

Tablighi Jama'at: History, Objectives And Misconceptions

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Abstract

This study focuses on general description of Tablighi Jama'at. The study is significant as it investigates the meaning, purpose and function of Tablighi Jama'at in the light of the Quran and Hadith. Moreover, it is significant as it is an attempt to highlight the need and justification of Dawat-o-Tablighin in the present scenario and to remove the misunderstanding regarding the nature of Tablighi jama'at. This study comprises two parts. The focus of the first part remains on highlighting the major services and contributions by the people which led to the establishment and development of the movement. The second part investigates the objectives and methodology of Tablighi Jama'at. The objectives of this research paper are: to highlight the importance of Tabligh in Islam. To explore the knowledge about Tablighi Jama'at; To remove misconceptions of the people regarding Tablighi Jama'at. The study concludes with the understanding that Tablighi Jama'at, which is the fountain of Hidayah, has its roots in the Holy Quran and Ahadith and it is the continuation of the same mission which was adopted by Prophets (S.A.W) before. Moreover, the vast spreading of the moment leaves no place for any misunderstanding regarding its meaning, purpose and function.

Introduction

In Arabic language, the word Tabligh is verbal noun (masdar) of the ballagh _ بلغ. It can also be used in the phrase ballaghaal-risalah بلغ الرسالة means he conveyed or delivered the message (Abuzar, n.d.). Thus, the word Tabligh means to convey, or to deliver. Contextually, it refers to conveying the message of Islam. This is the Sunnah of all the Prophets (A.S).The work of Tabligh has strong basis in the Holy Quran and Sunnah of Muhammad (S.A.W). There are numerous verses of the Holy Quran and Ahadith of Muhammad (S.A.W) regarding the importance of Tabligh that support the practice of Tabligh. In order to understand how significant Allah

considers the preaching of Islam, I have mentioned a few of those verses:-

(وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ) [آل عمران : ١٠٤].

“[O Muslims!] There must be a group among you who would invite people to Good deeds; and would command them to do good deeds, and would prevent them from forbidden things; and these are the people who will attain salvation”. [3: 104]

In this context, there is a Hadith of the Holy Prophet Muhammad S.A.W:

“Abu Saeed Al Khudri [May Allah be pleased with him] narrates: I heard Rasullallah Sallahllahu

Alaih-i-Wasallam saying: Anyone among you who does see an evil, should stop it with his hands; if he is not able to do so then with his tongue; if he (even) is not able to do this, then by his heart and this is the weakest form of Imaan” (Elias & Elias, 2023).

The vital importance of Tabligh has been further described by Imam Ghazali in the following lines:

There is no doubt that “Amar bil-maʿruf wanah iʿanil Munkar” is that solid pillar of Islam, on which each and every article of Islam rests. For this purpose, Almighty Allah sent all of His Holy Prophets (A.S). If it is ignored or forgotten or its methods and practices are given up, it would mean that the purpose of Prophet-hood has been overwhelmingly defeated and rendered meaningless (Anwar, 2001).

Origin of Tablighi Jamaʿat

According to Aziz (2006) the founder of this particular method of Tabligh was Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (1885-1944). His eldest brother, Maulana Muhammad, and father Maulana Muhammad Ismail, lived in Basti Nizam-ud-din (in the immediate suburbs of Delhi) and tried to teach the visiting Mewatis, the Quran and the fundamentals of Islam. After Maulana Muhammad’s death (1917), the seat at Nizam-ud-din became vacant. Muhammad Ilyas moved (from Saharanpur, where he was teacher at Madrassah Mazahir al-ʿUlum) to Basti Nizam-ud-din at the request of some of the inhabitants of Mewat. He took leave of absence from Madrassah Mazahir al-ʿUlum, Saharanpur (for one year). At Basti Nizam-ud-din, he started teaching in a small mosque. The passersby, on their way to seek manual labour in Delhi, were mostly from Mewat, According to the Gazetteer of Alwar, (1878, London) most of the Mewatis were Rajputs. Among the chiefs of Mewat, one Lakhnupal was converted to Islam during the reign of Firuz Shah

Tughluq (1351-88 C.E). The majority of the Population accepted Islam over a period of years.

According to Jan (2006) Major Powlett, settlement officer of Alwar, wrote in the Gazetteer of 1878, that the Mewatis were Muslims only in name. They regularly celebrated many of the Hindu festivals like other Muslim festivals such as Eid, Muharram and Shahb-i-Barat. Their names usually ended in “Singh” though “Khan” was much more frequent. When they dug a new well, they first dedicated the platform to the Hindu god, Birujior Hanuman. They did have rarely mosques in their villages. The situation was somewhat better in the Gorganwan district. There were a few Madaris.

The Gorganwan Gazetteer of 1910 shows us that the Mewatis were not very particular about practicing Islam and joined the local Hindus in their customs and practices. The Bharatpur Gazetteer tells us that the customs of the Mewatis were a mixture of those of the Muslims and Hindus. They practiced circumcision, Nikah and burial of the dead, but never went for pilgrimage. At the same time, they celebrated Holi and Diwali, did not marry in the same tribe, denied the daughters any share of inheritance and used mixed Muslim and Hindu names.

But the people of Mewat possessed some good qualities as well, which reflected their basic goodness. Through education, religious knowledge and proper training, their shortcomings could be decreased. In this regard they were not like the pre-Islamic Arabs. They were simple, hard and brave people. After the arrival of Maulana Muhammad Ilyas at Basti Nizam-ud-din, the Mewatis started coming there more often.

According to the Gazetteer (1910) the first act of Maulana Ilyas was an attempt to establish religious Madaris in Mewat. He toured the area and set up ten Madaris, but he soon realized that this

approach was not being effective because of three major factors:

- i. There was no religious urge among the people.
- ii. Mere instruction in religion was not enough, different measures were needed to transform the lives of the students, and
- iii. The Madrassah teaching was directed only at the young children, whereas the grown-ups, who were under obligation to obey Allah's commands, were not being approached at all. Thus, the system of Madaris was quite inadequate for Islamizing the lives of the people.

According to Anwar (2001) Maulana Muhammad Ilyas felt that the reformation of the few people was not enough. Nevertheless, his continued association with Mewat resulted in a large number of people accepting him as their spiritual leader and during his journeys through the area, he found that the people were attracted towards him. In 1925 he went to Makkah to perform his second Hajj. During the stay at Madina, he felt the need to work in Mewat. Accordingly, after having returned to Mewat, Maulana Ilyas began gasht, i.e. going from person to person and inviting people to join him to call other Muslims towards the fundamentals of Islam. The people were unfamiliar with this call. They founded it quite a difficult task (Anwar, 2001). At the gathering at a place called Nooh, Maulana Muhammad Ilyas asked the people to arrange themselves into groups for Tablighi tour of the area. The people requested for the time of one month to prepare themselves, and thereafter, a group was formed. They enlisted those villages which were to be visited by this group. They spent eight days working at eight places from Nooh up to Sohna (in Gorganwan District) where they spent the next Friday. At Sohna they planned the Program for the next week. They reached Tawro on the second Friday and by the third Friday they were in Nigina (Ferozepur). Maulana Muhammad Ilyas used to join them on the Fridays.

Generally Tablighi movements concerned with Kalima and prayer, but in fact, it is a movement of faith, faith in the unseen realities, and faith in Allah. Maulana Muhammad Ilyas aptly called this movement, a movement of faith. However, gradually this movement came to be known as the "Tablighi Jama'at" (Jan, 2006).

Principles and Methodology of Tablighi Jama'at

During the First World War (1913-1919) the Ottoman caliphate had ended. For the re-unification of Muslim Ummah, the Khilafat Movement rose in India because the institution of Khilafat was held in highest esteem not only for the Indian people but for the Muslims all over the world (Qureshi, 1969). He holds that the Muslim-Hindu unity of the Khilafat days had run its course but the two communities were openly against each other and after the cessation of non-cooperation in 1920 two new Hindu movements began immediately i.e. Shuddi and Sangathan with the help of Aryans-Arya Samaj organization.

Shuddi movement aimed at the mass conversion of certain backward groups of Muslims who had adhered to some Hindu customs after having accepted Islam. He further states that the Sangathan programme was specifically aimed at organizing Hindus into militant force to fight the Muslims. According to him, the basic notion was that India was a Hindu country and all elements that divided it into different communities should be eliminated. From being a multi-national, multi-cultural and multi-religious people, the Indians were to be converted into uni-national, uni-cultural and uni-religious entity (Qureshi, 1969). Dr. Moonje, the main organizer of the Sangathan movement explained its objective clearly in his presidential address to the third session of the Oudh Hindu Mahasabha at Ayodhya in the following words:

“Just as England belongs to English, France to French, Germany to Germans, India belongs to Hindus ... the Hindus hence forth create their own world, which will prosper through Shuddi and Sangathan” (Jan, 2006).

As a result, the emergence of Tablighi Jama'atis regarded as a direct response to the aggressive Hindu movements such as Shuddi and Sangathan. These movements launched great efforts in the early 20th century to re-convert those Hindus who had embraced Islam in the past.

Objectives of Tablighi Jama'at

The main target of Tablighi Jama'at is to strengthen the bond with Allah. One of its aims is to emphasize all Muslims to follow the ways of life of Muhammad (S.A.W). We shall get success and strengthen our beliefs in the oneness of Allah i.e. There is no God but Allah and Muhammad S.A.W is the prophet of Allah.

The main aim of the Tablighi Jama'at is to present before the world a true picture of Islam. The Jama'at believes that if Muslims begin to consider this world, a temporary place, a gift from Allah for a specific and fixed span of time to prepare us for a beautiful reward or everlasting unbearable punishment after life, then this objective can be achieved. Manzoor et al (n.d.) summarizes the following objectives of the Jama'at's delineated by Maulana Mohammad Ilyas:

1. Hazrat Maulana Ilyas said: “Those people who are working in our Tabligh should meet three communities: (i) ‘ulama and reformers (ii) People who are not their (social or religious) equals (iii) to achieve the following three objectives:
2. The real objective of our movement is to teach the Muslims what the Holy Prophet Muhammad S.A.W came with. (i.e. to make Muslim Ummah to follow the complete system of Islam, both in belief and practice.) This is our greatest

objective. Gasht is the initial means of achieving this objective; and the instructions of Kalimah and Nimaz are the ABC of Tablighi Nisaab.

3. To reject evil's power and turn towards Almighty Allah, is the next objective of our Tabligh. This needs sacrifice of both wealth and body (Manzoor et al, n.d.).
4. “Tabligh is to teach Din to the lesser informed people and learn it from learned people as well. However, lesser-informed should be considered as benefactors” (Manzoor et al, n.d).
3. Once, Maulana Ilyas said to Maulvi Zahirul Hassan: “No one understands what is in my heart. They think that this movement is Salat, but I swear it is not so”. On another occasion, he said to him, “Zahirul Hassan! We aim to create a new Ummah” (Manzoor et al, n.d.).
4. In a letter written by Maulana Ilyas to Maulana Hussain Ahmad Madani, he describes the following basic objective of Tablighi Jama'at:-

There is no limit to the ridicule and derision with which the very mention of things like Namaz, Roza, adherence of Faith and compliance with the Shari'at is practiced among the Muslims. The basic aim of the Tablighi movement is the revival of the glory of these duties and to bring about a change from scoffing to reverence (Nomani, n.d.).

5. In an interview with Mufti Wali Ullah, chief Mudarris at Madrassah Ma'rif-ul-Quran Mathani Peshawar, he said that the customs and shape of Din is present among the Muslims, but to put spiritual

powers in them is the aim of Tablighi struggle (Ullah, W. personal communication. 3 May, 2022).

Six Numbers of Tablighi Jama'at

Tablighi Jama'at, works according to certain principles on which its practices and teaching are based. They are generally known as 'Six Numbers'. To enumerate, they are: (i) the Kalima [Phrase], La ilaha illa'llah, MuhammadurRasulullah; (ii) Salat [the Prayer]; (iii) 'Ilm&Dhikr [Knowledge and Remembrance]; (iv) Ikram-i-Muslim [Honoring Muslims]; (v) Ikhlas [Sincerity]; and (vi) Da'wat and Tabligh [Invitation and Motivation]. It is said that in addition to learning them, acting in accordance with the Six Numbers facilitates the following of the entire Din of Islam (Jibril, 2022).

Curriculum of Tablighi Jama'at

To learn and put the above six points practically in the lives of Muslims, the elders [Akabir] have devised a plan i.e. to spend four months once in life in the way of Allah by moving away from family and home, leaving aside all domestic activities and putting oneself in the environment of mosques on personal expenditure. This is followed by spending forty days in a years, three days every month in the surrounding areas, visiting the local Tablighi Markaz once in a week (Shab-i-Jumma), to carry out two gashts gatherings [one in the own mosque, and the other in the adjacent neighborhood] and to conduct two daily halqahs [circles] of T'aleem [education – one each, in one's local mosque, and home (Iskandar, 2008).

General Principles of Tablighi Jama'at

There are some general principles of Tablighi Jama'at, which are not in written form but the workers of Tabligh have to obey all these principles, which are the following:

- i. To respect every Muslim from the core of heart.
- ii. Not to seek other's faults but to mend our own.
- iii. To avoid criticizing those who are in the process of learning and those who are unable to spend their time with the Jama'at for some reasons.
- iv. To avoid delivering personal deeds in addresses and to persuade people by the noble deeds of the Prophet Muhammad [S.A.W] and his companions [R.A].
- v. Not to use Tabligh for personal interests but to consider it a universal message for all the humanity.
- vi. Only Allah is the doer of everything.(Hussain, S. personal communication, May 22, 2022)

Participation in Tabligh

To participate in the work of Tabligh, it is not necessary for a person to be an 'Alim, because the spread of Islam is not exclusively limited to the 'ulama or the pious; it is rather a religious obligation of every Muslim. Therefore, the membership of Tablighi Jama'atis on a voluntary basis and those who join the Jama'at do it by using their own expenses. The participants belong to different socio-ethnic and economic backgrounds. The Muslims who join the Tablighi Jama'at may start with a short period of commitment and gradually build on their experiences and ultimately become full-fledged Tablighis. Membership of the Tablighi Jama'at is open and free to any Muslim, any time. (Ullah, W. personal communication. June 2, 2022).

Tablighi Jama'at in the way of Allah

By the grace of Almighty Allah, the network of Tabligh has spread in the whole world. For this purpose, the Jama'ats (groups) are sent inside as well as outside the country. The details are the following:

- i. Those troops (Tablighis) who go to other countries for the period of one year usually spend forty days before and after their departure, with consultation from the elders at Raiwind.
 - ii. Those who are unable to go in the foreign countries due to known reasons are sent to different places inside the country for the period of one year.
 - iii. Other Jama'ats are sent abroad for assisting the Jama'ats who are there for the period of one year. This kind of Jama'at is known as Taqazay ki Jama'at.
 - iv. Seven months Jama'ats are sent abroad where they spend at least four months. Like one year, they pass forty days in the country before and after their departure.
 - v. The Jama'ats for three days are sent from the local marakiz (centers) in the surrounding villages. These centers are present in almost every city in Pakistan.
 - vi. Those who spend forty days or four months, pass some of their time at Raiwind and then they are sent to different places. After the completion of their tashkil (duration), they leave for their homes with some instructions from the scholars of the Tablighi Jama'at, who have given their whole lives to this sacred work. (Ali, A. personal communication, May 15, 2022).
1. Two Chillas (40 days) in the next two years.
 2. He should be married.
 3. His age should not exceed 65 years. However, if a person is healthy, then he may avail a chance.
 4. If the journey is in some English countries, then he must know English language.
 5. Punctuality in attending all Tablighi activities at the local place;
 - i. Conducting Taleemi sessions, both at mosque and at home.
 - ii. Gasht in his own street (Muhalla)
 - iii. Gasht in his neighbor Street (Muhalla).
 - iv. Spending 2 ½ hours i.e. 1/10 part of 24 hours, involving himself in Da'wat
 - v. Sehroza (3 days) in every month.
 - vi. Regularity in attending shab-i-jumma and mangal mashwara (Ullah, S. personal communication, May 27, 2022)

Shura and Amir

Every Markaz has a Shura and Amir. All the decisions are made in Shura. For instance, if a Tablighi member wants to delay or break his "Khuruj"(journey)for half a day in order to attend to a personal matter, requires the approval of the Shura. The Shuramembers gather for four or five days in a month. All the Tablighi centers in the country act upon the Shura's decisions. A member of Shura could be impeached when he doesn't follow Islamic principles (Bejnori, 2006).

There is no paper work in Tablighi Jama'at and hence no written organization structure. Amir is elected on the basis of his performance by Shura. A person who has learnt the procedures of this work and has enough knowledge about Islam and who can fulfill other

Prerequisites for those who go abroad on Tashkeel

Those who go abroad are required to have spent 4 months tashkeel within the country.

responsibilities, is appointed as the Amir of the Tablighi Jama'at. Moreover, he should be pious, farsighted, well-disciplined. There is no tenure for Amir's office. He is Amir as long as he works. If he is ill, he appoints an acting Amir, and if he thinks he cannot shoulder the responsibility anymore, he does resign the office. The Shura has the power to remove or terminate him (Jan, 2006).

Economy

Tablighi Jama'at is not formally dependent on anybody for its financial matter. Its members have the belief that Allah Almighty will help them in everything, including their financial matters. It doesn't get formally any Zakat or charity from anyone. Some rich people directly spend or donate money or send people in Tabligh on their own expenses (Jan, 2006).

Misconceptions about Tablighi Jama'at

Like all other Muslims, the members of Tablighi Jama'at believe that Kalma Tauhid is the spirit of the universe. The true believers are those who propagate the message of Islam to all human beings. Among the human beings, the nearest to Allah are the messengers and prophets. Every Muslim believes that they are innocent as Allah Himself purified their hearts from all types of evils. Apart from these prophets, no one is free of sins.

The history of Islam goes back to the distant past. In Quran, Allah Almighty describes the history of different nations. It includes the stories of those who embraced the true religion of their Prophets and pursued the right path. On the other hand, Quran also describes the stories of those who resisted and opposed the dissemination of true religion. But their efforts never met the successful end. History reveals that falsehood had never sustained before the truth.

Tabligh or Amar bilmaruf and naheanilmunkar is one of the significant Islamic obligations which was performed by the all the previous prophets to their ummah as long as they were alive. But because no prophet was to come after Muhammad, (May Allah's mercy and peace be upon him) this sacred responsibility was handed over to his ummah. Every Muslim who has faith in Allah, His angels and prophets, and the Day of Judgment, is made responsible to propagate this message to every nuke and corner of the world.

Unfortunately, after the death of Muhammad (May Allah mercy and peace be upon him), his ummah did not assume this important responsibility. But after 1400 years, it restarted in India. It was Maulana Ilyas (May Allah's mercy be upon him) who took the initiative in the beginning of the 20th century and today, the network of Tabligh has covered almost every part of the world. Tablighi Jama'at has reached to every country due to which a large number of people are accepting Islam.

Unfortunately, there are some misconceptions in the minds of those who do not know the reality and the purpose of Tabligh. Moreover, there are some objections raised by the people who do not know the sacred mission of this jama'at. So, in order to clear this misunderstanding, following are some basic questions along with their answers.

Is Tabligh a bid'at?

The big misunderstanding is the procedure and schedule in which a person, at first, has to go for four months. After that he has to go for 40 days, followed by 3 days each month and shab-i-Jummah every week. This schedule, they say, have no example in the life of the Prophet Muahmmad (May Allah's mercy and peace be upon him) and his companions.

Those who hold these views say that Tabligh is a bid'at. But the fact of the matter is that they do not know the definition and types of bid'at. Linguistically, bid'at is anything which is baseless and has no example. Literally, it can be defined as anything which is not mentioned in either Quran or Ahadith. Moreover, bid'at is anything which has no example in the lives of sahabah or tabi'een but adopted by few people and considering it a part of religion.

Bid'at can be mainly divided into two types:

Bid'at-i-Haqiqiya: It is the one which has no existence in Quran-o-Hadith. But people adopted it for the sake of earning sawab (reward). Eid Meelad-un-Nabi is one such example.

Bid'at-i-Izafiya: It is the one which though exists in Quran-o-Hadith, but the date and time of its practice is unknown. People adopted it later, for the sake of earning sawab. Funeral Prayer, collective recitation from the Holy Quran and chaliswan (to serve dinner on 40th day of someone's death) are few of such examples. Such type of bida't is also called Bi'dat-i-Wasfiya.

(Saqib, 2011) describes five types of bid'at in his book, *Mirqaat-ul-Mafatih*. These are as under:

Bid'at-i-Wajiba: The teaching and learning of Quran is necessary. Moreover, to learn Quran, it is necessary to have the basic knowledge of grammar. Bid'at-i-Wajiba is, therefore, necessary as one cannot learn Holy Quran without 'Uloom -i-Aliya.

Bid'at-i-Muharrama: As the name indicates, this type of bid'at is forbidden in Islam. Examples are khawarij, rawafiz, jabriya and qadriya.

Bid'at-i-Mandooba: Such type of Bid'ai includes Tablighi system (including shab-i-jummah, sehroza, chillah, four months, gasht, mashwara and t'aleem). It may be added here that

there was no such schedule at the time of Muhammad (May Allah mercy and peace be upon him) but our Prophet s.a.w used to convey the message of oneness of Allah to the people. Now the system of specifying the time (10th part of year, month and day) is Bid'at liddin, not Bid'at fiddin. According to Mullah Ali Qari (May Allah's mercy be upon him), the former is not forbidden, but the latter is forbidden. Moreover, the time specification is also based on a hadith in which Prophet (S.A.W) said to his companions (sahaba) that those who would believe in my prophet hood would be more highly rewarded even if they acted upon 1/10th of the religion (The Wadud Channel, 2020).

Bid'at- e-Makrooha: It includes the construction of beautiful mosques and the decoration of Quran. It is makrooh near Shafi'i school of thought, while in Hanfi School of thought, it is not forbidden but it should be done with a separate charity (Saqib, 2011).

Bid'at-i-Mubaah: It is mubaah near Shafi' school of thought. The examples of such type of bid'at are shaking of hands after 'asar and fajar prayers and embracing each other after Eids prayers. This type of bid'at is mubah according to Shafi' is, while makrooh near Hanafis (Saqib, 2011).

From the above discussion, it becomes clear that the allegations and objections raised against Tabligh are baseless.

The objection of not participating in social welfare activities

Some people raise the objection that Tablighis do not participate in social welfare activities. This objection is baseless, because Tablighi Jama'at is not an organization of social welfare, but it only aims to preach Din-i-Islam to people and build their relationship with Allah. As for as public

assistance is concerned, it is the fourth out of “Six Points” known as “Ikram-i-Muslim.” If a person doesn’t help an affected person, he is neither a good Muslim, nor a Tablighi (Mumtaz, 2014).

Is Tabligh a trap by the West?

According to some people Tablighi Jama’at is a trap by the West to keep the Muslims aloof from worldly affairs. This objection is also baseless as Tablighi Jama’at includes people from all professions such as labours, farmers, doctors, professors even beaurocrates, who practice Tabligh. So how one can say that people are kept away from worldly affairs in Tabligh. In fact, the West is afraid of Tablighi Jama’at because they convert people to Islam, peacefully and quite rapidly (Mumtaz, 2014).

The objection of not participating in Jihad raised by some people against Tablighi Jama’at

According to some people, the people of Tablighi Jama’at do not discuss jihad, and they also do not participate in jihad.

Jihad is a religious obligation which no Muslim can deny. It will continue till the Day of Judgment. Tablighi Jama’at is actually trying to bridge the gap and create unity among the Muslim Ummah through faza’ail. It is basically not a jihadi organization, but it is actually working for making the roadmap for jihad. In fact, it is the need of the day to prepare the environment for jihad. If in case, it asks the people to start jihad, there is every possibility of strong reaction against it as we see many jihadi organizations are facing bans at both national and international levels. In short, it is wrong to detach the working of Tablighi Jama’at from the agenda of jihad. In Fatawa-i-Alamgeri, jihad has been defined as the propagation of the message of up keeping Kalma-i-Tauhid. The people of Tablighi

Jama’at have individually participated in jihad several times and they were not stopped from doing so.

Objections on Tablighi Nisab

It is a misconception by some people that Tablighi Jama’at has amended their book, Fazail-i-‘Amaal by excluding some parts from it. This objection is also baseless as Fazail-i-‘Amaal is the compilation of different Fazails and each part still exists in actual form and can be studied separately.

Objection on Da’wat of prayer and Sunnah

Another query is regarding the da’wat of prayer and Sunnah.

The scope of Tabligh includes the propagation of every commandment of Allah to be performed according to the Sunnah of our Prophet (S.A.W). But the most important obligation of every Muslim is to offer prayer. Offering prayer according to Sunnah is essential and therefore, it speaks for the significance of Sunnah in Islam. Prayer has priority over other commandments as it is the prayer which lays the foundation for the religion of Islam. And no less important is Sunnah in Islam. Every commandment from Allah must be obeyed according to Sunnah of Prophet (May Allah mercy and peace be upon him). Therefore, dawah of prayer and Sunnah is equivalent to dawah of Din-i-Islam.

The Stay of Tablighi Jama’at at Mosque

Some people raise the objection on the stay of Tablighi Jama’at at the mosques. The answer is that the stay of Tablighi Jama’atis not against the sanctity of mosques in Islam, because the purpose of Tablighi Jama’at is to learn and propagate the teachings of Islam, therefore, mosque is the right

place to do this. To stay at mosque with the intention of itikaaf is not wrong. (Nabi, M. Personal communication. June 7, 2022).

Who should preach?

Some people raise the question of whether every person is free to preach especially when he has not learnt the knowledge of preaching from some madrassah.

The answer to this question can be given in the light of sayings of Muhammad (May Allah mercy and peace be upon him). He (SAW) said that a Muslim should preach whatever he knows. It means that it is not necessary to first read in madrassah and then preach. Everybody should preach good things and stop others to do bad things. He himself should also adopt good things and refrain from doing bad things. (Nabi, M. Personal communication. June 7, 2022).

Is the Leaving of Family behind the right thing to do?

Those who follow their own line of thinking ask the question about leaving of their family behind by Tablighi Jama'at.

In fact, this question becomes useless if we compare those who leave their families for years just for the sake of earning few coins. Moreover, the life of sahaba provides the best example for all of us. They left their homes and preached the true message of Allah and His prophet as long as they were alive.

The objection of taking over the duty of 'ulama

Some people raise an objection against Tablighi Jama'at that they do not give any importance to 'Ulama which is wrong.

This objection is totally baseless as the people working in Tablighi Jama'at give due regards to 'Ulama and especially emphasis this point in their agenda. If there is anyone who does something wrong, it should not be attributed to the whole of jama'at. It is his personal matter (Aslam, 2005).

Emphasizing Fazail and ignoring Masail

The preference of Fazail over Masail by Tablighi Jama'at is another query which often comes in the minds of those who have no acquaintance with Tablighi Jama'at.

It is true that Tablighi nisab focuses more on fazail and less on masail. But the answer to this question can be given in the light of saying of Maulana Ilyas (May Allah's mercy be upon him). He says fazail come first before masail. The reason he gives is that when somebody knows the worth of reward to be given after a good action ('amal), only then will he become willing to perform action. It is afterward that masail in performance of that action can be known. Therefore, fazail have preference over masail (Aslam, 2005).

Tabligh is the job of ulama

Another point of criticism is that advising people is only the duty of ulama and not the illiterate people. However, this objection also becomes useless when the difference between wa'az (advice) and Tabligh (preaching) is understood. Actually 'Ulama are the learned people who advise people in every matter of religion. On the other hand, Tabligh is a simple task which is well defined. In other words, it is based on "Six points" which begins with kalma-i- tauhid and ends at the Tabligh itself (Aslam, 2005).

Conclusion

Tabligh is one of the important pillars of Islam. I have already mentioned that Islam gives much

importance to the work of Tabligh. In the contemporary period, Tablighi Jama'at is an Islamic revivalist movement, and probably the largest Islamic movement in the world today. It was founded by Maulana Ilyas in 1927 in Mewat, south of Delhi in India. It is a religious movement that emphasizes personal purification and spiritual guidance. The purpose of Tablighi Jama'at is to visit Muslims and invite them towards practical Islam. Its function is to encourage the Muslim masses to follow the ways of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W), the last prophet of Allah Almighty. The aim is to remove the stains of materialism from the hearts and minds of Muslims and guide them towards righteousness.

The movement of Tabligh, which started 97 years before, has established itself in numerous countries outside its Indian homeland. Its network reached throughout the globe. In Pakistan, the activities of Tablighi Jama'at had started even before the partition. After the partition, Maulana Yousuf—the second amir of Tablighi Jama'at—visited different areas of Pakistan. During his visit to Bahrain in 1958, he suggested Raiwind as the Centre of Tablighi work in Pakistan.

I finish my study with the belief that when truth comes, it destroys evil. Tablighi Jama'at is the continuation of the same mission which was adopted by Prophets (A.S) before. It is the fountain of Hidayah as it has its foundation in the Holy Quran and Ahadith. The fast and vast spreading of the moment provides an ample proof to this argument. Therefore, it leaves no place for any misunderstanding regarding its meaning, purpose and function.

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