on the egalitarian ethos of Islam (Noor, 2010, p.712). It is because of the movement's uncompromising stand on the equality of all believers that all the Muslims cutting across class boundaries also find it appealing and accessible for its spiritual needs.

Religion in this day and age is very much alive and active it still asserts an increasing control and influence over the minds of people all around the world. The world today with all its modernity and secular ethos, witnessing a period of global religious revival, these movements are playing an important role in creating new individual and group identities. Some of these movements are more prone to the religious extremism than other while the rest are more engaged in their project of reform and renewal. Futuristic unfolding of the religious movements would certainly provide an opportunity to study and analyse the changing ideologies and practices.

Lastly we see how religious ideas respond to the society in different ways including the political ones. We have seen the practice of politics and religion as a single entity and its divisive consequences. In situations where religion and politics are entangled so closely that it becomes difficult to identify them separately. Unless the law draws distinction between religion which should function as a personal mater and politics which should be governed by secular democratic ideas, the two would always run the risk of creating divisions in the society.

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