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## Disintegration of the Muslim *Ummah* and the Emergence of the Islamic Resurgent Movements in the Sub-continent: A Comparative Study of Ideologies of the Tablighi Jamaat and Jamaat-i-Islami

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### ABSTRACT

*Removing the causes of disintegration and paving the way for the reintegration of the Ummah (global community of Muslims) is one of the main agendas of the revivalist movements. Islamic revivalist movements (henceforth as IRMs) are urging ordinary Muslims to adopt a more conservative outlook in their daily lives. Among these IRMs, the Tablighi Jamaat (TJ) founded by Maulana Muhammad Ilyas and the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) established by Maulana Maududi have attracted the attention of millions of Muslims. While scholars have extensively studied the origin, ideologies, and Islamization of these Muslim evangelical movements. There is a lack of scholarly literature on the comparative study of both Islamic movements on the question of what factors led to the decay and downfall of the Muslim community. Drawing from various primary and secondary sources, this paper seeks to explore the perspectives of both these revivalist movements on the disintegration of the Muslim Ummah. Both of these Islamic revivalist movements widely believe that Muslims deviated from the true path of Islam, and as a result, God punished them by depriving them of their socio-political glory. The ultimate objective of both the revivalist movements is the same but they have many differences when it comes to implementing their reformation schemes.*

**Keywords:** *Islamism, Jamaat-i-Islami, Muslim disintegration, preaching, Tablighi Jamaat.*

In the past seventy-five years or so, several Islamic movements and religio-political parties have appeared in Muslim-majority regions such as Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and South Asia. Primarily such religious movements are endeavoring to halt the process of Muslim's downfall and to help their co-religionists to organize their individual and collective lives in accordance with the Islamic teachings (Calvert 2008). During times of trials and tribulations, many revivalist movements within the Muslim community have come forward to combat different challenges and to urge the Muslim community to mold their lives in accordance with Islamic teachings (Lapidus 1997). While their objectives remained almost identical, nevertheless,

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the methods regarding the implementation of their programs and course of action remained dissimilar.

The trend of Islamic resurgence and revivalism has its roots in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries when the established Muslim states and Sultanates were colonized by the strong nation-states of Europe. For instance, in India, the British forces supplanted the Mughal Empire, French forces seized many parts of North and Western Africa and the Central Asian region fell to the Czarist Russia after the end of World War 1 (1914-1918). The last surviving Caliphate with whom Indian Muslims had emotional attachment was also dismembered by the victorious nations of Europe mainly led by England and France (Calvert 2008). The 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries brought numerous socio-political challenges to the Muslim community worldwide (Lapidus 1988). Most of the activists of the Islamic revivalist movements considered the deviation of Muslims from the right path as one of the main causes of colonization. Therefore, the disintegration of the Muslim-dominated states in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries acted as a motivating factor for the conservative Muslims who later formed various Islamic revivalist movements for reforming Muslim societies across the globe. In order to combat the Europeans, some of the Ulama and nobles fought against them while others endeavored to reform the lives of the Indian Muslims in order to put them back on the right path of Islam (Qadir 2005).

In 1926, the Muslim community of Mewat (colonial India) was threatened by the preaching activism of Shuddhi and Sangattan, the two known Hindu religious movements that aimed to convert nominal Muslims to Hinduism. Thus, to protect lapsed Muslims from such anti-Islamic movements, Maulana Mohammad Ilyas laid the foundation of TJ. Maulana Ilyas wanted to help Indian Muslims live their lives in accordance with the teachings of Islam in a country governed by colonial rulers. From Mewat, where TJ originated, the movement expanded its influence and ideology in almost every corner of the world. Today TJ has 80 million followers across the globe and its annual gathering called *Ijtima* at Tungi (Bangladesh) sometimes attracts more Muslims than the *hajj* (pilgrimage) at Makkah (Saudi Arabia) (Pieri 2021). The Raiwind Tablighi Ijtima is also one of its significant religious gatherings which attracts millions of Muslims from different parts of the country (Pew Research Center 2010).

On the other hand, the JI was founded by Maulana Maududi in 1941. Maulana Maududi (1903-1979) was also one of those influential Muslim scholars who aimed to reform the Muslim Ummah and to put them back on the right track of Islam. Similar to the TJ, the JI is also an Islamic revivalist movement seeking the establishment of an Islamic political system. Like the TJ, the JI also aims to help Muslims live their lives according to the teachings of Islam. In order to Islamize the Muslim Ummah, the JI has also established many branches in other countries, particularly in Muslim-majority countries. For Maulana Maududi, Islam is not just a religion but a complete code of life. Maulana Maududi preferred to Islamize the state structure as it was considered to be the first step towards a genuine Islamic renaissance (Geaves, 2021). Although both the TJ and JI are known Islamic revivalist movements, they have some fundamental differences when it comes to methods of reforming Muslims and their societies.

Keeping in view the socio-political and religious challenges brought about by the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, these revivalist movements started asking some fundamental questions regarding the fall of Muslim political authority in the past. For instance, Muslims were primarily concerned about how the Western powers defeated them. What was wrong with the Muslims as a community? Most of these resurgent movements widely believe that Muslim's deviation from the right path of Islam led to various socio-political and economic problems. On the one hand, some of the revivalist movements strictly believe in following peaceful methods such as public lectures, preaching, persuasion, education, and other social activities. While on the other hand, some of them believe in revolutionary steps and confrontation with the established system of the state (Bagader 1994).

Most researchers have produced literature that deals with the history, origin, Islamization, and the role of different Islamic revivalist movements in Muslim and non-Muslim majority countries around the world. Yoginder Sikand (2002) discusses the historical background of the TJ and elaborates on its rapid development from its inception in colonial India to 2002. Bulbul Siddiqi's (2014) doctoral thesis unfolds the origin, Islamization, and preaching

methodology of TJ in England and Bangladesh. Jan Ali's (2006) doctoral thesis elaborates on the Islamization of Tablighis in the Australian context. Like others, the dissertation of Arsalan Khan (2014) also explains the historical background of TJ and its widespread Islamic role in the Pakistani context (Khan 2014). Farish A. Noor (2012) traces the historical background of TJ, its ideological structure, and its appeal to the Muslim community of Southeast Asia (Noor 2012). Jan Ali and Faroque Amin (2020) compared both the Islamic movements and their Islamization process. They argued that TJ and JI are not antagonistic and seek to pursue a similar objective by encouraging Muslims to live an Islamic way of life (Jan and Amin 2020). The same is the case with Mumtaz Ahmad, who has emphasized the historical development of both Islamic movements in the context of Pakistan. Ahmad argues that JI is an Islamic political party working towards establishing an Islamic system of governance in Pakistan, while TJ is a non-political revivalist movement whose members seek fundamental changes in the lives of Muslims (Ahmad 1991).

As mentioned before, there is no specific research work that highlights the concepts of both the Islamic resurgence movements on the question of what went wrong with the Muslim community and what factors caused their socio-political downfall in the past. This research paper aims to focus on this particular aspect of both Tablighi Jamaat and Jamaat-i-Islami, the two prominent revivalist movements in the modern era. Additionally, this research study aims to fill an important gap in academia and to provide relevant literature on the question of what went wrong with the Muslims due to which they lost their socio-political authority in the past. This study is based on various primary and secondary sources. Primary sources include literature produced by the founding fathers and ideological supporters of both the resurgent movements, while secondary sources consist of various academic works produced by different scholars over the years.

### **Disintegration of the Muslim Ummah: A Comparative Analysis of TJ and JI**

The Tablighi Jamaat and Jamaat-i-Islami assert a common narrative regarding the pre-Islamic era, contending that it was marked by widespread socio-economic challenges and a regressive lifestyle. For instance, Maulana Maududi argued that before the advent of Islam, the Arabs lived a life that was governed by the customs of *Jahiliyyah* (ignorance). They worshiped many gods and goddesses, engaged in immorality, and lived what he called a dirty life. Maududi further argued that the same socio-political and religious chaos could also be seen in other parts of the world, such as Iran, India, the Roman Empire, and Europe (Maududi 1940). It was Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him who converted their social, cultural, political, and religious chaos into a unified socio-political system that later challenged the most advanced empires of the time such as Persia, Egypt, and Rome (Maududi 1940). Similarly, leaders and activists of TJ also firmly believe that the pre-Islamic era was a period of chaos and disintegration not only in the Arabian Peninsula but in other parts of the world as well. For instance, Maulana Ihtisham Kandhalvi, one of the founders of TJ, argued that the Messenger of Allah peace be upon him brought the most successful revolution in Arabia and eradicated all the existing challenges confronted by the people of Arabia at that time (Kandhalvi 1993).

Both the Islamic movements agreed on two fundamental things regarding the early period of Islam. First, the pre-Islamic period was a time of severe social, religious, cultural, and economic challenges confronted by people living in and outside Arabia. Second, it was the holy Prophet peace be upon him and his close associates who eradicated all the existing challenges and evils from society and laid the foundation of an exemplary state whose boundaries spread in different directions. However, both the revivalist movements diverge on the question of what went wrong with the later Muslims and what led to their socio-political and civilizational decline in the subsequent periods. The remaining part of this study will explore the commonalities and differences of perspectives of JI and TJ on the question of the decline of Muslim Ummah.

## **The JI's Perspective on the Transformation of Political System from Caliphate to Dynastic Rule**

Maulana Maududi believed that the Islamic state founded by the Rightly-Guided Caliphs known as *Khulfa-e-Rashidins* (632-660) was an exemplary period of Islamic history that witnessed the zenith of socio-political development (Maududi 1939). According to him, the underlying cause of various challenges that later encircled the Muslim community can be found in the transformation of the political system from the Caliphate into the monarchical system. For Maududi, Amir Muawiya (d. 680) who founded the first Muslim monarchy in 661 A.D. was one of the causes that transformed the Islamic system into a worldly system. He further says that it was Amir Muawiya who once said, "I am the first Muslim king" (Maududi 1966: 148). This transformation created several other issues such as the monarchs started keeping bodyguards for their protection and many other un-Islamic practices. State posts were assigned to family members and other loyalists. According to Maududi, the state treasury also became the personal property of the king and his family, and the independence of the judiciary was also compromised for all the time to come (Maududi 1966).

For Maududi, the history of Islam came to a halt soon after the collapse of the rightly-guided Caliphs. All the socio-political institutions founded by the later rulers were incapable of stopping the process of stagnation and those institutions did not reflect the ideals of Islam in any form (Nasr 1996). The new socio-political system adopted by the later Muslim elites was based on un-Islamic principles, power politics, suppression of political opponents, fear, personal power, dishonesty, injustices, cruelty, and tribal nationalism. In the opinion of Maududi, since the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty in 661 A.D. both the so-called Islamic state and society remained no longer Islamic (Liu 2013). It reveals that Maulana Maududi considered the political transformation from Khilafat to a dynastic empire as one of the core causes that led to the decay of Muslims in the later periods.

On the question of Muslim rule over India, Maulana Maududi believed that despite their long-established rule in the sub-continent, Muslim kings neither strengthened the roots of Islamic civilization nor did they provide a real Islamic environment to the people. Muslim rulers and their close associates emphasized the expansion of their state boundaries only. They did not rule the state in accordance with the teachings of Islam and the Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad (Maududi 1939). Instead of following the orders of God, ordinary Muslims were compelled to follow the wishes of their kings and nobles. They were involved in what Maududi called "*badsha parasti*" (loyalists and followers of the king) and "*umara parasti*" (loyalists and followers of the nobles) (Maududi 1939). On the question of Muslim's political decay in the Indian subcontinent, Maulana Maududi firmly believed that other reasons, such as political division that occurred in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the rising power of the Marathas, the Sikhs, and the Britishers further complicated the already existing challenges facing by the Muslim Ummah of India (Nasr 1996).

## **The Tablighi Jamaat's Perspective on the Transformation of Political System from Caliphate to Dynastic Rule**

Literature produced by the leaders and ideological supporters of the Tablighi movement is silent on the question of earlier political transformation. Maulana Ihtisham and other Tablighi writers do not consider that political shift as an important factor that paved the way for the decay of Muslims in the past. For instance, *Fazail-i-Amm'al* (Merits of the good Deeds) of Maulana Muhammad Zakriya and *Musalmano ki Mojoda Pasti ka Wahid Ilaj* (Disintegration of the Contemporary Muslims and its Remedy) of Maulana Muhammad Ihtisham Kandhalvi are the two prominent Tablighi texts authored by the founding fathers of the TJ in colonial India. Neither of the authors has argued that the early political transformation from the Caliphate to Monarchy was one of the first factors that initiated a process of Muslim disintegration. However, some of the devoted Tablighis have criticized a number of Muslim kings for perpetuating acts of barbarity during their reigns. For instance, Maulana Tariq Jamil once explained that King Timor (1336-1405) was one of the cruelest rulers of the world who despite his faith massacred millions of

Muslims in India. On the question of Mahmood Ghaznavi (971-1030) and his style of ruling, Tariq Jameel praised him for his kindness and sincerity (*Khuda Tarsi*) and was considered to be one of the God-fearing rulers who administered his state based on the principle of justice (Arsalan 2006). Like the JI, the TJ also strongly argued that Muslim kings and their nobility emphasized the expansion of their state boundaries only because their main target was the collection of revenue and other taxes from the public (Numani 2001).

But TJ does not consider that fundamental challenges were caused by the earlier political transformation as argued by main leaders of JI like Maulana Maududi. Maulana Sabir (2012) argued that the Companions of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, *Tabi'een*, and *Taba Tabi'een* used to call ordinary Muslims towards the true religion. Unfortunately, Muslims who followed *Taba Tabi'een* neglected the duty of *dawat-i-Tabligh* and this led to their downfall in the past (Sabir 2012). Maulana Habib (2000) also firmly believed that avoiding the pious work of *dawat* led to the socio-political disintegration of the Muslim Ummah. In addition, Islamic activists of TJ also unwaveringly believe that if they had been ideal and pious Muslims like the earlier generation of Muslims, non-Muslim forces could not have ended their political hegemony. Moreover, it also shows that, unlike the JI, Tablighi Islamists have a divergent concept when it comes to the role played by the *Sikhs*, *Marathas*, and Englishmen in the disintegration of Muslim political power in India. Tablighi Islamists take the view that Muslim rule in India could not have been ended by these worldly forces if Muslims had been ideal and pious followers of Islam.

### Neglecting the Duty of *Dawah* and its Grave Socio-Political Consequences

Both the revivalist movements believe that preaching good deeds and prohibiting Muslims from committing sins called *amr bi'l mar'uf wa nahi ani'l munkar* (encourage righteous behavior and discourage immorality) is the duty of all the followers of Islam. To prove that *dawah* (preaching Islam) is a primary religious duty of all Muslims, leaders and ideological advocates from both sides quote several known verses from the holy Quran. Both the resurgent movements also believe that if Muslims fail to carry out the duty of *dawah*, it can yield dire consequences for the entire Muslim community. For instance, Maududi argued that Muslims are the distinguished and specially selected people of Allah who have been raised to preach good deeds and prohibit people from bad acts. Maududi also argued that after the demise of the last Prophet of God, Allah entrusted this sacred duty to His followers. According to Maududi, if Muslims neglect this fundamental duty, then Allah will punish them as He punished the Jewish community in the past (Maududi 1939). For Maududi, major socio-political and religious problems emerged in the Muslim community when the *Ulama* and those who held political power neglected the duty of *amr bi'l mar'uf wa nahi ani'l munkar*. This resulted in the spread of various irreligious acts such as immorality, dishonesty, hypocrisy, ignorance, and *sharr wu pasad* (decay and disintegration) in the Muslim community (Maududi 1939).

Interestingly, leaders and preachers of TJ also quote such verses from the holy Quran and *Hadith* of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him in their different Tablighi *Bayans* (speeches). Manzoor Numani, for instance, argued that like other *Faraiz* (obligatory things in Islam), the duty of calling others to the right path of Islam is also a compulsory act (Numani 2001). Maulana Ihtisham also argued that *dawah* has always been one of the primary duties of all Muslims. In addition, TJ's preachers also thoroughly argue in their campaigns that neglecting the fundamental duty of *dawah* played an important role in the destruction of Muslim political power in the world (Kandhalvi 1993). For instance, Maulana Habib argued that neglecting the work of *dawah* by the Muslim community was one of the significant factors that led to the decay of Muslims in the past (Habib 2000). On the question of their political decline in South Asia, Maulana Sabir Mahmood also maintains that due to their negligence of the duty of *dawah*, Muslims lost their long-lasting rule in the sub-continent for all the time to come (Mahmood 2012). It shows that Tablighi Islamists also strongly believe that due to the absence of a gross root revivalist Islamic movement, Muslims lost their true faith not only in India but also all over the world.

The above comparative discussion shows that both the revivalist movements have no difference of opinion on the question of *dawah* as a fundamental religious duty entrusted to the

Muslim community. Muslim revivalist movements frequently contend that the Holy Prophet and His followers created an excellent state structure because of their dawat mechanism. At the same time, both the revivalist movements also share the same understanding when it comes to the consequences of abandoning the duty of *Amr bi'l mar'uf wa nahi ani'l munkar* and its impact on the Muslim community. Islamic revivalists of both the resurgent movements widely believe that neglecting the duty of dawat-i-Tabligh can lead to the disintegration of their socio-political glory.

### **Moral Decay of Muslims and its Connection with Political Authority: TJ and JI**

The TJ and JI also strongly consider that Muslims' moral decay was also one of the fundamental factors that led to their disintegration in the past. Maulana Maududi argued that Islam is a unique religion as it teaches high moral standards and prohibits all social evils and ills that badly affect the lives of individuals and destroy their social structure. Moral evils such as disunity, wickedness, barbarity, ill-treatment of the destitute people, injustices, murder, fraud, adultery, robbery, and larceny have always deviated Muslims from the right path and finally led to the downfall and disintegration of their socio-political systems in the past (Maududi 1967). Maududi gives various examples of the past nations and argues that their socio-political and civilization advancement was due to their piety and commitment towards their religious duties and beliefs. For instance, on the question of the disintegration of the Bani Israel, Maududi argued that it was due to their cruelty, irreligiosity, grave sins, the breaking up of their promises with God, and the amalgamation of *Haq* (truth) with *Batil* (falsehood) that destroyed them (Maududi 1939).

Maulana Maududi also argued that the Aryans who ruled over India for many centuries also lost their authority when their ruling class got involved in immoral activities. On the question of Muslim rule over India, Maududi explained that unfortunately Muslims (both rulers and the ruled) had started immoral practices and as a result, they became unable to compete with their opponents and safeguard their political authority in the region. He believed that Muslims had long been deviated from the straight path of Islam. He even went a step further when calling them irreligious people. He called himself a "new-born" Muslim whose beliefs were considered different from the "bad Muslims" (Siddique 1986: 119).

Similarly, Maulana Ilyas also argued that as people moved away from the times of their Prophets, their worship became mere customs and rituals. To guide them back to the right path, Allah would send His Messengers for this purpose (Numani 2001). Tablighis also believe that unfortunately Muslims deviated from the true path and there was no specific group of righteous people who could put them again on the right path of Islam. It is worth mentioning that TJ's teaching and its ideology have deeply been influenced by Shah Wali Ullah (1703-1762) who also considered that Muslim's deviation from the true path and their moral decay made them incapable of defending their political suzerainty in times of crisis (Pieri 2012).

Moreover, Tablighi activists widely believe that the moral values of contemporary Muslims are not in accordance with the teachings of Islam. Therefore, they are confronting various challenges in the contemporary world. For example, Maulana Nadwi (1978) argued that it was due to their moral degradation that Mewati Muslims were encircled by many challenges in the 1920s and 1930s. He further argued that Mewati Muslims were only nominal Muslims as they had long been following Hindu customs and traditions in their social lives (Al-Nadwi 1978). On the question of moral virtues and their relationship with worldly powers, Maulana Ihtisham argued that the early generation of the Muslim community had power, respect, and value among the other nations of the world. However, the current Muslims have no respect, wealth, or sense of brotherhood. Like Maulana Maududi, Maulana Ihtisham also condemned the present-day Muslims by arguing that their *Ammal* (deeds) and *Akhlaq* (character) did not remain as good as that of the companions of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him (Kandhalvi 1993). Regarding the importance of good deeds and their relationship with political hegemony, Maulana Ilyas once remarked:

When we do not fulfill the commandments of Allah and don't refrain from the forbidden in our personal lives, over which we have full control and there is no obstacle or compulsion, then how is

it possible that we be entrusted with the governing of this world. It is only through the decision of Allah that the believers may be granted government on the earth so that they may seek His pleasure and His laws in this world (Numani 2001: 15-16).

The aforementioned statement of TJ's founder reveals that Tablighi activists have always believed in a strong connection between good deeds with the ruling authority. For them, companions of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him and their successors were very pious and ideal Muslims and it was due to their religious commitment and moral qualities that enabled them to lead and rule a larger part of the world for many centuries. Both revivalist movements consider that the moral decay of the Muslim community has contributed to their socio-political and religious downfall. Islamic activists of both the resurgent movements share the same view that it was their moral degradation that invited the anger of Allah Almighty Who deprived them of their well-established states around the world. Overall, Maulana Ilyas and Maulana Maududi share similar views on the impact of bad deeds and their potential connection to worldly power.

### Questioning the Role of the Traditional Clergy

The role of clergy in the Muslim community is also a controversial and debatable issue. Maryam argues that Islamic revivalist movements put some kind of responsibility on traditional *Ulama* to justify their own existence and purification initiatives (Zaman 2014). Thus, to justify their existence and Islamization both the resurgent movements have put some kind of blame on the shoulders of traditional *Ulama*. For instance, Maulana Maududi asserts that there was a time when Muslim Ummah was the most advanced nation of the time, and their socio-political and cultural achievements were matchless. Regarding challenges confronted by the Muslim community, Maulana Maududi believes that problems started when Muslim intellectuals ceased critical thinking and began adopting Western ideas (Maududi 1939).

This means that Maududi also criticized the *Ulama* for failing to control the process of Muslim's downfall. For Maududi, when Western civilization was destroying Islamic norms and traditions, it was the primary duty of the religious circles to come forward and save Muslims but unfortunately, they were not in a position to oppose preachers of the Western civilization. For Maududi, one of the core problems with the *Ulama* was their blind belief in *Taqlid* (following their predecessors). Traditional clergies did not consult the Quran to find out the required solution (Maududi 1939). As far as the concept of Sufism is concerned, Maulana Maududi firmly believed that it was one of the major causes that destroyed Islam and Muslims worldwide. According to him, it was Sufism that misguided and misled some of the Mughal rulers such as Jalal Uddin Mohammad Akbar (d. 1605) and Dara Shikoh (d. 1659) (Nasr 1996). For Maududi, traditional clergies were unable and completely failed to sort out irreligiosity from public life. He also believed that the sole objective of the religious class was to get profitable positions and to protect their religious monopoly in the state. For Maududi, a very small number of the *Ulama* and Sufis did their rightful duties while the rest remained ignorant of Islam and its teachings (Maududi n.d).

Likewise, the founding fathers of TJ also criticized the traditional *Ulama* for focusing solely on religious education, rather than initiating a grass-root religious movement that could protect ordinary Muslims from their enemies. Manzoor Numani argued that the *Ulama* prioritized religious education over what Numani called the "internal development" or "spiritual purification" of their students. He considered that this was not the method of the Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him, his *Sahaba* (companions), *Tabi'een* (those who came after the companions), and *Taba Tabi'een* (those who came after the *Tabi'een*) (Numani 2001: 220-221). Maulana Ilyas stated that one of the core problems with the Madrassa and their students was that after the completion of their studies, they emphasized securing a government post in the educational institutions run by the colonial rulers. In this way, the *Ulama* helped enemies of the Muslim Ummah. For instance, once Maulana Ilyas said, "If our lands produce no fruit, it is still a loss; but if they produce fruit that goes to our enemies, it becomes a far greater loss" (Numani 2001: 34). It reveals that for TJ's leadership, the old structure of the Madrassa was also partly

responsible for failing to initiate a gross-rooted Islamic mechanism that could produce purified Muslims.

In addition, it is important to differentiate TJ from JI on the question of Ulama and their responsibility in the process of Muslim decay and disintegration. The criticism of Tablighi leaders regarding the role of traditional clergies is based on the Madrassa mechanism adopted by the past *Ulama*. As mentioned earlier, Tablighi leaders criticized the past clergies for failing to launch a vital Islamic revivalist movement that could save ordinary Muslims from the reconversion activism of Hindu and Christian missionaries. Unlike the JI, Tablighi activists do not question the ideological concepts of the *Ulama* as questioned by Maulana Maududi in his various writings.

For Maududi, one of the core issues with the traditional clergies was that they were blindly following the ways and methods of their *Aslaafs* (predecessors). He also believed that traditional clergies held outdated concepts, and they could not compete with the newly-adopted ideas brought by the colonial rulers. Maulana Maududi attacked traditional clergy for neglecting Jihad and Ijtihad believing that turning blind eyes to such significant aspects of Islam paved the way for various socio-religious ills in society (Maududi 1939). In other words, he called it *Jahiliyyah* (Nasr 1996). On the other hand, leaders of the Tablighi movement do not take the view that the clergy's *Taqlid* and their outdated beliefs were accountable for the disintegration of Muslims. Indeed, TJ has no issue with the traditional *Ulama* when it comes to their religious ideology. For TJ, the concentration of traditional clergies on academics within the premises of a religious seminary was not enough to halt the process of decay and disintegration.

### **Deviation of the Common Muslims from the Right Path of Islam**

It is worth mentioning that literature produced by the founding fathers and ideological supporters of both Islamic resurgent movements also criticizes ordinary Muslims for their decay and disintegration. Maududi believed that ordinary Muslims erred in following the commandments of God over the years. He argues that despite their long rule over the Indian subcontinent, Muslim rulers did not establish a specific mechanism to teach authentic Islam to the local people. Consequently, due to the absence of a religious environment in the country, ordinary Muslims lived their lives in accordance with *Jahiliyyah* norms and traditions. This condition weakened Islamic civilization, making it unable to prevent Western nations from seizing political authority in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries (Maududi 1939). Maududi argued that the fall of Islam was not just the result of the failures of the established institutions or intellectual decay, but rather it was the result of the fall of individual Muslims (Nasr 1996: 55). For Maududi, Muslims lived their lives against the commandments of Allah, and as a result, they lost their political authority from Morocco to India. The Marathas, Sikhs, and eventually the English colonial rulers defeated them multiple times and it was nothing but the result of their irreligiosity and sinful behavior (Maududi 1946).

Similarly, TJ and its leadership have also blamed individual Muslims by calling them nominal or lapsed Muslims. Furthermore, activists of TJ strongly argue that ordinary Muslims were pursuing only worldly life and this created what they call *Fitna* (chaos) in their societies. The Tablighis also hold that there was a period in history when the Sunnah of the last prophet of God and the teachings of the holy Quran were adhered to by ordinary Muslims. But as time went on, ordinary Muslims lost their piety and began to conduct their lives- both individually and collectively- according to their own desires. This error and irreligiosity on the part of individual Muslims, Tablighis think, led to their dissolution known as *Sharr wu Pasad* (decay and disintegration). Additionally, Maulana Ihtisham also argued that due to the irreligiosity and lack of religious devotion and dedication among ordinary Muslims, God deprived them of what he called the *Ghaibi Madad* (unseen help) (Kandhalvi 1993). Farish stated:

Time and again, Maulana Zakaria berates his fellow Muslims for straying off the proper path that had been set by the Prophet and his companions and insists that there is no other model for Muslims to emulate today than the model that was set by the first community of Muslims in Mecca and Medina (Noor 2012: 74).



Regarding the various forms of *Jahiliyyah* confronted by the Muslim *Ummah*, both the revivalist movements firmly believed that ignorance deviated Muslims from the right track in the past. They both held the belief that nominal Muslims lived their lives in accordance with societal norms rather than the teachings of Islam and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet of God. For instance, Maududi argued that Muslims were unaware of the fundamentals of Islam and most of them followed the rituals and traditions of the days of ignorance. For Maududi, the majority of the Muslims had a hypocritical nature where they did not hesitate to violate the very basic rituals of Islam such as *Nemaz* (prayer), *Ramzan* (fasting), *Zakat* (almsgiving), and performing *Hajj* (pilgrimage) (Maududi 1939). TJ also argues that Muslims were living their lives like non-Muslims called *Dosro Kay Tarekay* (the ways of other nations) and this led to their decay in the past. Tablighi Islamists firmly believe that Muslims did not follow true Islam (*Haqiqi Islam*) in their lives with whom attached their religious and worldly prosperity (*Din wu Dunya ki Falah wu bahbood*) (Kandhalvi 1993). In short, Islamic revivalists argue that the disintegration of Muslims was not just the failure of their intellectual minority or state institutions; rather, it was also the failure of individual Muslims whose lives were governed by ignorance and personal desires.

### Blaming the Western Nations

In addition to the internal factors that, according to both the revivalist movements, contributed to the Muslim *Ummah*'s decay in the past. Both TJ and JI widely believe that Western nations and their socio-political and economic structures also played a significant role in the downfall of the Muslim community. Maulana Maududi, for example, was critical of those Muslims who adopted and imitated the Western way of life without questioning whether or not it violated the core tenets of Islam. Maududi referred to such Muslims as "mental slaves." He stood against Western secularism, atheism, and materialism believing that these European ideas were inferior to the Islamic conception of civilization (Maududi 2003). Maulana Maududi further argues that the problems began when Muslim *Ummah* failed to produce researchers in both secular and religious fields. This lack of advancement gave birth to numerous challenges and as a result, the Muslim *Ummah* started copying Western education and ideas that further contributed to their downfall. On the other side, the Western world started producing extraordinary researchers who gave new ideas and concepts. These new ideas strengthened their society, military, and political institutions. Thus, the Western world had the potential to colonize the Islamic world (Maududi 1939).

In the same vein, TJ views Western ways of life and their socio-political structure as anti-Islamic, suggesting that Muslims need to protect themselves from such irreligious ideas and concepts. After narrating that the past generation of Muslims led a very successful life, Maulana Sarfaraz Ahmad, a devoted TJ activist, elaborated that contemporary Muslims have become what he termed "mental slaves" of the Western nations. He argued that Muslims lost their respect, power, and authority due to many factors and reasons but following the Western life-style and their worldly ideas were also some of the main factors due to which Muslims suffered in the past (Sarfaraz 2013). Maulana Zakriya, another prominent scholar of TJ, maintains that contemporary Muslims wish to see the renaissance of Islam. However, Zakaria, laments, how could they see it as they had long been following the luxurious lifestyle of the *Kafirs* (non-believers) (Zakriya 2009). It should be noted that both the revivalist movements emerged at a time when Muslims had already witnessed the decline of their political power to the British Raj. Thus, opposing the colonial rule and considering it a threat to the socio-religious identity of the Muslim community was a natural response from these religious resurgent movements.

Nonetheless, it is important to note that Maulana Ihtisham Kandhalvi in his book titled *Musalmano ki Mojoda Pasti ka Wahid Ilaj* has not criticized Western powers and their system as a reason that contributed to the decay of Muslims in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. More recently, however, some of the TJ's ideological supporters have produced literature that, like Maulana Maududi, also blames Western powers for their socio-political concepts. Put briefly, there is a widespread belief among both the revivalist movements that Muslim's adherence to

Western values and lifestyle, was largely responsible for the overall socio-political and cultural downfall of the Muslim community. Maulana Maududi contends that neglecting the field of research on the part of the Muslim Ummah led to their socio-political decay in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The founding fathers of TJ widely believe that neglecting the pious work of *dawat-i-Tabligh* on the part of the Ulama and ordinary Muslims weakened their socio-political, religious, and economic status. Consequently, they lost both their political power and status in the subsequent periods.

Apart from their shared understanding of the causes of the Muslim *Ummah's* downfall, both revivalist movements also differed in four fundamental aspects. First, Maulana Maududi considered the transition from the Caliphate to the Monarchy as one of the initial changes in the political structure that led to socio-political and religious problems. In contrast, the TJ and its leadership did not view this political transition as a significant factor in the decline of the Muslim *Ummah*. They believed that both ordinary Muslims and the elite class neglected the duty of *dawat*, and this terrible mistake ultimately led to their decline in the years to come. Secondly, Maulana Maududi widely argued that the traditional clergy and their outdated beliefs were also partly accountable for the decline of the Muslim community. Leaders of TJ also questioned the role of traditional clergy, but their criticism is based on avoiding the fundamental duty of *dawat* only. Tablighis did not question their religious beliefs as Maulana Maududi did. Thirdly, Maulana Maududi also contended that the Muslim Ummah neglected research work in both science and technology and religious fields, and this serious fault led to their further disintegration. TJ's leaders and its ideological supporters have produced a rich literature on their Islamic revivalism, but they do not shed light on this particular aspect. The JI was first established as an Islamic reform movement but soon it became a religious political party struggling to implement an Islamic system of governance in Pakistan. On the other hand, the TJ is widely considered an apolitical and pacifist religious movement that seeks to convert nominal Muslims into ideal and practical followers of Islam. Most of its ideological supporters are the followers of the Deobandi school of thought.

To conclude, many Islamic reformist movements emerged shortly after the fall of the Mughal Empire in India and the disintegration of the Ottoman Caliphate based in modern-day Turkey. Their goal was to correct the course of Muslims' social and political downfall and steer them back toward true Islam. The reformist movements of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries sought to strengthen the Muslim population and provide them the opportunity to reclaim their historical prominence and political dominance. The two well-known Islamic revivalist movements, Tablighi Jamaat and Jamaat-i-Islami sought to turn lapsed Muslims back into ardent followers of Islam. Regarding the issue of the socio-political and civilizational collapse of the Muslim world, there are similarities and differences between the two Islamic movements. For instance, according to JI, the earlier political transformation of Muslim rule from the Caliphate into dynastic rule, among other reasons, is one of the significant factors that doomed the Islamic civilization and political hegemony of the Muslim community. For TJ, this political transformation would not have led to their disintegration if there had been a proper system of *dawat-i-Tabligh* in the past. Apart from this, both the revivalist movements also take the view that the deviation of both the Ulama and of the ordinary Muslims from the right track of Islam led to their downfall in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Apart from that, both the resurgent movements have different views on the revival of Muslims around the world. While both the revivalist movements consider Islam a complete code of life for the entire humanity, they believe that Islamic teachings encompass nearly every aspect of human life on earth. However, to achieve the purpose of revivalism, both the resurgent movements have formulated divergent strategies. Leaders and ideological supporters of the JI believe that no Islamic society can be established without taking part in the political affairs of a state. On the other hand, Tablighi activists believe that their *Khuruj* system is the only proper Islamic way that is capable of bringing Islamic changes in the lifestyle and outlook of Muslims around the world. As an Islamic movement, TJ rejects electoral politics, believing that guiding common Muslims towards the right path of Islam is the key to solving the socio-political problems confronted by the Muslim community. In contrast, JI maintains that political activism is the most

effective means to establish an Islamic system of governance. This study suggests that although both the Islamic resurgent movements have followed different paths, their ultimate goal of Islamic revivalism is the establishment of an Islamic political system.

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