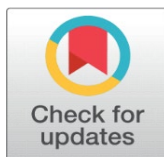
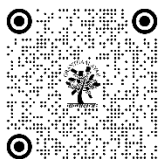


THE EMERGENCE AND SPREAD OF TABLIGHI JAMA'AT IN KASHMIR

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ABSTRACT

The establishment, mission and the role of Tablighi Jama'at, a well-known missionary global organisation, has been studied at length at different levels of scholarship. However, the establishment and growth of the Tablighi Jama'at at regional level has not been worked upon in most of the cases. The present article, as such, will be a novel attempt in tracing the establishment of Tablighi Jama'at in the Valley of Kashmir.

Keywords: Islam in Kashmir, Reform movements in Kashmir, Tablighi Jama'at, Tablighi Jama'at in Kashmir

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1. INTRODUCTION

Tablighi Jama'at, an international religious organization, was established in India in 1926 A.D. by Muhammad Ilyas al-Kandhlawi (Rahmat Allah 'alaihi, RA). Working at the grassroots level, the movement seeks to draw Muslims from all social and economic backgrounds closer to Islam with the primary goal of spiritual reformation. The movement started off modestly in Uttar Pradesh's Mewat district and has since expanded to almost every continent. The most influential region of Tablighi Jama'at has always been India, where it was founded. The Jama'at has presence in nearly every part of India. The most Muslim populated region of India, Kashmir, has long been a focal point for Islamic reformation movements, and Tablighi Jama'at being no exception. The study of Tablighi Jama'at's formation and growth in Kashmir, particularly between 1947 and the 1990s, offers an interesting insight of how the movement accommodated in various sociopolitical situations. Given the resources at hand, the current article attempts to chart the historical development of this reformist-revivalist movement in Kashmir.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Books and articles have been published on the various aspects of emergence of Tablighi Jama'at in Kashmir. Syed 'Abul Hassan 'Ali Nadwi (RA) (2014) has written a comprehensive, most authentic book and is among the primary sources

on Tablighi Jama'at in India. He highlights the historical aspect of the movement and its founder. Muhammad Khalid Khan (2000) brings together observations and studies by several social scientists about the Tablighi Jama'at as a transnational movement. The book is a useful account of how Tablighi movement developed and spread to different parts of the world, with an examination of the variety of political as well as cultural challenges faced by the movement, though the country to country analysis of the Jama'at is incomplete. Based on his Ph. D. accomplished at the University of London, Yoginder Sikand (2002) a widely travelled author in India, Bangladesh and Britain for interviewing the Tablighi activists covers the inner struggle in the Jama'at, the challenges of modernity, its consolidation in the Indian sub-continent and the challenges that it faces in UK from groups like Hizb-ut-Tahrir. Hafiz Muhammad Ahmad (2001) along with the importance of Da'wah in Ummah, also refers to the Da'wah work of the life of *Hadrat Muhammad (SAW)*, Sahabah, Taba'in etc. The author also discusses the different Karguzari (reports of Tablighis after returning from different places) of Tablighi activists. M. Anwar al-Haq's (1972) book discusses the Indian Sufi background to the movement and compares its lexical and operational techniques with other Sufis.

Ghulam Nabi Wani's (1972) article provides a useful account of Jama'at's Da'wah efforts in Kashmir especially in establishing Islamic institutes, the role of women and youth. Wani's writing has special significance as it serves as a primary source of the article-he being the one among the founding members of the Jama'at in Kashmir. As such there is no work that deals in any detail with the foundation and role of Tablighi Jama'at in Kashmir. Hence the present article will be a pioneering effort towards the study of the historical background and emergence of Tablighi Jama'at in Kashmir. To put the emergence of Tablighi Jama'at in perspective it is relevant to begin with a brief history of the spread of Islam in Kashmir.

3. ISLAM IN KASHMIR

The history of Islam's expansion in Kashmir is distinct from that of other Muslim areas. Islam entered Kashmir gradually through conversions, made possible by the entrance of foreign travelers from both South and Central Asia. "It is difficult to say", says Arnold, "when this Islamizing influence first made itself felt in the country", "yet the earliest sources, although scattered, clearly indicate that the process of Islamization of Kashmir must have begun through those Muslims who had settled here long before the establishment of the first Muslim Sultanate and the process of settlement had started as early as eighth century." Although contacts were established earlier, but it is an established fact that the real credit of Islamization of Kashmir goes to Sufis and Rishis. According to T. W. Arnold: "but all the evidence leads us to attribute it (the Islamization of Kashmir) on the whole to a long continued missionary movement inaugurated and carried out mainly by *Faqirs* and *Dervishes*". (T.W. Arnold, 1995, 292)

Islam is essentially a missionary religion and with this spirit arrived Sayyid Sharaf-ud-Din, popularly known as Bulbul Shah (RA), from Turkistan during the rule of Suhadeva (1301-1320 A.D.). He was responsible for a number of conversions. Rinchena (1320-23 A.D.), who became the first Muslim king of Kashmir, actually owed his conversion to Sharaf-ud-Din. At this point in time, Islam had already made its way to the northern peripheries of Kashmir, such as Swat, Kunwar, Pakhli, Buner and Hazara. This paved the way for the spread of Islam in Kashmir. Also, according to A. Q. Rafiqi, "Zulju's invasion proved a turning point in the history of Kashmir and contributed towards the establishment of Muslim rule there; for Rinchena rose to power in its aftermath." (A. Q. Rafiqi, 2003, 8)

Different people have attributed different motives to Rinchena for adopting Islam, the details of which are beyond the scope of the present article. Suffice is to say that Rinchena embraced Islam at the hands of Bulbul Shah and assumed the title of Sultan Sadr-ud-Din, and claims our attention as the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir. After Rinchena, his brother-in-law and commander-in-chief and several others embraced the faith of Bulbul Shah, for whom a place of residence was built on the bank of the *Vitasta*, known as *Bulbul Lankar* and also the first mosque in Kashmir. Bulbul Shah died in 727 A.H. corresponding to 1327 A.D.

However, the saint who exercised the greater influence on the society of Kashmir, says W. Lawrence in his famous work *The Valley of Kashmir*, was Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani (Rahmat Allah 'alaih), who visited the Valley in the time of Sultan Qutb-ud-Din (1373-89 AD) and established Islam in the whole Valley. He is popularly known as Amir-e-Kabir, Shah-e-Hamdani and Ali *Thani*. The Mosque, Khanqah-e-Mu'alla built in his memory in Srinagar, is one of the most sacred places in Kashmir and is a worthy memorial of the man who in his times exerted enormous influence upon the Valley. Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani (Rahmat Allah 'alaih) visited Kashmir thrice accompanied by seven hundred noble men, mostly *Sadat* preaching Islam in Kashmir and Ladakh. While asserting the role of Sayyid Ali Hamdani (*Rahmat Allah 'alaih*), M. A. Wani

writes: "The process of Islamization of Kashmir that had already begun was given such an impetus by this Sayyid that he and the 'Islamization of Kashmir' became almost inseparable and the latter cannot be dealt with or even touched upon without analyzing the role of the former." (M. A. Wani, 2004, 38)

The mission of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani (RA) in Kashmir reached its culmination with his illustrious son, Mir Sayyid Muhammad Hamdani (RA) 1372-1450 A.D., who arrived in Kashmir in 1393 A.D., at an age of twenty-two. On his arrival, accompanied as he was by three hundred *Sadat*, Mir Muhammad was warmly received by Sultan Sikandar (1398-1413 A.D.) and his administration, with Suhabhatta as the prominent figure. He took the charge of Dā'wah work and preached Islam continuously for 22 years in the Valley of Kashmir. Sikander along with Mir Muhammad Hamdani was instrumental in the application of *Shari'ah* in Kashmir. (G. M. D. Sofi, 2007, 44)

The conversion of the people of Kashmir to Islam was furthered by the arrival of other *Sadat*, prominent among them being: (1) Sayyid Jalal-ud-Din of Bukhara, known as Makhdum Jahanian Jahangir, the disciple of Shaikh Rukn-ud-Din Alam (RA), who arrived in 1348 A.D and left Kashmir after a short stay. (2) Sayyid Taj-ud-Din, a cousin of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani (RA), arrived in 1359 A.D. in the reign of Sultan Shihab-ud-Din. He was accompanied by Sayyid Masud and Sayyid Yusuf (RA), his disciples, and is buried near his tomb in Mahala Shihabuddin-pura. (3) Sayyid Husain Simnani, the youngest brother of Syed Taj-ud-Din, a disciple of Sheikh Rukn-ud-Din Alam, arrived in 1372 A.D.

Though the *Sadat*/Sufis played a significant part, the role played by local *Rishis* in the spread of Islam in Kashmir has been no less significant. Saints and *Rishis* like Shaikh Nur-ud-Din, *Baba Pam Rishi*, *Baba Bam-ud-Din*, Shaikh Hamza Makhdum, Syed Ahmad Kirmani, Syed Muhammad Hisari, and *Baba Zain-ud-Din* (RA) by their example and precept streamlined the path of Islam in its slow, steady and systematic conversion of practically the whole Valley. Among these, Shaykh Nur-ud-Din (RA) (1378-1435), the founder of the Rishi Movement in Kashmir is the great national saint of Kashmir. The simplicity and the purity of Shaykh Nur-ud-Din's life has deeply influenced the Kashmiris who entertain the highest veneration for the saint. Anecdotes of his life are part of the daily chorus of the people throughout the Valley.

Shaikh Hamzah Makhdum (RA) 1494-1576, popularly known as *Sultān-al-Ārifin* and *Mahbub al-Ālam*, also ranks among the celebrated saints of Kashmir who contributed a great deal towards Islamization of Kashmir. He revitalized the Suhrawardi order in Kashmir and worked as an active missionary and a champion of puritan Islam. An important contribution of Shaikh Hamzah Makhdum (RA) and his disciples was the enrollment of the *Rishis* in the Suhrawardi order that had a profound bearing on the subsequent history of Islam in Kashmir. Of the most reputed saints of the Suhrawardi-Rishi syncretic phase to have done a good deal of work towards conversions during the late sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century was Baba Nasib al-Din Gazi (RA), the distinguished disciple of Baba Dawud Khaki (RA). While living an extremely austere life, he worked as an active missionary. He toured different parts of Valley, the main purpose being conversions to Islam, for creating the Islamic awareness among the people, who in spite of being Muslims, carried out un-Islamic practices. (M. A. Wani, 2004, 72)

The conversions continued towards the close of the fifteenth century with the arrival of Mir Shams-ud-Din Iraqi (RA) (in 1496 A.D.) who was a Shi'a Muslim. With the aid of his disciples, Mir Shams-ud-Din (RA) won over a large number of converts. The Shi'a doctrine, however, did not gain much hold on the Valley. Mir Shams-ud-Din Iraqi (RA) was buried at Zadibal and his tomb is held in great veneration by the Shi'a Muslims of Kashmir. (G. M. D. Sofi, 2007, 56)

Under the Mughals, Islamic influence strengthened further and many men of learning came into the Valley. In the reign of Aurangzeb, Raja Jaya Singh, the Rajput Raja of Kishtwar, is said to have converted to Islam by the miracles of Sayyid Shah Farid-ud-Din Qadiri (Rahmat Allah 'alaihi) of Baghdad, and his conversion seems to have been followed by that of the majority of his subjects. The journey of Mughal Emperors to Kashmir also appears to have effected conversions along the route, as Rajas continued to adopt Islam. (Ibid. 58)

Such has been, in brief, the history of the propagation of Islam in the Valley of Kashmir. On the whole the spread of Islam has been generally peaceful. At any rate, Islam was never introduced into the Valley by conquerors like Mahmud or a warrior like Shihab-ud-Din nor a general like Muhammad bin Qasim. In fact, the process was reversed. Islam was introduced by a simple *faqir* (Bulbul Shah) whose simplicity and piety impressed the reigning sovereign of the time (Rinchena Shah). The work was taken up and continued by *faqirs*, thus its widespread peaceful penetration was due to the piety, purity and simplicity of the *Rishis* and saints who denied pleasures to themselves and served others. Thus the great Prophet *Hadrat Muhammad (SAW)* who took pride in *Faqr*, found *Fuqara (faqirs)* to propagate his faith in the Valley of Kashmir.

4. PROMINENT MUSLIM REFORM MOVEMENTS IN KASHMIR

The wave of change and reform had been sweeping over most parts of the sub-continent for quite some time before it reached Jammu & Kashmir. Here it is very relevant to note that one factor that stood between the state and the reform was the peculiar geographical position of Kashmir. However, the establishment of the Dogra rule (1846-1947) brought Kashmir close to Jammu and subsequently to Punjab. All such developments brought Kashmir close to the other parts of country. The net result was that the Kashmiri society got influenced by the socio-religious reform movements like Ahl-i-Hadith, Aligarh and Deoband. Social conditions in Kashmir, too, called for a change and by the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries the urge for change became irresistible. Since the beginning of the 20th century there was a phenomenal rise in the number of reform movements which aimed at socio-religious transformation of the Kashmiri society.

5. ANJUMAN NUSRATUL ISLAM

Among the earliest reform movements in Kashmir was Anjuman Nusratul Islam, a socio-religious and educational reform organization of Kashmir, instituted by Mirwaiz of Kashmir Moulana Rasool Shah (RA) in 1899 A.D who became its first Chairman up to 1909 A.D. The Anjuman facilitated the young people access to contemporary education in addition to making sufficient facilities for the teaching of the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith.

The Anjuman further devoted itself to promote the cause of Islamic education by inculcating in youth the values as envisioned in *the Holy Qur'an* and preached by *Hadrat Muhammad (SAW)*. The Anjuman provided financial help to the needy and the poor Muslim students, who were engaged in the pursuit of religious as well as modern education. The Anjuman also emphasized to work for the overall orientation of Muslims towards a deeper commitment and understanding of Islam. (Nazir Ahmad Dar, 2005, 122)

Along the social and educational activities the Anjuman tried to play a role in the political affairs of Kashmir, as well. It acted as a representative body of Kashmiri Muslims. In 1923 A.D. it presented Kashmiri Muslims' demands to the Dogra Government and made a number of representations stressing the need for the community's elevation. In this connection Mirwaiz Moulana Ahmadullah Shah (RA) and his younger brother Mirwaiz Moulana Atiqullah Shah (RA) were the prominent figures of this movement. The Jami'a Masjid of Srinagar was a stage for heralds of Anjuman to create the Islamic social and political awareness among the Kashmiri Muslims. Particularly the role of Maulana Yusuf Shah (RA), especially in the creation of Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, has its unique impact on the history of Kashmir. The Anjuman, thus, provided the religious, cultural and political leadership to the Kashmiri society.

6. JAMI'AT-E-AHL-I-HADITH

Established by Sayyid Husain Shah Batku in (1922 A.D), with Anwar Shah Shopiani and Sabzar Shah, at the turn of the nineteenth century, Jami'at-e-Ahl-i-Hadith, popularly called the Ahl-i-Hadith movement forms a significant part of the history of Islam in Kashmir. This is not only because of the movement's emphasis on the commandments of Holy Qur'an and the Hadith, but also because of certain reservations to the worship of shrines, tombs and excessive veneration of Sufis and Rishis. The Ahl-i-Hadith was the first reformist movement of its kind in Kashmir since the introduction of Islam. The movement's goal was unique in that it advocated for purging Islam of accretions, customs, practices, superstitions, ceremonies etc., with a view to restoring its pristine purity. It also stood for a strong affirmation of the unity of Allah Almighty (*tawhid*), and the rejection of *bid'ah* (innovations) and *shirk* (polytheism.) (Bashir Ahmad Khan, 2000, 134)

According to the perception of Ahl-i-Hadith the nineteenth century religious atmosphere in the Valley was contaminated by the ignorance spread by the corrupt *mullahs*, *muftis*, *babas* and *pirs*. Kashmiri Muslims mired in superstitious practices and ignorance, indulged in a number of unwarranted rituals and ceremonies especially associated with *khanqahs*. Muslim funeral ceremonies during that time reflected Hindu influence and incurred unnecessary and exorbitant expenses on Friday, the fourth day (*chaharum*), the fortieth day (*chehlum*), at six months (*shashmahi*) and on annual (*salana*) days of mourning. As such Sayyid Husain Shah Batku and later Anwar Shah Shopiani maintained that a majority of the people in the Valley, though Muslims by faith, needed to be converted afresh in view of the gap that existed

between normative Islam and the Islam practiced by the Kashmiris. Sayyid Husain Shah Batku's religious outlook was influenced by the Ahl-i-Hadith 'Ulama from outside Valley. (Sofi Ahmad Muslim, 1980, 122)

The movement later involved itself in other educational activities, as well. In the late 1950s, Ahl-i-Hadith leaders began calling for the establishment of *madaris*. One of the most important *madrasa* established at the time was *Al-Kulliyah-al-Salafia Dar-ul-Qur'an wa-a1-Hadith* at Gow Kadal in Srinagar. Other *madaris* included *Madrasa Mohammadiya* High School, Chota Bazar Srinagar; *Madrasa Mohammadiya* Middle School Waniyar Srinagar; *Madrasa Mohammadiya*, Paripore Tehsil Kulgam, District Anantnag, Kashmir; *Madrasa Mohammadiya*, Ganderbal Srinagar; *Madrasa Mohammadiya*, Khudwani Anantnag and so on. In the early 1990s, the famous high school *Al-Kulliyah-al-Salafia* was established at Parraypora on a huge parcel of land. Besides the schools, three important libraries were established with great collection of literature on Islamic subjects. The official publication of the movement, first *the Tawhid* and later *The Muslim* (by Moulana Ghulam Nabi Mubarki 1320-1399 A.H.) played an important role in highlighting the perspective of the movement. The Ahl-i-Hadith movement faced severe criticism from other socio-religious organizations of Kashmir.

7. ANJUMAN-I-TABLIGH-UL-ISLAM

The Anjuman-i-Tabligh-ul-Islam, an organisation defined as the traditionalist, is a non-political group in Jammu & Kashmir and declares its mission the spread of Islamic theology, Hanafi jurisprudence and Sufi way of life. Anjuman-i-Tabligh-ul-Islam Jammu and Kashmir, was instituted in 1931, under the supervision of Hanafi 'Ulama like Sayyid Muhammad Maqbool Gilani, Maulana Saeed Masoodi, Sayyid Mirakh Shah Andrabi, Sayyid Muhammad Fazil Qadiri Mantaqi, Pir Muhammad Yahya Rafiqi, Sayyid Muhyi-ud-Din Andrabi and Pir Abdul Qadir Āsim. The first elected president of Anjuman was Sayyid Muhammad Maqbool Gilani. (Bashir Ahmad Khan, op.cit, 147)

From 1931 the Anjuman worked to establish a network of socio-religious institutions, Islamic libraries, reading centers and colleges in the Valley. These socio-religious institutions not only disseminated the basic principles of Islam, but also prepared the youth for contemporary social challenges. The Anjuman organised seminars and conferences to inculcate Islamic awareness, scientific and cultural consciousness among the people of the Valley. Additionally the Anjuman produced various weekly and monthly publications and journals (like *Jahangir*, *Hanafi*, *Al-Tabligh* and *Al-Iteqad*).

Among the most prominent figures of the Anjuman was Maulana Qasim Shah Bukhari (RA) who was elected its president in 1960 till his death in 2000. It is during his tenure that the Anjuman worked in and outside the Valley and was able to establish its district, tehsil and block level units functioning under provincial headquarters. After his death, his son Maulana Muhammad Farid-ur-Rahman assumed the presidential responsibility.

8. JAMA'AT-I-ISLAMI

The Jama'at-i-Islami started out as a movement of political and religious rejuvenation based on the premises that since the world belongs to Allah, therefore, only rule of Allah is the valid rule. The movement was found by Sayyid Abul 'Ala Maududi, one of the prominent Islamic scholars of Indian sub-continent of 20th century.

After the Partition of India, Jammu and Kashmir became the part of India. The individuals who had been inspired by the literature of Sayyid Maududi, and had associated themselves with the Jama'at-i-Islami Hind, established a separate organization in Jammu and Kashmir independent of both the Jama'at of Pakistan and India. Maulana Sa'd-ud-Din (1912-1999 A.D) was the founder of this party which was named as Jama'at-i-Islami Jammu and Kashmir (JIJK). After 1945 the first unit of JIJK was established in Kashmir with Maulana Sa'd-ud-Din as its first elected Amir. After a conference of the members of the organization the constitution was unanimously approved. With the adoption of the constitution the movement formally took the shape of an independent organization. The constitution of the Jama'at envisions fulfilling its goal through democratic and peaceful means. (Aashiq Kashmiri, 1979, 237)

The major contribution of Jama'at is recognized in the field of education. With the opening of Falah-e-Aam Trust J and K, the Jama'at opened schools at hundreds of places in the Valley. The Trust came into existence in 1972 and from then started to offer services in the field of education. A Periodical, Weekly, Monthly and Dailies were published and books, both in English and Urdu, were introduced to the students and scholars. The Jama'at for its political role has been criticized. It presently stands banned.

9. FOUNDATION OF TABLIGHI JAMA'AT IN KASHMIR

The existing literature provides scant information about the early interactions and presence of Tablighi Jama'at of Mewat in Kashmir. There is no record of a Jama'at unit arriving in Kashmir during the tenure of Maulana Ilyas (RA). The whole focus of Maulana Ilyas (1885-1944) during his period was to consolidate and strengthen the movement around Mewat. Nadvi's biography of Maulana Ilyas is the only account that makes mention of interaction of Kashmiri 'Aalim Maulana Muhammad Yusuf Shah with Maulana Ilyas when the former was studying in Deoband. Nadvi writes:

"In January 1944, the Mirwaiz Maulana Mohammad Yusuf of Kashmir was residing at Nizamuddin during the final year of Maulana Ilyas (RA). A Jama'at from Lucknow reached Nizamuddin, where they discovered Maulana Ilyas elucidating to Maulana Mohammad Yusuf the rationale of the 'Ulama's active involvement in the Tabligh movement. Men who were able to learn and know stayed with him, he felt firmly, listening to his words and fully grasping the Movement's ideas and regulations. He intended to make the 'Ulama understand that only they and they alone were deserving of the Tablighi call." (Maulana Abul Hassan Ali Nadwi, 2006, 68)

Even though Maulana Mohammad Yusuf (RA) returned from Deoband and began Tablighi *gasht* in Kashmir, he was unable to make Tablighi Jama'at a stand-alone organization. When Maulana Yusuf and his followers visited Srinagar residents' doorsteps during the *gasht*, they were taken aback. I learned this from an Indian named Maulana Ilyas, Maulana would always say. The approach is that of Hadrat Muhammad (SAW), he added, and Maulana Ilyas from India restored it.

Another person from Kashmir, who met Maulana Ilyas (RA) and got inspired, was Maulana Muhammad Qasim Shah Bukhari (RA) who was studying in Delhi during that time. Maulana Muhammad Qasim Shah Bukhari relates:

"I saw Maulana Ilyas (RA) when I was studying under the supervision of Maulana Kifayatullah in Delhi. People used to invite Maulana Kifayatullah (RA) to their marriage ceremonies. One day I also went with him to attend one of the marriage ceremonies. When we reached there, we saw congregation still waiting eagerly and impatiently for someone else, as well. We were curious for the person for whom people were enthusiastic and passionate in spite of the presence of Maulana Kifayatullah (RA). At last a lean, feeble and attractive person arrived and it was Maulana Ilyas (RA)." (G. N. Wani, op.cit. 43)

10. FIRST WAFD (DELEGATION) TO KASHMIR

The expansion of Tablighi Jama'at within Indo-Pak subcontinent actually took place during the reign of Maulana Yusuf (RA). During his tenure the Jama'at delegations were sent to every corner of India. Maulana Yusuf (RA) had been keen and regularly emphasizing at Tablighi-headquarter (Nizamuddin) that Jama'at needs to be sent to Kashmir. Additionally, when he proposed merging Anjuman-i-Tablighul-Islam with Tablighi Jama'at, he wrote letters to Kashmiri 'Ulama, namely to Maulana Muhammad Qasim Shah Bukhari and Mirakh Shah Andrabi (RA), to which they objected. (G. N. Wani, op.cit. 44)

Ultimately it was Sufi Uthman Bengali who led the first delegation to Kashmir. The Jama'at worked for 40 days in different localities of Kashmir. Although no Kashmiri went to Nizamuddin with them but they wholeheartedly supported and showed the inclination towards this new movement, as claimed by Haji Ghulam Mustafa (one of the participants in that Jama'at). He further said:

"When we reached Nizamuddin after completion of our period in Kashmir Maulana Yusuf called us and asked for *Karguzari* (report of work) regarding Kashmir. We replied that people of Kashmir were generous and kind but none came with us due to agricultural season there. Maulana replied: "if you would have sacrificed your season they would have done the same". (M. Farooq, 2015, 420)

Around 1960 it was Munshi Allahdatta who led the second delegation and his efforts led to firm foothold of Tablighi Jama'at in Kashmir. He was the real founder of Tablighi Jama'at in Kashmir. Munshi Allahdatta, among the nobles in Nizamuddin, was born in 1904 at Punjab Pakistan. He got his early guidance and education at home from his father Ghulam Nabi. During Partition his ancestors and relatives migrated to Pakistan and he, after spending some time in Pakistan, came back to Nizamuddin along with his 12 years son Fazil-Ilahi. From Nizamuddin he went to Agra where he worked as *Munshi* (clerk) in food and supplies department. It was at Agra that he got familiar with Tablighi Jama'at. After involving himself in Tablighi work he dedicated his rest of life for its cause. For missionary work he led several Jama'at

(delegations) from Nizamuddin not just within India but abroad, too, like Hijaz, Syria and Saudi Arabia. He visited Kashmir several times with the Jama'at up to 1974 and attracted special attention and affection. (G. N. Wani, 2012, 44-47)

During his preaching tours Munshi Allahdatta mobilized his colleagues to reach every corner of Kashmir, especially Srinagar, Islamabad, Sopore, Bandipora and Kapwara. But it was Baramullah town that proved to be the fertile ground for Munshi Allahdatta to sow the seeds of Tablighi Jama'at there. The pioneering persons who joined and supported Munshi Allahdatta for the cause from Baramullah were: Perwaiz Ahmad Khan, Noor Husain, Haji Muhammad Yusuf Bhat, Ghulam Rasool Ragoo, Abdul Karim Sofi and Haji Ghulam-ud-Din (RA). Maulana Abdul Wali Shah (RA) was one of the first Kashmiris to join Tabligh's mission and undoubtedly the most well-known of them and to be instrumental in the spread of Tablighi Jama'at in Kashmir. He was the first person who, after Mirwaiz of Kashmir, practically joined and patronized the Tablighi Jama'at. (G. N. Wani, 2012, 14)

Born in Dewbag Tangmarg, Maulana Abdul Wali Shah (RA) (1896–1978 AD) had his early education at Maulana Rasool Sahab's (RA) Madrasah in Srinagar. Having an exceptional zeal for studying Islamic knowledge, he moved to Amristar where he became a pupil of Mufti Mustafa (RA) in the Madras-i-Nu'mania. Additionally, he continued to be among Muhammad Hasan's and Maulana Ashraf Ali Thanavi's (RA) Khulafa and learned Tafsir, Hadith, Mantiq, and Falsafa from Maulana Wali Ahmad and Maulana Kifayatullah. When Maulana Abdul Wali Shah (RA) returned to Kashmir Valley he found the atmosphere tainted by the polytheistic activities. He was disappointed to see Muslims enmeshed in ignorance and superstitious customs. He noted that the only explanation for the sick state of the Kashmiri people was their ignorance of the actual meaning of Tawhid. Maulana Abdul Wali (RA) founded the Tahrir-i-Tawhid in Baramullah with the goal of reviving the Tawhid creed. His views, which began with a small group of people, eventually spread throughout Baramullah. It was Maulana Abdul Wali's efforts that made it possible for Munshi Allahdatta to establish a strong presence in the area prior to the advent of Tablighi Jama'at in Baramullah. Since Allahdatta was a man of integrity, his backing of the new movement removed any doubt regarding Tablighi Jama'at, and the masses devoted themselves fully to the Tablighi cause. (G. N. Wani, 2012, 14)

11. CONSOLIDATION OF THE MOVEMENT IN KASHMIR

The Tablighi Jama'at steadily expanded among students, 'Ulama, and others in different regions of northeastern Kashmir in the years following 1960. The establishment of centers was required as a result of the movement's growth in order to coordinate and direct Tablighi activities at the municipal, district, and provincial levels. In the beginning, Jamia Masjid Baramullah (*Masjid Baitul Mukarram*) served as a hub for Tablighis. The Khatib of this mosque was Maulana Habibullah, who adhered to the doctrine of Jama'at-i-Islam. But as the doctrinal divide between Tablighi Jama'at and Jama'at-i-Islami widened in the 1980s, Tablighis decided to construct a distinct Markaz (center) for their operations in 1981. Thus, Masjid-i-Rashād, the first distinct Tablighi Markaz, was constructed in Baramullah town in 1981. Masjid-i-Rashād also functioned as *Wadi Markaz* (Valley Centre) after 1994–1995, where state-level Tablighi activities (such as *Wadi Mah-wara*) are carried out. (M. Farooq, 423)

Munshi Allahdatta desired for the first All India Tablighi Ijtimā in Kashmir after enlisting the local Kashmiris in the Tablighi activities. Thus, the inaugural Tablighi Ijtimā was conducted in 1972 at Baramullah Chowk, also called Tashqend Bus-stand, to inspire the movement's efforts. Thousands took part in this significant Ijtimā. According to reports, Pir Shams-ud-Din Lolabi (RA) favored them with his khilafat during Ijtimā, while Munshi Allahdatta raised Wali Muhammad Shah's hand.

Among the other prominent Tablighi workers who contributed to arrange this historical Ijtimā was, Perwaiz Ahmad Khan (popularly known as Amir Ahmad Khan Sahab), the first *Amir* of Tablighi Jama'at in Kashmir. A graduate from college, Perwaiz Ahmad Khan had become a committed Tablighi activist by the time Munshi Allahdatta came to Baramullah. With the consensus and as per the desires of local Tablighis, Munshi Allahdatta nominated Perwaiz Ahmad Khan as the first *Amir* of Kashmir. (G. N. Wani, 2012, 53)

Ijtimas continued to take place in several locations in Narwaw Uri (1974), Kupwara, Bandipora, Sopore (1976), and Srinagar (1988) between 1972 and 1988. In addition to Baramullah, Narwaw served as a productive area for Munshi Allahdatta's labor. Because of their simplicity, he always referred to Narwaw as the Mewat of Kashmir. The location of Masjid Noor, Fatahga Narwaw, was the site of the second Ijtimā. The first state level Ijtimā of Tablighi Jama'at in Kashmir was held at Srinagar Eidgah from July 3–5, 1988, at the request of the local Tablighis and with approval from the

headquarter. Ijtima was planned with great enthusiasm and success by all of Kashmir's Tablighi elders. The speech by Maulana Umar Palanpuri, also referred to as *Lisan-ul-Da'wah* in Tablighi circles, and the involvement of Maulana Inamul Hasan and other Tablighi elders from Nizamuddin were the most notable aspects of this important occasion. The only Amir to visit Kashmir, Maulana Inamul Hasan (RA), the third Amir of Tablighi Jama'at, oversaw the further consolidation of the organization in Kashmir from 1965 until 1995. Maulana Inamul Hasan (RA) offered the collective *dua* to conclude the Ijtima, and Jama'at (delegations) were organized and sent throughout the area.

During 1980-1990 Tablighi Jama'at expanded with regular pace. By 1990s with the emergence of militancy in Kashmir the cause of Tablighi Jama'at met difficulties. The Amir migrated to Delhi during this period and no delegation visited Kashmir. As the situation improved they resumed their activities. In the years that followed, district headquarters were set up in almost every district. Notable are the Ranger Masjid in Srinagar, the Masjid-i-Murshidān in Kupawara, and the Masjid-i-Zakariya in Sopore. (G. N. Wani, Interview) Without specifically mentioning current events, the Tablighi modus operandi has remained apolitical throughout its existence and has consistently urged individuals to "follow the path of Allah" during times of crisis.

12. TABLIGHI JAMA'AT, KHATM-E-NUBUWWAT AND CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES

In addition to Tawhid and the belief in the Hereafter, the foundations of Islam also rest on the principle that Hadrat Muhammad (SAW) sealed the auspicious office of "prophethood." Thus, Khatam-al-Nabiyyin (the Seal of the Prophets) is another title for him. This belief called the Finality of Prophethood (Khatm-e-Nubuwwat) has been accepted as an integral part of Islam without fail since the time of Hadrat Muhammad (SAW). This view is supported by hundreds of Hadith and several verses in the Holy Qur'an.

Numerous academic volumes have been written on this topic, and it has been unanimously agreed upon. However, during the reign of the first Caliph, Hazrat Abu Bakr (632–634 A.D.), the doctrine of Khatm-e-Nubuwwat was instantly contested by individuals such as Musallima Kadhaab, Aswad Ansi, and even a woman named Sajah, who claimed prophetic status. Muslims have faced challenges against Khatm-e-Nubuwwat throughout history in varied places and eras, but the Ummah has always responded impromptu and effectively. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad challenged Khatm-e-Nubuwwat in the Indo-Pak subcontinent in 1889 by asserting his prophetic status and launching the Ahmadiyya movement. All available resources were used in a vigorous response by the 'Ulama, intellectuals, and ordinary Muslims. Many important works of literature were produced on the topic that successfully disproved every claim made by the Ahmadiyya. The reaction from all reform movements, particularly the Deoband, and from intellectuals like as Allama Iqbal and Maulana Maududi are notable.

Due to the unique circumstances of the 1990s, certain religious groups and 'Ulama were prohibited from engaging in activities. It is alleged that Christian missionaries therefore took advantage of the circumstances and stepped up their missionary work in Srinagar and the surrounding areas. They encouraged the establishment of missionary schools and centers in the Valley and offered support for social and civic projects in an effort to further their missionary cause. It is believed that numerous children and young people were influenced after being admitted to these facilities or institutions. The growing activity of Christian missionaries, along with the claim that many Muslims had been converted to Christianity, caused a stir at one point.

Maulana Rahamatullah Qasimi (RA) asked for a joint forum of all Anjuman, religious institutions, and movements to collaborate against these concerns after realizing the necessity to respond. Maulana Rahamatullah (RA) started the "Khatm e Nubuwwat" movement in the Valley to combat the Ahmadiyya activities after receiving encouraging feedback from others. Since 2011, Tablighi Jama'at has operated effectively, holding Ijtimas and seminars around Kashmir. The Organization also published books and magazines to raise awareness. The two most well-known of these publications are *Kashmir 'Isayi Missionaries ke Nishane par: Irtidad, Asbab aur 'Ilaj* by Maulana Altaf Hussain Nadvi and *Irtidad ka Haditha: Asbab aur Tadaruk* by Maulana Rahamatullah Qasimi. The Tablighi Jama'at not only involved 'Ulama in Tablighi activities, but also influenced the youth of Kashmir.

13. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Tablighi Jama'at has emerged as a significant organisation in the socio-religious transformation of Kashmir, leaving a profound impact on the region's spiritual and moral fabric. Despite facing significant obstacles in fully achieving its objectives, the movement has made notable strides in fostering a revival of faith and a return to Islamic

values. Its distinctive approach, centered around mosque-based activities, a strong emphasis on Da'wah, and a focus on the spiritual upliftment of individuals, has resonated deeply within Kashmiri society. The movement's initiatives have not only targeted the spiritual development of men but also included women and students, addressing their unique needs and challenges in the context of a rapidly changing world.

Through its consistent efforts to counter the growing influence of consumerism, Tablighi Jama'at has sought to provide an alternative vision of life that prioritizes religious values over material pursuits. The Jama'at's activities in Kashmir—ranging from Mahwarah (spiritual gatherings), Qur'āni Halqa (study circles), Taleem (religious instruction), and Bayan (sermons)—have created vibrant spaces for religious engagement, where individuals are encouraged to strengthen their connection to faith and engage in communal worship. These practices, rooted in a deep commitment to personal and collective piety, have contributed to the moral and ethical regeneration of Kashmiri society.

Moreover, the movement's consistent adherence to an apolitical stance has been instrumental in maintaining its focus on spiritual and moral reform rather than getting entangled in the region's complex political landscape. This apolitical posture has enabled Tablighi Jama'at to gain acceptance across diverse sections of Kashmiri society, fostering unity and shared religious experiences regardless of political affiliations or sectarian divisions. By addressing the spiritual, social, and moral concerns of the younger generation, Tablighi Jama'at has effectively acted as a counterbalance to some of the more negative influences that have emerged in Kashmir, helping to preserve the region's unique religious identity in the face of modern challenges. As such, it remains a vital and dynamic force in shaping the religious and cultural future of Kashmir, with its emphasis on personal transformation, collective solidarity, and commitment to Islam serving as enduring principles for generations to come. Simultaneously, a large segment of the society criticize the Tablighi movement for its apolitical stance and its focus predominantly on *Fazail-i-Amal*.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

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