

Panel 41: Pakistan in Transition

- The Politics of Difference –  
(Chair: Pnina Werbner)

Parrots of Paradise - Symbols of the Super-Muslim:  
Sunnah, Sunnaization, and Self-Fashioning in the Islamic Missionary Movements  
Tablīghī Jamā'at, Da'wat-e Islāmī, and Sunnī Da'wat-e Islāmī

(Shortened version)

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Muslim Faith Movements (*Tahrīk-e Īmān*) from South-Asia have proven specific strengths in influencing and re-shaping the Islamic-Religious Fields in the Diaspora communities in European countries as well as in their societies of origin in South Asia. The Tablīghī Jamā'at emerged 1926 as a Muslim response to the *shuddhī*-campaign of the Hindu missionary movement Ārya Samāj. Its founder, the charismatic Dēobandī trained 'ālim Maulānā Muhammad Ilyās Kāndhalawī (1885-1944), developed a six point (*che bātein*) programme,<sup>2</sup> that still serves as the principal guideline for all lay preachers. His nephew Maulānā Muhammad Zakarīyā Kāndhalawī (1898-1982) wrote the handbooks of the movement, commentaries on selected *ahadīth* (1940), collectively published as *Tablīghī Niṣāb* (Urdū: Tablīghī Curriculum, 1955), which since 1985 is also called *Fazā'il-e A'māl* (II Vols.) (Urdū: Virtuous of Good Deeds). Maulānā Muhammad Yūsuf (1917-1965), the son of Maulānā Ilyās, and *amīr* of Tablīghī Jamā'at after his father's death in 1944, wrote the second major publication of the movement, "*Hayāt as-Sahābah*" (III Vols.) (Arabic: The Lives of the *Sahābah*, the founder generation of Islam). After Maulānā Yūsuf's death in 1965, Maulānā In'āmul Hasan led the movement until 1995. Since then the movement has a collective membership (Urdū: *shūrā*) dominated meanwhile by Maulānā Sa'd (b. 1965) and Zubair (b. 1950). Since the late 1960s the movement operates globally, with their European headquarters in Dewsbury (UK, founded in 1978),<sup>3</sup> the North-American headquarters in Chicago<sup>4</sup> and its world headquarters next to the Nizāmuddīn shrine in New Delhi. Members are popularly

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<sup>1</sup> A lot of the material used in this paper is drawn from interviews conducted during fieldwork in Pakistan (November 2006), Spain (November 2007), and India (January-April 2008) for the collaborative research project "Muslims in Europe and Their Societies of Origin in Asia and Africa", funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research under the Grant Programme "Humanities in Dialogue with Society."

For summaries and impressions of the fieldwork, see:

Da'wat-e Islami in Pakistan: [http://www.zmo.de/muslime\\_in\\_europa/ergebnisse/gugler/index\\_en.html](http://www.zmo.de/muslime_in_europa/ergebnisse/gugler/index_en.html)

Da'wat-e Islami in Spain: [http://www.zmo.de/muslime\\_in\\_europa/ergebnisse/gugler/index-spain2.htm](http://www.zmo.de/muslime_in_europa/ergebnisse/gugler/index-spain2.htm)

Da'wat-e Islami in India: <http://picasaweb.google.de/thomas.gugler> .

<sup>2</sup> Shahādah, zalāt, dhikr, ikrām-e Muslim, niyyāt, and nafr.

<sup>3</sup> Other major Tablighi Centres in Europe are: Association Foi et Pratique in Paris founded in 1972 (first jamā'at in 1962), An-Nur Mosque in Brussels 1975, Asociacion Annur Mezquita in Barcelona registered 1992 (founded 1985), and Friedrichsdorf Mosque Association in Germany in 2000.

<sup>4</sup> The annual ijemā' in Chicago 1988 is said to have been the largest Muslim gathering in North-America until then. See: Ahmad, Mumtaz: Islamic Fundamentalisms in South Asia: The Jamaat-i Islami and the Tablighi Jama'at. In: Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Eds.): Fundamentalisms Observed. Chicago: University of Chicago 1991, pp. 457-530.

recognised by the white *shalwār-qamiz*, a fist-long beard, *miswāk*, black leather socks and sometimes prayer-marks on the forehead – the black leather socks (*Děobandī khufein*) being the differentia specifica. Its dynamics of conversion and mobilization rely heavily on Gujarati trader networks.<sup>5</sup>

*Da´wat-e Islāmī: The Barelwī response to the transnational missionary efforts of Deoband?*

In 1981 the “*Amīr-e Ahl-e Sunnat*” (1982) and Memon Maulānā Muhammad Ilyās Qādrī ‘Attār (b. 1950) officially founded the Barelwī version of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at, the Da´wat-e Islāmī ([www.dawateislami.net](http://www.dawateislami.net)), in Karachi. While Da´wat-e Islāmī copies the structure and activities of Tablīghī Jamā‘at, their members differ from them in appearance mainly because of their green turban. The green colour of the turban, indicating their focus on the green dome of the Prophet in Madīna (*Masjid an-Nabawī*), is regarded as their trade mark, the central element in their politics of visibility, and has led to their popular label “*jannat ke tūte*”, parrots of paradise. The six points of action of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at (*che bātein*) are worked out into 72 directives, the Madīna-rewards (*madanī in‘amat*), which serve as guidelines to evaluate the daily performance in the *madanī card*, which has to be forwarded to one’s *negrān* (Urdū: in-charge) once a month. This *madanī card* is also a tool for formalizing the *murīd’s* (disciple) relation to the *murshid* (master), as the monthly points collected according to the 72 rewards indicate the *pīr’s* love for the adherent (*dost* – friend of ‘Attār, *pyārā* – the cherished one of ‘Attār, *mehbūb* – dear to ‘Attār’s heart, or *manzūr-e nazar* – favourite of ‘Attār). ‘Attārī’s handbook of the Sunnas resembles the main book of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at, “*Fazā’il-e A‘māl*”, and is entitled “*Faizān-e Sunnat*” (Urdū: Spiritual Benefits of the Sunnah). Comparable to the Tablīghī Jamā‘at, Da´wat-e Islāmī organises besides the weekly *ijtemā’* a three-day annual congregation in Multan for South Asia and Birmingham for Europe. The highlight of the weekly *ijtemā’* is the *Fiqr-e Madīna*, the visualization of the Judgement Day and honest repentance of sins.



**Liminal spaces between Du‘a and Fiqr-e Madina at the annual *ijtema’* in Multan. Copyright: Thomas K. Gugler**

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Lewis, Philip: *Islamic Britain: Religion, Politics, and Identity among British Muslims*. London: I. B. Tauris 1994, pp. 90-94. See also the paper by Hansen, Thomas Blom: “We are Arabs from Gujarat” the purification of Muslim identity in contemporary South Africa. Seminar 2003/2, RAU Sociology.

The movement operates globally from its world headquarters *Faizān-e Madīna* in Karachi and all followers are requested to take *bay'a*, oath of allegiance, to Ilyās Qādrī 'Attār. The North-American headquarters is in Chicago,<sup>6</sup> the European headquarters is the *Faizān-e Madīna* in Accrington, UK. Other centres of the same name can be found in Bradford, Birmingham, Barcelona, Valencia and Malaga. Members of the Da'wat-e Islāmī imitate the symbols of piety introduced by the Tablīghīs into the religious market,<sup>7</sup> especially the prayer-marks on the fore-head. They also stress the length of the beard and the uniform dress code, which is a white *shalwār-qamiz*, with *miswāk* and a green beard-comb in its pocket, a green turban (*'imāma-sharīf*), and a brown *madanī cādar*. The Da'wat-e Islāmī has an edge over the Tablīghī Jamā'at as it since 1990 runs its own chain of Madrasas, *Madrassa-tul-Madīna*, with more than 1,000 Madrasas in Pakistan alone.<sup>8</sup>



**Madrassa-tul-Madīna in Mumbai, March 2008, copyright: Thomas K. Gugler**

### *Indian exceptionalism: Sunnī Da'wat-e Islāmī kā maqbūl-e 'ilm-e Tablīghī Nisāb*

In 1992, allegedly after a dispute with the Pakistani Organization Committee on issues connected to the first annual Da'wat-e Islāmī *ijtemā'* in India in 1991, the *negrān* (Urdū: caretaker) of the Indian branch of Da'wat-e Islāmī, Maulānā Muhammad Shākīr 'Alī Nūrī, also a Memon, split off to form the independent movement Sunnī Da'wat-e Islāmī ([www.sunnidawateislami.net](http://www.sunnidawateislami.net)), which has its world headquarters in Mumbai in the *Ismā'īl Habīb Masjid* at Muhammad Ali Rd., where Da'wat-e Islāmī's first weekly *ijtemā'*s in India were held from 1988 onwards. As in *Sunnī Youth Federation* or in *Sunnī Tahrīk*,<sup>9</sup> another offspring of the Da'wat-e Islāmī, *Sunnī* here marks the claim to be connected to the *Ahl-e Sunnat wa'l Jamā'at* (Barelwī) school of thought. Followers of the Sunnī Da'wat-e Islāmī differ from followers of the Da'wat-e Islāmī in appearance because of their white turban. As several Indian Barelwī *'ulamā'* suspected Ilyās 'Attār to be a secret agent of the Tablīghī Jamā'at, they hesitated to support him when *Madanī work* began in Mumbai in 1988, propagating that several Da'wat-e Islāmī activities – for example keeping Muslims after prayer at the mosque to listen to *dars*, separate families by sending the men around on travel-

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.faizanemadina.us> .

<sup>7</sup> For the transformation processes through the market situation see: Finke, Roger and Rodney Stark: *The Churched of America, 1776-2005. Winners and Losers in Our Religious Economy*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University 2005.

<sup>8</sup> <http://madrassa.faizaneattar.net> . For a discussion see: International Crisis Group: *Pakistan: Karachi's Madrasas and violent Extremism*. Brussels: Asia Report N° 190 – 29 March 2007.

<sup>9</sup> <http://Sunnitehreek.com.pk> .

tours etc. - <sup>10</sup> would not be Barelwī, but Dēobandī *bidat*, innovation.<sup>11</sup> SDI's *darsī kitāb* is a commentary on selected *ahadīth*, too. Resembling Ilyās 'Attārs "Faizān-e Sunnat" it was first called "Faizān-e Sharī'at"<sup>12</sup> (Urdū: Spiritual Benefit of the *Sharī'ah*, 1999 written by Maulānā Muhammad Ibrāhīm Āshī) with the subtitle explaining it to be the Barelwī *Tablīghī Nisāb*, but meanwhile officially renamed "Barakāt-e Sharī'at" (Urdū: Blessings of the *Sharī'at*) and rewritten by Maulānā Shākīr 'Alī Nūrī. *Barakāt-e Sharī'at* was published in three parts, each part at the annual *ijtemā'* in 2005, 2006, and 2007. The annual *ijtemā'*, which takes place since 1991 at the *Vādi-e Nūr Azad Maidān* in Mumbai, differs from the annual *ijtemā's* of the other two movements, as the first day of the three-day-meeting, Fridays, is reserved for the sisters. The highlight of the weekly *ijtemā'* is the *Zikr-e Madīna*, the call to the Beloved Prophet to save one from the tortures of hells and honest repenting of sins. Besides the weekly and annual *ijtemā'* on Saturday nights in their headquarters, the *Ismā'īl Habīb Masjid* in Mumbai, the movement has an (weekly and) annual *ijtemā'* in May in its European headquarters, *Noor Hall*, in Preston, UK. Sunnī Da'wat-e Islāmī organizes regular Youth Camps in Manchester at the *North Manchester Jāmia* Mosque. Other centres are in Blackburn (*Razā Masjid*), Bolton (*Madīna Masjid*), and Leicester (*Usmānī Masjid*). The movement is currently setting up a *da'wah*-oriented *Youth Education Centre* in Bolton. The headquarters for North-America is in Chicago. SDI founded twelve *madaris* in India so far. The funding is partly organized through the *Ibad-ur-Rehman Trust* (Manchester) and via the platform World Memon Organization.<sup>13</sup>

*khurūj fī sabil illah: „It is time to leave our families (...) for the sake of Islam“<sup>14</sup>*

These three movements operate similarly: Employing peer pressure and rewarding conformity, the Sunnah-mongers impose a strict dress code on their followers and are organised in extremely mobile small units of lay preachers (*jamā'at*, *madanī qafila*, *qafila*), who invite for weekly (*shab-e jum'a*) and annual *ijtemā's*, congregations. Imitating the *hijra* towards Madīna, highly religious young men travel on missionary *gasht* (walks) and *khurūj* (journeys) (*chillā* for forty days, a *grand chillā* is four months) to mosques, where they eat and sleep during their preaching tours, and invite the local neighbourhood to join them in prayer (*naikī kī da'wat* – invitation towards good), after which they give *dars*, reading a chapter of their respective Sunnah-catechism (*darsī kitāb*), which codifies the movement's corporate identity. They then urge people to register for missionary journeys (*tashkīl*). After returning from the missionary tour the swarm's leader (Urdū: *amīr*, *negrān*) is expected to give a report (*karguzārī*, *madanī report*) on the local conditions and the results of their missionary activities. As cultural conflicts have become intra-civilizational in response to Western modernity,<sup>15</sup> the activities of both groups aim at the "inner mission", bringing Muslims back to the "real" Islam and saving them from Western lifestyles in respect of dress, eating, and drinking habits.

<sup>10</sup> Other points of criticism were that, Ilyās 'Attar used the title "Amīr-e Ahl-e Sunnat" and claimed that it is obligatory for Muslims to wear the green turban.

<sup>11</sup> Usually Deobandis claim that Barelwis introduced plenty of *bidat*. Cf. Qasmi, Matloob Ahmad: What is Sunnat & What is Bidat. New Delhi: Adam Publishers 2008.

<sup>12</sup> New Delhi: Farid Book Depot 1999 (a second edition 2006). This book is a meanwhile officially denied link to the Faizān-e Sunnat, which Shākīr 'Alī Nūrī does not cite – while *Barakāt-e Sharī'at* is cited by Ilyās 'Attar. The subtitle reads: "Sunnī Da'wat-e Islāmī kā maqbūl-e 'ilm-e Tablīghī Nisāb."

<sup>13</sup> For the WMO see its official homepage: <http://www.worldmemon.org>.

<sup>14</sup> SMS from Kafīl Ahmad to his brother Sabil Ahmad, Glasgow, June 2007. Both were heavily involved in *Tablīghī* activities.

<sup>15</sup> For some reflections on Islam's interaction with modernity see: Almond, Ian: The New Orientalists. Postmodern Representation of Islam from Foucault to Baudrillard. London: I. B. Tauris 2007.



Advertising Qafilas in the Faizan-e Madina Bradford. The madrassah pult below is used to register the names. Copyright: Thomas K. Gugler

Personalizing Sunnas: “ISLAM means I Submit to the Law of Allah and Muhammad”

The three movements stress piety of action as well as the strict and literal imitation of the life of the Prophet (*sunnat an-nabī*) in all aspects of the daily routine. As missionary, *dā’ī*, the lay preacher has to act like a perfect, ideal Muslim, a Super-Muslim, so to speak. Selling Sunnas as salvation goods,<sup>16</sup> the lay preachers are at the same time promoters and consumers of the commodities they promote. The commodity they are prompted to put on the market, promote and sell are themselves. As the three missionary movements compete for impact, politics of visibility is of the essence for them. The test they need to pass in order to be admitted to the social prizes they covet demands them to recast themselves as commodities, as products capable of catching the attention and attracting demand and customers (Baumann 2007: 6). With the interpretation of Sunnah as a normative system of life-styles (Weber / Troeltsch) the Missionary Movements transform the consumer into a commodity. They mark their lay preachers with easy recognizable symbols and marks of belonging, which exemplify modern processes of transformation in systems of religious practice (Graf 2003) with the means of *Identity Formation* (Eisen 1998). This process I want to call *Sunnazation*.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> Cf.: Moore, Robert Laurence: *Selling God. American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press 1994. Cf. also: Shields, Rob (Ed.): *Lifestyle Shopping. The Subject of Consumption*. London: Routledge 1992.

<sup>17</sup> Not to be confused with the concept of *Sunnification* as defined by Burton Benedict in his work *Mauritius – The Problems of a Plural Society* (London: Pall Mall Press 1965), p. 39: “Sunnification means the abandonment of local and sectarian practices in favour of a uniform orthodox practice.”



Haftawa Ijtemā` by Da`wat-e Islāmī in Bengaluru, in March 2008, copyright: Thomas K. Gugler

### Rediscovering Roots: From Radicalization to Spirituality

The “Islamic Project”, the virtual direct of change in society, of these three movements is the “Sunnaization”, that is the re-shaping and re-construction of the daily routine and the individual markers of identity based on the examples of the Prophet and the *Salaf*, the pious ancestors, as portrayed in the *Hadīth*-Literature. This so-called “non-political” Sunnaization can be understood as the privatization or individualization of political re-Islamization.<sup>18</sup> It focuses the private sphere instead of the state and argues with *ahadīth* rather than the Qur`ān. Each of the three movements produced its specific commentary on selected hadith *Fazā`il-e A`māl*, *Faizān-e Sunnat* or *Barakāt-e Sharī`at*, focussing on the Sunna of the Prophet, *sunnat an-nabī*. The Barelwī lay preachers have yet no publication on the Sunna of the Salaf, *sunnat as-salaf*, which would be comparable to the *Hayāt as-Sahābah*. This different focus of *Sunnah*-values, either more *sunnat an-nabī* or more *sunnat as-salaf*, seems to become central, if one looks at the emotional outcome of the Sunnaization processes: when Tablīghīs develop through *Salafī*-focused Sunnaization their specific sense of disgust with the world and symbols of the super-Muslim serve as a signifier that one is about to qualify for paradise and one has put one foot already out of the mundane “prison”, comparable processes of Sunnaization inside Da`wat-e Islāmī seem to serve to develop a strong emotion of love for the Prophet and the symbols of the super-Muslim re-inforce and express the feeling that one’s love for the Prophet exceeds any other emotion one may also have.

Contentwise these Sunnah-catechisms teach an analytically comparable very specific Islamic etiquette in drinking, eating, walking, greeting, sleeping, brushing teeth, combing the beard, etc. “Sunnaization” is a process to encourage people to establish the “Sunnas of the Prophet”, which means that every individual establishes deep, unambiguous and public visible ties to the Prophet in his personal daily worlds of living. It also means to regulate one’s behaviour by

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Roy, Olivier: *Globalised Islam. The Search for a New Ummah*. New Delhi: Rupa 2005.  
Cf. Roy, Olivier: *Secularism Confronts Islam*. New York Chichester: Columbia University 2007.

either substituting norms of behaviour (for example cutting instead of shaving a beard) or integrating additional essentializing parts into an otherwise unchanged behaviour, for example doing *zikr* (active remembrance of God by a specific *mantra*) while taking the step to board a bus with the right foot first.

This re-essentialized Sunnah becomes a normative system of life-styles, apparently emanating the power of transsubstantiation to convert a competition-ridden society of egomaniac consumerists into a supportive community of loving brothers and sister following either Muhammad or his companions.

*“I have never seen such long beards and such dark spots on the foreheads”*<sup>19</sup>

The focus however, is the stage-managing of the lay preachers’ imitation of the Prophet in the public sphere (cf. Jonker 2006), their symbols of piety, claiming capital of authenticity (cf. van der Veer 2006) to fuel the dynamics of conversions. Equipped with the symbols of the Super-Muslim, “all the paraphernalia to win over the hearts of the people”,<sup>20</sup> the lay-preacher has to serve as a role-model for the “religious” Muslim. Neatly dressed-up followers and a demonstrative culture of cleanliness and discipline are central elements of re-essentialized religious symbol systems. As agents of “hard religion” the lay-preachers of Da’wat-e Islāmī compete with Tablīghīs in an aggressive rat-race for supplying salvation goods and services. As the lay preachers also compete with modern and secular recreational activities the modernization of religious rituals include active marketing measures like the staging of religious mass-events (annual *ijtemā’*s) with regional TV and sport-stars.



**Faisal Iqbal and Imran Farhat two cricket players from the National Team at the annual *ijtemā’* of Da’wat-e Islāmī in Multan, copyright: Thomas K. Gugler**

The lay preachers support the in by capitalism transformed modern societies visible trend towards consumer-autonomy and individualization of religious participation and created programmes for expressive individualism and religious event culture – religion as an experience-factory. The customer-oriented approach allows the Sunnah-companies not just to

<sup>19</sup> Arshad ul-Qadri describing the Tablighi Jama’at in: *Tableeghi Jamaat*. Mumbai: Sunni Youth Federation 2000, p. 17.

<sup>20</sup> Arshad ul-Qadri describing the Tablighi Jama’at in: *Tableeghi Jamaat*. Mumbai: Sunni Youth Federation 2000, p. 14.

propagate more salvation-certitude, but also to generate more need for salvation. Because of the *bay'a* the Da'wat-e Islāmī has again an edge over the Tablighīs if it comes to securing customer loyalty. As a youth-movement especially the Da'wat-e Islāmī systematically focuses on new consumer groups, who tend to be secondarily in traditional Islamic religious fields, which are usually dominated by male elders. The *imitatio Muhammadi* is not just a means to generate *sawab*, but also social capitals like trust- and authenticity-capitals. The Islamic dress code serves in the here and now as a *freedom-ticket* with which young Muslims can autonomously generate social capital, which allow them to re-shape the Islamic religious field in their immediate environment. One can also talk about the Missionary Movements of health & wealth religions, which not just propagate an inexpensive and healthy lifestyle without intoxication and promiscuity, but also integrate their followers in permanent-expanding trader-networks, thereby creating long-term social-structural processes of middle class formation.

*mujhe āpnī aur zarī dunya ke logon kī islāh kī koshish karnī hai (slogan of Da'wat-e Islāmī)*

Though the Da'wat-e Islāmī was officially founded by Ilyās Attār himself, the idea, that the Tablighī Jamā'at has to be confronted and fight against with its own weapons, came from the charismatic *munazir* (debater) Allama Arshād ul-Qādrī (1925 –2002). He wrote the extreme widely spread books *Tablighī Jamā'at* (1987 – which is read as a prime reference between Indonesia and the Gambiah), *Tablighī Jamā'at āhādīs kī rośnī me* (Urdū: TJ in the light of hadīth), *Zalzala* (Urdū: Convulsion, 1998), *Zer-o-Zabar* (Urdū: Complete Destruction (of Dēoband), written during his third imprisonment 1979), and *Da'wat-e Insāf* (Urdū: Call for Justice, 1992). After studying the Tablighī dynamics of mobilization, Arshād ul-Qādrī stressed the need to set up a rival Barelwī organization. The first attempt was the World Islamic Mission ([www.wimnet.org](http://www.wimnet.org)),<sup>21</sup> *Al-Da'wat-ul-Islamiyyat-ul-A'lamiyah*, which Arshād ul-Qādrī and the Karachi-based Shāh Ahmad Nūrānī (1926 - 2003) launched in Mecca in 1972. The WIM has its head-office in Bradford (<http://www.wimuk.com>), in a building of a church which was renamed “Jamia Masjid Tabligh ul-Islam”.



„Tabligh ul-Islam“ Masjid in Bradford, copyright: Thomas K. Gugler

<sup>21</sup> See also: <http://www.wimmauritus.org> .



The WIM was the first Barelwī organization, which systematically funded missionary travels on the global stage, setting up several educational institutions as well, among them the Islamic Missionary College in Bradford.<sup>22</sup> The WIM founded the first Barelwī Madrasah in Bradford in 1974.

The WIM, however, faced serious difficulties in keeping up the incoming flow of money and in this respect the organization can be called a failure – which Arshād tried to correct.



World Islamic Mission in Bradford, copyright: Thomas K. Gugler

Arshād ul-Qādrī and the Karachi-based Shāh Ahmad Nūrānī, since 1973 head of the *Jam'iyat-e 'Ulamā'-ye Pakistān* (JUP), were the most prominent of the “founding figures” and early supporters of Da'wat-e Islāmī. Along with other Pakistani Barelwī 'ulemā' they installed Ilyās Qādrī, who was the then Punjab president of *Anjuman Tulaba-ye Islām*, JUP's youth wing,<sup>23</sup> as its *amīr* at *Dār-ul 'ulūm* Amjadia as they sought i) someone who could mobilize the youngsters and ii) a Memon as the organization's *amīr*, who with his connections to the business community could systematically break up the Gujarati trader networks on which Tablīghī Jamā'at economy and their mobilization of conversion and mobilization rely.<sup>24</sup> It is noteworthy, that the World Islamic Mission,<sup>25</sup> whose president then was Arshād ul-Qādrī, did operate from Bradford, where Da'wat-e Islāmī set up its first European Headquarters.

### Spaces of Dialogues: Barelwīyat kā agent kaun?

The early history of the Pakistani movement Da'wat-e Islāmī entering the increasingly pluralistic religious market in India is quite revealing in several aspects. The first *madanī qafilā* from Karachi to Mumbai was organized in 1986. The *muballighs* set up the first *markaz*, the *Ismā'īl Habīb Masjid* in Mumbai in 1988. Their *tablīgh* activities, starting with waking up the Muslims from the neighbourhood to invite them to recite *salāt-e fajr* in *jamā'at*

<sup>22</sup> For example: Jam'ia Madina-tul-Islam in Den Hague, Dar-ul-'uloom Alimia in the USA,

<sup>23</sup> Established by Former Federal Minister Mohammad Hanif Tayyab. Its centre is Islamiya University in Bahawalpur. Its biggest fraction supports Maulana Shah Ahmad Noorani.

<sup>24</sup> Interview with the grandson of Arshad al-Qādrī, Khushtar Nūrānī in New Delhi in March 2008.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.wimnet.org> . Cf. also: <http://www.wimmauritus.org> ,

were copied from the *Tablighī Jamāʿat* in order to make sure that the *Tablighīs* don't win more ground, but made the local *Barelwī ʿulamāʿ* suspicious, who saw the *muballighs* of *Daʿwat-e Islāmī* as agents of a threatening force of *Dēobandization* from within.

In July 1991 Ilyās ʿAttār, accompanied by a group of seventy *muballighs*, came to India in order to settle down the conflict with the local *Ahl-e Sunnat ʿulamāʿ*. On this occasion the Mumbai *Barelwī ʿulamāʿ* hired the hit man and top-terrorist Salīm Talwār to get rid of the perceived agent of *Dēobandization* of the *Ahl-e Sunnat* movement. When Ilyās ʿAttār came out of the house of Maulānā Zahīr ud-Dīn, whom he tried to convince to support his movement, Salīm Talwār confronted him on Muhammad Ali Rd, putting his gun on Ilyās ʿAttār's head, requesting him only to leave India, after Ilyās ʿAttār is reported to have said with a softening smile: “*ham sirf madanī kām karte hain.*” However, Salīm Talwār shot two of his disciples on the spot to make sure his request is understood and followed.<sup>26</sup>

Following this incident Ilyās ʿAttār left India and he did not come to the first annual *ijtemāʿ* of *Daʿwat-e Islāmī* in December 1991, but tried to cancel this first annual congregation and settle down the conflict with the Indian-*Barelwī ʿulamāʿ* first. The *ijtemāʿ* however was organized by zealous Indian activists under the *negrān* Muhammad Shākīr ʿAlī Nūrī, who took the standpoint that the *Tablighī Jamāʿat* had to be confronted irrespective the support of the *ʿulamāʿ*. After the *ijtemāʿ* the Pakistani Organization Committee of *Daʿwat-e Islāmī* refused to reimburse him for his costs and Muhammad Shākīr ʿAlī Nūrī broke away to form the independent movement *Sunnī Daʿwat-e Islāmī*. Muhammad Shākīr ʿAlī Nūrī has since then not spoken a word with Ilyās ʿAttār.<sup>27</sup>

“I take every *Sunnī* like a crown on my head.” (Ilyās Attār on *Sunnī Daʿwat-e Islāmī*)

In *Dēoband Daʿwat-e Islāmī* is seen as another attempt of *Barelwīs* to copy the success of *Dēoband*: “they try to imitate anything we do without understanding it, which is why they always fail. One cannot imitate something one doesn't understand.”<sup>28</sup>



**Qadiriya-Sufi-Tombs at the *Tablighī Markaz* in Bengaluru: Sultan Shah Masjid. Copyright: Thomas K. Gugler**

<sup>26</sup> Interview at the *Chishti-Hindustan Masjid* in Mumbai-Byculla in February 2008.

<sup>27</sup> Interview with Shākīr ʿAlī Nūrī in Mumbai, 23th February 2008.

<sup>28</sup> Interview with the first Vice-Chancellor of *Dar-ul-ʿulum Deoband*, Prof. ʿAbd-ul Khaliq Madrassi in April 2008 in *Deoband*.

Though the relation between Da'wat-e Islāmī and Tablīghī Jamā'at is one of an intense enmity, both portraying each other as Non-Muslims, reality fortunately offers enough space for a tolerance of ambiguity at many places. When I went to the Tablīghī *markaz* in Bangalore-*Shivajinagar* the madrassah boys showed me around and in the basement I saw the green turban of a Da'wat-e Islāmī follower, sitting in the first row, listening to *dars*. The Bangalore *markaz* is a special case as its hosts also the tombs of two *Qādirīya-Sūfīs*, Sultān Shāh Qādrī and Multān Shāh Qādrī. The *amīr* was apologizing for those as they did not manage to get the license to destroy the earlier tombs at this site. In this case it is allowed for Barelwīs to visit the Tablīghī mosque to do *du'ā* at the tombs and listen to *dars*. It is however not allowed to read *namāz* together with Tablīghīs as reciting *namāz* behind a Dēobandī turns anyone into a Non-Muslim and one's marriage becomes null and void, according to *Ahl-e Sunnat fatawa*. It is however allowed to pray after the prayer-times, alone, in the Tablīghī mosque.

### Religion is All Around<sup>29</sup>

Modern societies are by definition becoming increasingly diverse and religiously pluralistic. Capitalist transformation of traditional communities and the global circulation of ideas by new media and the information technology have led to a situation in which people have had to find new modes of coexistence. As modernity comes with growing pressure to draw boundaries and formulate identities, globalization also brings a new ambiguity into Islamic interpretations, enabling them to integrate different Islamic identities (Graf 2007).

Religious symbol systems are marked by highly conflicting semiotic complexities. Religious interpretation cultures constitute themselves only through processes of permanently updated actualization of passed down myths. *Hadīth* are selected, read and commented in different ways. Cultural interpretation systems will snatch away of any reified finalization, already because the agents in the world of religious sign systems are as a rule fictional (Gugler 2008a). Fictional agents of actions however, refer to agents in reality never in an unambiguous way, but only in a mode of arbitrary selection decision marked by an abundance of options (Graf 2006).

This paper uses in most parts the terminology of Religious Economics, not in the intention to reduce religious people to consumerists, but because due to the market situation in pluralistic societies the Missionary Movements of the Dēoband and the Barelwī-school are forced to put the very same products and services on the religious market, though at the same time their emotional worlds of religious sentiment are completely different, just having in common that people receive enormous social and emotional support during missionary travels.

The Barelwī-Semantics of Sunnas appear at times strange as they unlike the Sunnah-Semantics of Tablīghī Jamā'at, merge into the Sūfī-Semantics of self-annihilation, self-annihilation either in the *murshid* Ilyās Attār or the Beloved Prophet Muhammad Mustafā. Maybe one should quickly translate those semantics of self-annihilation in terms of an Indian religions inherent "Oceanic Feeling" (Masson 1980, Gugler 2008b) or "Ewigkeitsgefühl" [feeling of eternity] (Freud), i. e. waves of an feeling of sadness and disgust with the world mixing with the awareness of transience (naturally including world destruction fantasies usually in the form of an obsession with the Day of Judgement) and a specific nostalgia - feelings of a deep depersonalization mixing with cosmic narcissism (Kohut) – before obsessive paranoid experts of Islam-analysis start unfolding their analytical expertise.

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<sup>29</sup> „Religion ist überall.“ Rössler, Dietrich: Die Vernunft der Religion. München: Piper 1976, p. 7.

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