

Violence and the Deobandi Movement

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In recent times, there has been much discussion on violence in Islam. Especially in the media, Islam has been depicted as intrinsically violent and militant. As a matter of fact, the media has, at times, instilled a fear of Islam. This chapter will initially examine the genesis and development of the Deobandi movement in the Indian sub-continent. It will then focus on the theme of violence that has permeated this movement. Violence, in the context of this paper, refers to the exertion of physical force so as to injure or cause harm. This chapter will examine the tendency and pattern in the Deobandi outfits to use violence in pursuit of their Islamist, jihadist and sectarian objectives.

In the face of British colonialism and a concomitant desire to preserve Muslim values from being eroded, a group of prominent Indian scholars founded the Deobandi movement in 1867 in Uttar Pradesh, North India. This was part of a series of revivalist movements that were sweeping British India during the time. Scholars including Muhammad Qasim Nanotwi (d. 1880), Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (d. 1905), and Haji Muhammad Abid (d. 1912) and others agreed to establish an Islamic seminary known as Darul Uloom Deoband.¹ Deoband was chosen because

it was a center of Muslim culture. In addition, many families from Deoband had reportedly served the Mughal Empire. It was also in close proximity to the former Mughal capital of Delhi.

Deobandi scholars claim that they responded to colonialism by reforming facets of the Islamic religious tradition in striving to maintain Muslim identity in the face of colonialism. However, not unlike the Wahhabis of Saudi Arabia, Deobandi “reforms” seem to be directed against Sufi and other traditions of Islam rooted in the Indian subcontinent. It is a fact that Deobandi icons such as Shah Waliullah invited an Afghan ruler, Ahmed Shah Abdali, to attack Hindus, Sufis and Shias, in order to “revive the glory of Islam”². The jihadist movement of Syed Ahmed and Shah Ismail, against Sikhs and local Pashtuns, weakened and fractured the indigenous communities of the Punjab and the Frontier while strengthening the British rulers. It could be argued that due to their sectarian and *takfiri* (apostatizing) intolerance towards Sufis, Shias and other Islamic denominations, Deobandis furthered the cause of British colonialism. Their regressive and ultra-orthodox ideology and tactics halted Muslim progress in the fields of education and enlightenment. While reformers like Sir Syed Ahmed Khan - the founder of the Aligarh Muslim University - stressed on modern education after the failed revolt against the British colonialists, the founders of the Deoband madrassa stressed on regressive, insular, sectarian and exclusionary tactics³.

¹ Ira M. Lapidus, *A History of Islamic Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), 626. See also Barbara Metcalf, “Deobandis” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World* http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236MIW/e0187?_hi=0&_pos=2.

² Upadhyay, R. 2003. Shah wali ullah's political thought - Still a major obstacle against modernisation of Indian Muslims. - See more at: <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/paper629#sthash.FsFO56IS.dpuf> South Asia Analysis Group. <http://www.southasiaanalysis.org/paper629>

³ Moj, Muhammad. 2015. *The Deoband Madrassah Movement: Countercultural Trends and Tendencies*. Anthem Press.

Due to the growth of Deobandi and other similar movements, nineteenth-century Indian Islam saw a new emphasis on the study of *hadith*; they founded new *madrasas* to preserve and propagate their ideology during colonial rule.⁴ Gradually, the Deobandi movement expanded to different parts of India. By the end of the nineteenth century there were more than a dozen schools known as Deobandi from Peshawar to Chittagong to Madras. By 1967, Darul Uloom had reportedly graduated 3,795 students from present-day India, 3,191 from Pakistan and present-day Bangladesh, and 431 from multiple other countries, such as Afghanistan, China and Malaysia. Around the same time, Deobandis had founded 8,934 schools throughout India and Pakistan.⁵

Darul Uloom center continues to serve as an active place for the teaching of the Islamic tradition. Since the center's creation, more than 65,000 Muslims are believed to have studied there.⁶ As I shall discuss, the exponential growth of such seminaries in Pakistan, together with the incorporation of extremist elements in its curriculum, has been a major factor in precipitating acts of violence in the last few decades.

The Deobandi Ideology (*Maslak*).

Central to the Deobandi teaching is reverence for the Prophet Muhammad, his companions, and those scholars who interpreted the religious tradition. In fact, the exaltation of the companions is a distinctive feature of the Deobandis. According to them, the Prophet Muhammad identified the true path to salvation as “The one that I and my Companions follow.”

⁴ Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The 'Ulama' in Contemporary Islam: Custodians of Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), 14.

⁵ Luv Puri, *The Past and Future of Deobandi Islam*. **See also** Barbara Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860-1900* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 136. Jocelyne Cesari, *When Islam and democracy Meet: Muslims in Europe and the United States* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 93.

⁶ Jocelyne Cesari, *When Islam and Democracy Meet*, 93.

After love for the Prophet the Deobandis maintain that a cardinal principle of faith is to love all the companions.⁷ Therefore, in many ways, the actions and statements attributed to the companions become normative. Due to the exalted status they enjoy, the companions also become models of correct demeanor.

The primary objective goal of the Deobandi movement is to inculcate “correct practice” in Muslims and a proper interpretation of Islamic law. A salient feature of Deobandi ideology is the stress on studying prophetic traditions (*hadith*) in their seminaries. Students are required to study all six of Sunni canonical *hadith* works in one year. After eight years training in the traditional Islamic sciences, students at the *madrasa* graduate and become ‘*ulama*’. These scholars are then encouraged to take up positions as teachers, writers, debaters with rival Muslims and non-Muslims, prayer leaders, and guardians at mosques and shrines.⁸

In the field of jurisprudence, Deobandis follow the Hanafi *madhab*, and claim that Abu Hanifa’s (d. 767) legal rulings were premised on Prophetic traditions than on mere arbitrary reasoning (*ijtihad*), personal opinion (*ra’y*), analogy (*qiyas*) or juristic preference (*istihsan*). Deobandi scholars have further argued that the Hanafi *madhhab* is in complete accordance with the Quran and *hadith*.⁹ Deobandis also strongly advocate the doctrine of *taqlid* (imitation). They believe that a Muslim must adhere to one of the four schools (*madhhabs*) of Sunni Law and discourage inter-school eclecticism. One of their main opposing groups are the Ahl-i Hadith,

⁷ Ebrahim Moosa, Deobandi School, *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Law*, http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t349/e0090?_hi=1&_pos=1

⁸ Barbara Metcalf, “Traditionalist” Islamic Activism: Deoband and Deobandis, Ten Years Later: <http://essays.ssrc.org/10yearsafter911/%E2%80%9Ctraditionalist%E2%80%9D-islamic-activism-deoband-and-deobandis-ten-years-later/> Accessed August 15, 2015

⁹ Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*, 24.

who are also known as the *ghair muqallid* (those who reject *taqlid*), because they use the Qur'an and *hadith* exclusively. The Ahl-i Hadith do not recognize practices of erstwhile or contemporary Muslims that are not premised on the revelatory sources. They even reject the rulings of the classical schools of law on the same principle, insisting that the Qur'an and *hadith* are the exclusive and direct accessible sources of guidance. The Ahl-i Hadith accuse those who accept the rulings of a scholar or legal school of *blind imitation*, and frequently demand scriptural evidence for every argument and legal ruling.¹⁰

Another feature of the Deobandi movement is their claim to spiritual practices and devotional exercises. However, such a claim is hard to maintain given the fact that the Darul Uloom Deoband and its senior clerics are staunch opponents of traditional Sufi rituals, such as *milad-un-nabi* (celebrating the Prophet's birthday), *qawwali* (devotional music) and visiting shrines. The founders of the Deobandi movement, Rashid Ahmad Gangohi and Muhammad Qasim Nanotvi reportedly studied Sufism under Haji Imdadullah Muhajir Makki.¹¹ However, the Deobandi approach to Sufism seems to be influenced by the Wahhabis who reject traditional Sufi rituals and instead prefer literal Sharia interpretations. Indeed, Deobandis condemn some Sufi practices like shrine-based customs, including the *'urs* (annual death anniversary celebrations), the *fatiha* food offerings for the dead (distributed after reciting the opening chapter of the Qur'an), and the elaborate ceremonies associated with birth, marriage, and death.¹² The Deobandis are to be distinguished from the Barelvis (Sunni Sufis of the subcontinent) who affirm

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Brannon Ingram, *Sufis, Scholars and Scapegoats: Rashid Ahmad Gangohi and the Deobandi Critique of Sufism*, *Muslim World*: 2009 (99:3): 479. See also Barbara Metcalf, "Deobandis"

¹² Barbara Metcalf, "Deobandis"
http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t236/e0187?_hi=2&_pos=2#match

the authority not only of the Prophet but also of the saints and holy people, whom they revere as sources of religious guidance and vehicles of mediation between God and human beings.

The Role of *Madrasa* in the Deobandi Movement

An important consideration in examining the Deobandi movement is the role of the *madrasa* in promulgating and disseminating its teachings. The *madrasa* does not appear to have been a major institution in pre-colonial India. Students would learn informally from teachers who would then issue a certificate of completion and a permission to transmit their teachings. The modern *madrasa*, as a formal academic institution equipped with classrooms and a standardized curriculum was a product of the colonial period.¹³

As the Deobandi movement spread, it established seminaries across the Indian sub-continent to disseminate its interpretation of Islam. The education provided in the seminaries was primarily religious. It is important to note that in Pakistan, as in many developing countries, education is not mandatory. The World Bank estimates that only forty percent of Pakistanis are literate, and that many rural areas lack public schools. *Madrasas*, on the other hand, are located all over the country and provide not only free education, but also free food, housing, and clothing.¹⁴ In the poor areas of southern Punjab, *madrasas* funded by the Sunni Deobandi sectarian political party Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (to be discussed below) reportedly even pay parents for sending them their children.¹⁵

¹³ Barbara Metcalf, "Traditionalist" Islamic Activism: Deoband and Deobandis, Ten Years Later

<http://essays.ssrc.org/10yearsafter911/%E2%80%9Ctraditionalist%E2%80%9D-islamic-activism-deoband-and-deobandis-ten-years-later/>

¹⁴ Jessica Stern. "Pakistan's Jihad Culture." *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 6 (November/December 2000): 115-26.

In the 1980s, the Pakistani president General Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq (d. 1988) supported the *madrasas* so as to gain the confidence of religious parties for his rule. Zia also wanted to recruit troops for the war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.¹⁶ At the time, many *madrasas* were financed by the *zakat* (the Islamic tithe collected by the state), giving the government some form of control over the *madrasas*.¹⁷ However, despite their denial, Darul Uloom Deoband and other Deobandi *madrasas* enjoyed patronage and support not only from the Pakistani establishment during and after General Zia-ul-Haq's military rule but also from the Saudi government¹⁸. Increasingly, more religious schools are funded privately -- by wealthy Pakistani industrialists at home or abroad, by private and government-funded nongovernmental organizations in the Persian Gulf states and Saudi Arabia, and by Iran. As we shall see, without state supervision, these *madrasas* are able to preach a very parochial and, at times, a violent version of Islam.

Deobandis and Politics

In the aftermath of the mutiny in 1857, the Deobandi '*ulama*' pragmatically acquiesced in the face of British colonialism and power. They focused instead on religious education and on training religious leaders to serve the Muslim community. When the Indian nationalist movement spread after World War I, a large group of Deobandi scholars formed the political

¹⁵ Barbara Metcalf, "Traditionalist" Islamic Activism: Deoband and Deobandis, Ten Years Later <http://essays.ssrc.org/10yearsafter911/%E2%80%9Ctraditionalist%E2%80%9D-islamic-activism-deoband-and-deobandis-ten-years-later/> Accessed August 15, 2015.

¹⁶ Jessica Stern. "Pakistan's Jihad Culture." *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 6 (November/December 2000): 115-26.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Arab News, 2014, February 18. Al-Asheikh acknowledges Deobandi contribution <http://www.arabnews.com/news/527401>

party Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind in 1919. Later on, they supported the anti-colonial nationalist movement and opposed the creation of Pakistan. These scholars included Abdul Mohasim Sajjad, Hussain Ahmed Madani, Ahmed Saeed Dehlvi, and Mufti Muhammad Naeem Ludhianvi.¹⁹

In essence, these Deobandi scholars agreed with Gandhi and the Indian National Congress in opposing British rule and in demanding independence. They advocated a notion of Indian nationalism in which Hindus and Muslims constituted a single nation united in the struggle against the British.²⁰ The Jamiat view is that Muslims and non-Muslims have entered a mutual contract in India since independence, to establish a secular state. Thus, Indian Deobandi teachers, religious leaders, and politicians were actively committed to a secular, democratic polity. The leadership of the Deobandi activists was especially committed to preserving “minority cultural rights” in such matters as India’s constitutional guarantee to each religious tradition to follow separate family law. Their primary focus was religious education.²¹ This stance is, however, in contrast with the sectarian role played by the Darul Uloom Deoband during Sunni-Shia riots in Lucknow in 1930 and also in view of numerous anti-Barelvi, anti-Shia and anti-Ahmadi *fatwas* by top Deobandi clerics of that era.

At the time of independence, most Deobandis, including the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind opposed the partition of India and saw the creation of Pakistan as a Western plot to weaken the

¹⁹ “Why did the Pak Mawlana visit Deoband?” Rediff India Abroad. July 18, 2003. <http://www.rediff.com/news/2003/jul/17pak1.htm>. Retrieved August 15 2015.

²⁰ Christophe Jaffrelot, *A History of Pakistan and Its Origins* (Anthem: South Asian Studies, 2004), 224.

²¹ Barbara Metcalf, “Traditionalist” Islamic Activism: Deoband and Deobandis, Ten Years Later <http://essays.ssrc.org/10yearsafter911/%E2%80%9Ctraditionalist%E2%80%9D-islamic-activism-deoband-and-deobandis-ten-years-later/> Accessed August 15, 2015

newly-created Indian state. Foremost among the politically active figures was Mawlana Husain Ahmad Madani, who engaged in a public exchange with Muhammad Iqbal over the priority of territorial rather than religious identity for statehood.²² In this context of suspicion and discrimination, Muslim Indian leaders, including Deobandi leaders, intensified their stance as committed participants in India's particular style of a secular, democratic state. Indeed, some have argued that given the strength of both explicit and "soft" Hindu nationalism, or "Hindutva," it is India's Muslims who are most ardently keeping alive the ideals of the country's founding "Nehruvian secularism," committed to the constitution and to legal processes, as their best hope of flourishing as equal citizens.²³

The partition in 1947 caused a few Deobandi scholars to migrate to Pakistan. Some of them supported Muhammad Ali Jinnah's Muslim League and his vision of a separate Muslim political entity. Led by Shabbir Ahmad Usmani (1887–1949), these scholars formed the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam in 1945 in Calcutta. Other figures in the movement included Mufti Muhammad Shafi, Ihtishamul Haqq Thanvi, and Abdulhamid Bada'uni (d. 1969). In contrast to the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind's pro-secular stance in alliance with the Indian National Congress, the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam actively campaigned for the implementation of Islamic Sharia laws in Pakistan. In both countries, a section of Deobandis pragmatically aligned with the ruling party, e.g., with the Congress in India and with the Muslim League in Pakistan. Thus, they adopted a pro-secular or pro-Islamist stance in response to changing socio-political landscape. However, in both countries they continued to maintain close links with the Saudis.

²² Barbara Metcalf, "Deobandis"

²³ Barbara Metcalf, "Traditionalist" Islamic Activism: Deoband and Deobandis, Ten Years Later
<http://essays.ssrc.org/10yearsafter911/%E2%80%9Ctraditionalist%E2%80%9D-islamic-activism-deoband-and-deobandis-ten-years-later/> Accessed August 15, 2015

Although they were politically active, the Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam in Pakistan never enjoyed popular support as most Pakistanis did not support their myopic vision of an Islamic state and a narrow interpretation of Islamic praxis. The Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam forged alliances with any party that was politically expedient for them. In the 1970s, for example, they allied with a Pashtun regionalist party in opposition to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), a party that was, in principle, liberal socialist. In the mid-1990s, in contrast, they allied with that same PPP, now led by Benazir Bhutto (d. 2007), the daughter of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (d. 1979).²⁴

Deobandis have a strong influence in Pakistan, not only at the political level but also in educating the next generation of Pakistanis. This is confirmed by the following figures. Some 20 per cent of Pakistan's Sunni Muslims would consider themselves Deobandi and according to Heritage Online, nearly 65% of the total seminaries (*madrasa*) in Pakistan are run by Deobandis, 25% by Bareilvis, 6% by Ahle Hadith and 3% by various Shia organizations.²⁵ It is within the confines of the *madrasas* they operate and the genre of students they train that the Deobandis exert most influence on Pakistani society.

Violence and the Deobandi Madrasa

In the 1970s, the looming war against the Soviet Union led to more recruitment in Deobandi seminaries in the Pashtun areas of Pakistan. According to a World Bank report, enrollment in Deobandi seminaries increased after 1979, coinciding with the start of the Afghan war against the Soviets. Many of these students included a number of the Afghan fighters who

²⁴ Barbara Metcalf, "Traditionalist" Islamic Activism: Deoband and Deobandis, Talibs <http://essays.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/metcalf.htm> Accessed August 15, 2015

²⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deobandi#cite_note-33

were trained in Deobandi seminaries. They were financed by Americans who supported the war against the Soviets in Afghanistan for their own geo-political interests. Saudi Arabia also spent millions of dollars and trained teachers who then indoctrinated *madrasa* students in Wahhabi ideology. The Saudis targeted the Deobandi seminaries because they comprised the most popular schools in the Pashtun belt.²⁶

It is in the *madrasas* in Pakistan that the Deobandis promote their own version of jihad. These schools indoctrinate their students on the merits of fighting against the Hindus in Kashmir or against Muslims of other sects, whom they label as unbelievers due to their perceived heresy. Pakistani officials estimate that 10 to 15 percent of the country's tens of thousands of *madrasas* espouse such extremist ideologies. There is a palpable attempt to spread this ideology abroad. Many of the militant groups associated with radical *madrasas* regularly proclaim their plans to bring jihad to India proper as well as to the West, which they believe is run by Jews. A Deobandi off-shoot, Jaish-e-Mohammad, is known for conducting terrorist operations in India and elsewhere.²⁷

It would be wrong to depict the Deobandis as a monolithic group that espouses a militant ideology. Some Deobandi scholars, especially those in India, have denounced terrorism. In response to the increasing acts of violence, in February 2008 the seminary at Deoband hosted a conference of some ten thousand Islamic scholars from across the nation. They unequivocally denounced all forms of terrorism, proclaiming that the killing of innocent people was against the core principles of Islam. The declaration stated that Islam has taught its followers to treat all

²⁶ Luv Puri, *The Past and Future of Deobandi*

²⁷ BBC 2002, February 6. Jaish-e-Mohammad: A profile.
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/1804228.stm

mankind with equality, mercy, tolerance, and justice.²⁸ This conference also strongly condemned acts of violence on the part of Americans and others in Iraq and Afghanistan—which speakers labeled the real “terrorism”—as well as implications of covert action in oppressing Muslims in places like India as part of a worldwide campaign against Muslims.

Furthermore, on November 3, 2009, a group of Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Hind Deobandi scholars condemned suicide bombings and attacks targeting innocent civilians. They also argued that equating “jihad” with acts of terrorism and the killing innocent civilians is incorrect. “Jihad is basically a constructive phenomenon,” and that the misrepresentation of jihad should be avoided.”²⁹

Violence and the Deobandi Movement

While the *‘ulama’* of India were denouncing violence in the name of Islam, some *‘ulama’* of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) in Pakistan were doing the exact opposite. Many of the Pakistani *‘ulama’* defended the militant groups in Afghanistan since they were fighting the Soviet Union’s hegemonic interests. As a matter of fact, the Deobandis were especially supportive of the Taliban, who shared their sectarian orientation and vision of an Islamic state. It was from the seminaries in Pakistan that the Deobandis promoted their version of jihad in the name of Islam.

Pakistan’s interior minister Moinuddin Haider, for one, recognizes these problems. “The brand of Islam they are teaching is not good for Pakistan,” he says. “Some, in the garb of

²⁸ Barbara Metcalf, “Traditionalist” Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs, <http://essays.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/metcalf.htm>.

²⁹ Luv Puri, *The Past and Future of Deobandi Islam*.

religious training, are busy fanning sectarian violence, poisoning people's minds." In June, Haider announced a reform plan that would require all *madrasas* to register with the government, expand their curricula, disclose their financial resources, seek permission for admitting foreign students, and stop sending students to militant training camps.³⁰ There is little doubt that extremist and, at times, militant ideology is being taught in some of the *madrasas*. This is corroborated by Mujibur Rehman Inqalabi, the SSP's (Sipah-e-Sahaba) second in command. He is quoted as stating that Haider's reform plan is "against Islam" and complains that where states have taken control of *madrasas*, such as in Jordan and Egypt, "the engine of jihad is extinguished." America is right, he said: "*Madrasahs* are the supply line for jihad."³¹

From the 1980s on, the number of seminaries in Pakistan increased exponentially. Initially, as I discussed, the *madrasas* were used to mobilize support for the regime of Zia ul-Haq (in power 1977-1988), who was, in fact, particularly sympathetic to the Deobandi approach. The seminaries were not only a resource in domestic and foreign politics but at times found themselves engaged in a proxy war as both the Saudis and Iranians tried to disseminate their ideologies in Pakistan. It was in this atmosphere of politics and education that the genesis of the Taliban is to be found.

When the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan, the Taliban based their rule on the strict ideological basis furnished by the Deobandi '*ulama*'. The surge in the number of *madrasas* in Pakistan in the 1980s coincided with the influx of some three million Afghan refugees. The *madrasas*, which were located along the Afghan – Pakistan border, provided the only available

³⁰ Jessica Stern. "Pakistan's Jihad Culture." *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 6 (November/December 2000): 115-26.

³¹ Jessica Stern. "Pakistan's Jihad Culture." *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 6 (November/December 2000): 115-26.

education for many of these refugees. The Pakistani Deobandis forged close ties with the Afghan Taliban, especially as many Taliban leaders and fighters studied in Deobandi seminaries. Mulla Omar (d. 2015), the head of the Taliban, was a product of a Deobandi seminary.³² Even Hakimullah Mehsud, the new commander of Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan, studied in a Deobandi seminary in Hangu District of the North-West Frontier Province. He reportedly abandoned his studies and was heavily influenced by Salafism.³³

The *madrasa* Haqqaniya, in Akora Kathak near Peshawar, has trained many Taliban leaders.³⁴ According to Jeffery Goldberg, the Haqqania *madrasa* is, in fact, a jihad factory. "This does not make it unique in Pakistan. There are one million students studying in the country's 10,000 or so *madrasas*, and militant Islam is at the core of most of these schools. Many *madrasas* are village affairs, with student bodies of 25 or 50. Some of the *madrasas* are sponsored by Pakistan's religious parties, and some are affiliated with the mujahedeen groups waging jihad against India in the disputed province of Kashmir. Haqqania is notable not only because of its size, but also because it has graduated more leaders of the Taliban, Afghanistan's ruling faction, than any other school in the world, including any school in Afghanistan."³⁵ Theirs was, according to Ahmed Rashid, a long-time observer, "an extreme form of Deobandism, which was being preached by Pakistani Islamic parties in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan."³⁶ Their

³² Luv Puri, *The Past and Future of Deobandi Islam*.

³³ Ayaz Mir, "Chevalier Of The Undead," *Outlook India*, November 2, 2009.

³⁴ See Jeffrey Goldberg, "Jihad U.: The Education of a Holy Warrior." *The New York Times Magazine* 25 June 2000. <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/06/25/magazine/inside-jihad-u-the-education-of-a-holy-warrior.html>. Accessed August 15, 2015.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Barbara Metcalf, "Traditionalist" Islamic Activism.

parochial and often distorted vision of Islam emphasized personal behavior, detailed ritual observances, hatred of the West, a disdain for local cultural practices, and the confinement of women to their homes.

After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union and the continued infighting of the Afghan Mujahideen, the Taliban established themselves in Afghanistan and ruled as the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan from September 1996 until December 2001, with Kandahar as the capital. While in power, they enforced a strict interpretation of Sharia law, an interpretation which many Muslim leaders condemned. The Taliban were also denounced for their brutal treatment of women and other minorities. The majority of their leaders were influenced by Deobandi fundamentalism, while Pashtunwali, the Pashtun tribal code, also played a significant role in the Taliban's legislation.³⁷

The Taliban's support for Usama Bin Laden after the events of 9/11 and their refusal to give him up to the Americans led to the American invasion of Afghanistan and the Taliban's removal from power in 2001. However, despite this, they have remained an active force in Afghanistan and Pakistan and have continued their acts of terrorism, frequently killing innocent fellow Muslims. The marriage between Deobandis and the Taliban gave rise to Sunni extremism during the Afghan war in the 1980s, an alliance that continued even after the Soviets were expelled from Afghanistan. As Vali Nasr says:

“Many other South Asia's Sunni extremists, responsible for violence in Kashmir or against Shias and other minorities in Pakistan, hail from the Deobandi tradition, while Ahl-I

³⁷ <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deobandi>.

Hadith inspires the jihadi fighters of the Lashkar-e Tayiba (Army of the Pure) organization, which has fought in Kashmir.”³⁸

Another movement that espoused an extremist and militant Deobandi ideology is the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (the TTP), sometimes known as the Pakistani Taliban. This is an umbrella organization of various Islamist militant groups based in the northwestern Federally Administered Tribal Areas along the Afghan border in Pakistan. In December 2007 about 13 groups united under the leadership of Baitullah Mehsud to form the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan. Among the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan's stated objectives are resistance against the Pakistani state, enforcement of their interpretation of Sharia and a plan to unite against NATO-led forces in Afghanistan. It should be noted that the TTP is not directly affiliated with the Afghan Taliban movement led by Mulla Omar. The two groups differ in their histories, strategic goals and interests although they both share a primarily Deobandi interpretation of Islam and are predominantly Pashtun.³⁹

The Role of the Mosques in Promoting Violence

In examining the connection between the Deobandis and violence, it is essential to consider the role of their mosques in promoting acts of terrorism. The Deobandis reportedly control around 45 per cent of Britain's mosques and nearly all the UK-based training of Islamic scholars.⁴⁰ In 2006, the Daily Mail linked the terror-linked mega mosque (Markazi Masjid) of the

³⁸ Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: W.W.Norton, 2006), 101.

³⁹ Carlotta Gall, Ismail Khan, Pir Zubair Shah and Taimoor Shah (26 March 2009). "Pakistani and Afghan Taliban Unify in Face of U.S. Influx". *New York Times*. Retrieved August 15, 2015.

⁴⁰ Innes Bowen, *British Mosques aren't that Moderate After all*, 14 June 2014 <http://www.spectator.co.uk/features/9230671/who-runs-our-mosques/>

Deobandis and Tablighi Jamaat in Dewsbury (UK) to the 7/7 bombers who were responsible for terrorist acts in London. “The mosque is run by Tablighi Jamaat, a radical Islamic movement believed by intelligence agencies to be a fertile source for recruiting young extremists,” the report stated.⁴¹

The role of mosques in promoting violence is further highlighted in another report. In 2006, the Times stated: “Several of the suspects arrested in August over the alleged plot to blow up transatlantic airliners had attended meetings of Deobandi Tablighi Jamaat, which French intelligence has labelled an ‘antechamber of fundamentalism’. The FBI says it is a fertile breeding ground for al-Qaeda.” In 2007, the Times reported: “One of the suicide bombers who attacked London in July 2005, Shehzad Tanweer, studied at the Deobandi seminary in Dewsbury and Mohammad Sidique Khan, the leader of the 7/7 terror plot, was a regular worshipper at the adjoining mosque.⁴² The mosque authorities have denied these accusations. Richard Reid, the shoe bomber, was said to have been influenced by Tablighi Jamaat, several of whose adherents were also among those arrested over an alleged plot to blow up transatlantic airliners.”

A key element here appears to be the connection between Tablighi mosques and violence. A Telegraph article from 2006 calls Tablighi Jamaat the ‘Army of Darkness’ and said of the group: “...with increasing and alarming frequency, the name of Tablighi Jamaat is cropping up in the worldwide fight against terrorism.” “Several of those arrested on August 9 in connection with the alleged plot to blow up airliners en route from Britain to America, had attended Tablighi study sessions in Britain.”⁴³ “The group’s ideal of a world governed by an ultra-conservative,

⁴¹ Greenhill, Sam; Clark, Laura (21 October 2006). "Veil teacher link to 7/7 bomber". *Daily Mail*. Retrieved August 15, 2015.

⁴² Norfolk, Andrew (21 October 2006). "How bombers' town is turning into an enclave for Muslims". *The Times*. Retrieved 15 October 2010.

⁴³ <https://lubpak.com/archives/337987>

neo-medievalist form of Islam, in which women are subservient and all laws and customs are based on religious dictates, is barely distinguishable from the wish lists of al-Qaeda and the Taliban.” “In Britain, the group is run from the 3,000-capacity Markazi Mosque in Dewsbury – built with funds from Saudi Arabia – which also functions as Tablighi Jamaat’s European headquarters.⁴⁴

Deobandi mosques, *madrasas*, and preachers who promote acts of violence have also reached out to Muslims in the West. The recent number of Muslim youth who have shown willingness to join ISIL and have committed acts of terror in the West demonstrates not only the effectiveness of the Deobandi/ISIL propaganda but also the vulnerability of the minds of the youth who have been led to believing that blowing themselves up and killing others will lead them straight to heaven. The Deobandis have targeted not only non-Muslims but also fellow Muslims living in their midst.

Deobandis and Sectarian Warfare

The exponential growth of such Deobandi acts of violence in Pakistan is interwoven with their sectarian hatred of Sunni Sufis, Barelvis, and Shias along with other sects and communities. Sectarian dispute is a competition for religious legitimacy. Different groups contest for the right to speak for Islam and the right to decide who is a Muslim. Deobandi schools teach not only what Islam is, they also emphasize what it is not. They delineate sectarian boundaries and parameters, emphasizing, in the process, who is and who is not a Muslim.

The Iranian revolution of 1979 was bound to appeal to many Muslims especially as it had defied a major superpower of the time and because Ayatullah Khomeini (d. 1989) had

⁴⁴ <https://lubpak.com/archives/337987>

characterized America as the great Satan. Khomeini also wanted to export the revolution, calling on Muslims abroad to rise against their rulers. Deobandi leaders saw this as a threat since the revolution was intertwined with the spread of Shi'ism. Muhammad Manzur Numani is a senior Deobandi leader. The title of his work (*Khomeini, Iranian revolution and the Shi'ite Faith*) indicates the aspects that worried Numani most. In fact, he starts his work with a critique of the revolution and then proceeds to refute various aspects of Shi'i beliefs and practices. As he states, "Khomeini's revolution is based totally on the foundation of Shi'ite religion i.e., upon its doctrines of Imamate, *Ghaibate Kubra* (major absence) of [the] Imam - i- Akhiruzzaman (the Imam of the last phase - the awaited Mehdi) and, during this absence, the establishment of *wilayat-ul-faqih* (the rule of the *mujtahid*)."⁴⁵

In response to a Saudi request⁴⁶ to contain the increasing threat from the Iranian revolution, in 1984 Numani published a book titled, "*Iranian Revolution: Imam Khomeini and Shiism (Irani Inqilab: Imam Khomeini awr Shi'iyat)*." The preface to the book was written by a popular and erudite Indian religious scholar, Abu al-Hasan 'Ali Nadwi (d. 2000), one of the most senior religious leaders of India. Nadwi was an adviser to the Saudi Islamic World League.⁴⁷

Both Numani and Nadwi felt threatened not only by the Iranian revolution but, more importantly, the appeal of Shi'ism, especially as its revolutionary message could attract the Sunni youth. Hence, they and other Sunni scholars sought to expose what they claimed to be the "real" face of Shi'ism, exporting, in the process, their writings and sectarian literature abroad.

The book further attacked the Shi'is for their "unIslamic practices and beliefs." Soon, Numani's

⁴⁵ Mohammad Manzur Numani, *Khomeini, Iranian Revolution and the Shi'ite Faith* (London: Furqan Publications, 1988), 17.

⁴⁶ Khaled Ahmed, 2014. The Lucknow Connection. The Indian Express, May 12. <http://indianexpress.com/article/opinion/columns/the-lucknow-connection/>

⁴⁷ Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: W.W.Norton, 2006), 164.

book became a best seller throughout the Sunni world. With Saudi support, the book was translated from Urdu into English, Arabic, and Turkish and made available for wide circulation.⁴⁸ Such rhetoric was bound to inflame sectarian flames.

Sipah-e-Sahaba

The Deobandi and Ahl-i Hadith (Salafi) *madrasas* became the center of opposition to the Shi'is, while, at the same time, the '*ulama*' in these *madrasas* had ties with Saudi '*ulama*'.⁴⁹ This opposition was channeled through groups which, inspired by Deobandi rhetoric and ideology, resorted to militancy to counter-act what they perceived to be the Shi'a threat. Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP - soldiers of the companions [of the Prophet]) is a Deobandi Pakistani organization and a formerly registered Pakistani political party. It was established during the time of General Zia al-Haq in Pakistan in the early 1980s by Mawlana Haq Nawaz Jhangvi. Its stated goal was to deter the spread of Shi'i influence in Pakistan in the wake of the Iranian Revolution. The organization was banned by President General Pervez Musharraf in 2002 as a terrorist organization under the Anti-Terrorism Act of 1997.⁵⁰ In October 2000 Mawlana Masood Azhar, founder of Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), was quoted as saying that "Sipah-e-Sahaba stands shoulder to shoulder with Jaish-e-Muhammad in Jihad." This coalition further demonstrates the extent of the Deobandi network in Pakistan. A leaked U.S. diplomatic cable described it as another Sipah-e-Sahaba breakaway Deobandi organization.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Ibid., 165.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 162.

⁵⁰https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sipah-e-Sahaba_Pakistan#cite_note-Raman-1 See also <http://isianalysis.blogspot.com/2009/04/musharrafs-ban-analysis-18-1-2002.html>

As the name indicates, the Sipah posited themselves as the vanguards of the companions, a position that inevitably entailed opposition to and confrontation with the Shi'is. The Sipah-I Sahaba tried to combat the Shi'is at different levels. They resorted to publishing anti-Shi'i literature highlighting elements in Shi'i texts that were bound to anger Sunnis. These include the denigration of the companions in general and the Prophet's wife, 'A'isha, in particular. They also quoted Shi'i *hadith* and *tafsir* literature that pronounced the Qur'an to be incomplete. This would vindicate their contention that Shi'ism has transgressed beyond Islamic parameters. The Sipah further highlighted traditions that claimed that the Imams were superior to all Prophets apart from the last Prophet. What the Sipah failed to point out was that the Shi'is themselves do not consider their texts to be completely authentic. In fact, they reject many traditions such as those that suggest the present Qur'an is incomplete.⁵²

For the Sipah, the danger of Shi'ism lay not only in its heretical beliefs and practices, but also in its proselytism, especially in urban areas. The Shi'is, the Sipah claim, are not only ignorant of true Islam but are responsible for disseminating their ignorance. This has led many Sunnis to stray from the "true Islam." For the Deobandis and Sipah, confronting and combating Shi'ism was not only necessary, it was a religious obligation.⁵³

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi

The Sipah has a more militant offshoot, called the Lashkar-e Jhangvi (LeJ), which was established in 1994. The most potent aspect of the Sipah movement was the militant attacks

⁵¹ 2009: Southern Punjab extremism battle between haves and have-nots". *Dawn.com* (Dawn Media Group). 2011-05-22. Retrieved August 15, 2015.

⁵² Muhammad b. Muhammad al-Mufid, *Awa'il al-Maqalat fi al-Madhahib wa'l Mukhtarat* (Tabriz, 1950), 94-5.

⁵³ Muhammad Qasim Zaman, *The Ulama in Contemporary Islam*, 121-2.

against the Shi'is and the subsequent Shi'i retaliation. Sipah and Lashkar, which later became a part of the al-Qaeda network in Pakistan, attacked Shi'i targets especially in their holy places and mosques.⁵⁴

The emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan in 1994 saw a new wave of persecution against the Hazara Shi'is in Afghanistan. In August 1998, when Taliban forces entered the multi-ethnic northern Afghan city of Mazar-i Sharif, they killed at least 2,000 civilians, the majority of them Hazaras.

A number of Pakistanis, including members of the Sipah-i-Sahaba (SSP) and its offshoot, the Lashkar-e-Jhangvi (LeJ), fought on the side of the Taliban in Mazar-e Sharif. The links between these Afghan and Pakistani Sunni militant groups and the flood of Hazara into Balochistan prompted a rise in persecution of the Hazara in that province too. The Hazara Shia community is concentrated in Quetta and is estimated to be around 500,000. It has to be remembered that the LeJ is an entirely Deobandi group, which has also killed hundreds of Sunni Sufis, Barelvis in addition to thousands of Shias. Responding to the increased acts of violence, General Pervez Musharraf banned the LeJ in 2002. However, this has not deterred the LeJ from its sectarian attacks across Pakistan.

The various groups affiliated to the Deobandis in Pakistan have engaged in sectarian warfare with the Shi'is. A 62 page Human Rights Watch said in a report released “‘We are the Walking Dead’: Killings of Shia Hazaras in Balochistan, Pakistan,” documents Deobandi militant group attacks on the mostly Shia Hazara community in Balochistan. Since 2008, several hundreds of Hazara have been killed in steadily worsening targeted violence, including two bombings in the provincial capital, Quetta, in January and February 2013 that killed at least 180

⁵⁴ Ibid., 119-122.

people. “Sunni (Deobandi) extremists have targeted Hazara with guns and bombs while they participate in religious processions, pray in mosques, travel to work, or just go about daily life,” said Brad Adams, Asia director. This has led to large numbers of Hazaras to flee Pakistan for refuge in other countries. Human Rights Watch interviewed more than 100 survivors, members of victims’ families, law enforcement, security officials, and independent experts for the report.⁵⁵

The increase in Deobandi militant activities has meant that since 2008, Pakistan’s Shia Muslim community has been the target of an unprecedented escalation in sectarian violence. The Lashkar-e-Jhangvi has claimed responsibility for most attacks. On January 10, 2013, the suicide bombing of a snooker club in Quetta frequented by Hazaras killed 96 people and injured at least 150. Many of the victims were caught in a second blast 10 minutes after the first, striking those who had gone to the aid of the wounded. On February 17, 2013, a bomb exploded in a vegetable market in Quetta’s Hazara Town, killing at least 84 Hazara and injuring more than 160. The LeJ claimed responsibility for both attacks, the bloodiest attacks from sectarian violence in Pakistan since independence in 1947.⁵⁶ Moreover, in addition to the Hazaras, Shias of other ethnic groups such as the Balochs, Pashtuns and Punjabis too have been attacked in Quetta as well as in other parts of Pakistan.

Such attacks were not confined to the Shi’i community. There have been numerous attacks on Sunni Sufi and Barelvi shrines and leaders in which thousands of people have died. Such attacks have been claimed by the Taliban (TTP), LeJ and other Deobandi militant outfits⁵⁷.

⁵⁵ <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/06/29/pakistan-rampant-killings-shia-extremists>.

⁵⁶ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/pakistan/9794542/Pakistan-suffers-bloodiest-day-in-years-after-Quetta-snooker-hall-attack.html>

⁵⁷ Owais Tohid 2010. In Pakistan, militant attacks on Sufi shrines on the rise. Reuters. <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Asia-South-Central/2010/1105/In-Pakistan-militant-attacks-on-Sufi-shrines-on-the-rise>

Non-Muslims have suffered too. Entire Christian villages were destroyed in 2009 and in 2013, with no one held to account. The Pakistani Taliban took credit for the murder of Shahbaz Bhatti in 2011, an advocate of reform of the country's blasphemy laws, as he left his Islamabad home, leaving flyers at the crime scene in an upscale part of Islamabad.⁵⁸ In September, splinter groups from the Pakistani Taliban carried out twin suicide bombings on the All Saints Church in Peshawar that killed 119 Christians as they left Sunday services.⁵⁹ Even the Sunni Muslim majority has not been spared from the onslaught. The Pakistani Taliban targeted politicians deemed “secular” during the run-up to the May election and afterwards.⁶⁰

According to Knox James, the Pakistan Religious Violence Project that he directed for the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), documented a staggering number of attacks against religious communities over a 30-month period. Between January 2012 and June 2014, two reports recorded 325 instances of targeted violence against religious groups resulting in more than 3,000 casualties with over 1,100 deaths. The Shi'a community was hardest hit, with 857 individuals killed in 131 separate suicide bombings and targeted shootings. The Pakistani Taliban and LeJ repeatedly claimed responsibility for these acts.⁶¹ The violence has been felt by the Ahmadis too, a group that has been declared as heretical by the Deobandis

⁵⁸ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/mar/02/pakistan-minister-shot-dead-islamabad>

⁵⁹ <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/sep/23/pakistan-church-bombings-christian-minority>

⁶⁰ <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/05/09/us-pakistan-election-idUSBRE94807320130509>

⁶¹ Thames, Knox. "Pakistan's Dangerous Game with Religious Extremism." *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 12, no. 4 (2014): 40-48.

and other Muslim groups. The Ahmadis are regularly assassinated in drive-by shootings and their mosques attacked.⁶²

It is important to note that these acts of violence have not been confined to Pakistan as the militant groups are now exporting their version of jihad all over the world. The Khudamudeen *madrasa*, according to its chancellor, is training students from Burma, Nepal, Chechnya, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Yemen, Mongolia, and Kuwait. Out of the 700 students at the *madrasah*, 127 are foreigners. Nearly half the student body at Darul Uloom Haqqania, the *madrasa* that created the Taliban, is from Afghanistan. It also trains students from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Russia, and Turkey, and is currently expanding its capacity to house foreign students from 100 to 500, its chancellor said. According to the U.S. State Department, Pakistani groups and individuals also help finance and train the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, a terrorist organization that aims to overthrow secular governments in Central Asia.⁶³

The extent of the violence can be discerned from the following report. Global Index notes that in 2013, the country with the second largest increase in the numbers of deaths was Pakistan. Pakistan saw a substantial increase in the number of deaths per attack. In particular, the second and third biggest terrorist groups, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi and Jundallah, averaged 20 more fatalities per attack in 2013 than the previous year. This highlights the growing lethality of the Deobandi militant groups.⁶⁴

⁶² <http://www.rferl.org/content/pakistan-ahmadis-persecution-violence/24992861.html>

⁶³ Jessica Stern. "Pakistan's Jihad Culture." *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 6 (November/December 2000): 115-26.

⁶⁴

http://www.visionofhumanity.org/sites/default/files/Global%20Terrorism%20Index%20Report%202014_0.pdf.

An important consideration is the funding of these militant groups. Most of their funding comes in the form of anonymous donations sent directly to their bank accounts. Lashkar-i-Taiba ("Army of the Pure"), a rapidly growing Ahle Hadith (Wahhabi) group, raises funds on the Internet. Lashkar and its parent organization, Markaz ad-Da'wa Wal Irshad (Center for Islamic Invitation and Guidance), have raised so much money, mostly from sympathetic Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia, that they are reportedly planning to open their own bank.

Many of the families of the so-called "martyrs" receive financial assistance from the militant groups. The Shuhda-e-Islam Foundation, founded in 1995 by Jamaat-e-Islami, claims to have dispensed 13 million rupees to the families of martyrs. It also claims to provide financial support to some 364 families by paying off loans, setting them up in businesses, or helping them with housing. Both Lashkar-i-Taiba and Harkat have also established charitable organizations that reward the families of martyrs. Although these foundations provide a service to families in need, they also perpetuate a culture of violence.⁶⁵

Tablighi Jamaat

An offshoot of the Deobandi movement, the Tablighi Jamaat movement began in the late 1920s with Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Kandhlawi (d. 1944), whose family had long associations with Deoband and its sister school in Saharanpur, Mazaahirul-'Ulum. Its inception is believed to be a response to Hindu reform movements, which were considered a threat to vulnerable and non-practicing Muslims. Maulana Ilyas' strategy was to persuade Muslims to reform themselves and help fellow Muslims to a more strict and austere adherence to Islam. The Tablighi movement

⁶⁵ Jessica Stern. "Pakistan's Jihad Culture." *Foreign Affairs* 79, no. 6 (November/December 2000): 115-26.

gradually expanded from a local to a national organization, and finally to a transnational movement with followers in over 150 countries.⁶⁶

The essential principle of the movement is that every Muslim can be a vehicle for dissipating the values and practices of Islam.⁶⁷ For the Tablighis, Muslims ought to spend a portion of their time spreading the word of Islam, wherever they may be. The Tablighi movement permeates mainstream Muslim life by using mosques as bases for their activities.⁶⁸ Over time specific mosques throughout the world have come to be known as "Tablighi mosques." They try to spread Islam among Muslims and even use the *hajj* (pilgrimage) season for converting Muslims towards their ideas. Tablighis prefer face to face encounters and relationships for communicating their message.

With no formal bureaucracy or membership records, it is hard to calculate the number of participants over time, but at the end of the twentieth century, annual meetings of perhaps two million people would congregate for three-day meetings in Raiwind, Pakistan and Tungi, Bangladesh; large regional meetings were regularly held in India; and other convocations took place in North America and Europe, for example in Dewsbury, the site of a major seminary associated with Tablighi activities in the north of England. These convocations were considered

⁶⁶ Barbara Metcalf, "Traditionalist" Islamic Activism: Deoband and Deobandis, Ten Years Later
<http://essays.ssrc.org/10yearsafter911/%E2%80%9Ctraditionalist%E2%80%9D-islamic-activism-deoband-and-deobandis-ten-years-later/>

⁶⁷ Jocelyne Cesari, *When Islam and Democracy Meet*, 94.

⁶⁸ See Barbara Metcalf, "New Medinas: The Tablighi Jama'at in America and Europe," in Barbara Metcalf ed., *Making Muslim Space*, 113.

moments of intense blessings as well as occasions to organize for tours. They also gave evidence of the vast numbers touched by the movement.⁶⁹

Being influenced by traditional Islam, Tablighis have confined themselves largely to ritualistic elements of Islam. This has meant that they have been largely apolitical. Due to their emphasis on purity, personal contact, and a return to the practices of the Prophet, the Tablighis have been successful in attracting adherents to their movement, thus bringing Muslims of other denominations to the Deobandi ideology. Many Muslims of the diaspora do not have access to the traditional Islamic sciences offered in Muslim schools of learning or *madrasa*. By preaching to the Muslim laity in mosques, work places, and universities, the Tablighis fill a particular void. The effectiveness of the Tablighis essentially stems from their ability to provide an intensive religious training for individuals who have never attended the traditional places of Islamic learning. An increasing number of conversions in both Europe and the United States are due to the proselytizing activities of the Tablighis.⁷⁰ However, as I have discussed, an increasing number of Tablighi mosques have been accused of preaching hatred in the study sessions. Some of the recent perpetrators of violence had reportedly frequented Tablighi mosques and may have been radicalized there.

In response to this movement, the Salafis have disagreed vehemently with the Tablighis. A *fatwa* from Sheikh Bin Baz in 1997 explicitly stated that the Tabligh was one of the seventy two heretical sects of Islam. A Salafi website enumerates a list of deviant sects. The list includes

⁶⁹ Barbara Metcalf, "Traditionalist" Islamic Activism: Deoband and Deobandis, Ten Years Later
<http://essays.ssrc.org/10yearsafter911/%E2%80%9Ctraditionalist%E2%80%9D-islamic-activism-deoband-and-deobandis-ten-years-later/>

⁷⁰ Jocelyne Cesari, *When Islam and Democracy Meet*, 94.

the Tablighi Jamaat and Deobandism.⁷¹ Wahhabis and Salafis are also critical of the Tablighis' 'innovations,' especially as they lack a centralized religious leadership. They also criticize the Tablighis for their encouragement of lay persons to propagate Islam and their view that one does not need to be very learned to preach.⁷²

Conclusion

Movements such as the Deobandis and other Islamic fundamentalism groups represent a trend of clinging or returning to sacred texts or the "true," "original" or "essential" religion as a way to revolt against aspects of secularism and modernity. Movements such as the Deobandis also call into question the validity and legitimacy of secular governments and react strongly against religious and social pluralism. Instead, they want to recreate the idealized environment of Prophet and to an understanding of faith as exemplified by the early generation of Muslims. They also want to purify Islam from cultural and extraneous accretions. The Deobandis reject the compromises with liberal values and secular institutions and refuse to observe the boundaries that secular society has imposed around religion. For them, religion is not a peripheral element that can be divorced from daily life.

Ultimately, such movements oppose not only Western powers but also challenge the authority of local governments that have desacralized the public arena. The Deobandis want to place religion at the center of personal and public life and to impose their brand of a very austere and rigid Islam on the populace. In the attainment of their idealized socio-religious goals, some of the groups affiliated with the Deobandis have resorted to extremist and militant means,

⁷¹ Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam*, 244-5, fn. 26.; www.allaahuakbar.net.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 238.

contravening, in the process, some of the very principles of human rights that Islam enunciates. It is this dichotomy that has yet to be resolved.