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Tablighi Jamaat: Discourse and Challenges

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Introduction

Tablighi Jamaat has been widely discussed for some time now in the religious circles of the Muslim ecumene. It has been of particular interest to scholars in South Asia. Western scholars have written about it too. But none has succeeded in getting into the depth of a religious group that is fast gaining popularity among mostly poor Muslims of the subcontinent. It has received bouquets and brickbats but controversy remains on what it is.

Salafis or Saudi Hanbalis are generally dubbed as Wahabis who have their origin in the Saudi society. They outrightly reject the Tablighi Jamaat as heretic and have questioned the content and form of its preaching. For instance, a well-known Saudi scholar, Sheikh Ibn Baaz, goes as far as to forbid joining the Jamaat because of some *bidaat* (Innovations in religious beliefs or practices).

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Similar objections were raised by an old member of the Tablighi Jamaat, Dr Mohammed Saleem who lamented, "Ideally, Tablighi Jamaat should have been publicized puritan Islam, but they have laid so much emphasis on sufi traditions that the real Islam has gone into oblivion."²

Western researchers have fundamental reservations regarding the Tablighi Jamaat. First, it preaches a traditional version of religion, which promotes a conservative way of life to the youth. Second, its loose organizational structure helps terrorists conceal their identity. Some of the Pakistani and other South Asian intellectuals share these reservations.

In 2005, the Center for Policing Terrorism, an American research institute, analyzed the threats posed to the American security by the Jamaat. It remarked that there is a minimal possibility of any threat to the American security from Tablighi Jamaat; however, a possibility of recruitment of terrorists under its cover is quite high.³

However, Tablighi Jamaat's activities are expanding. Millions participate in the Jamaat congregations in Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. The growth of participants in its annual congregation is but exponential. This makes it instrumental to look into its policy, discipline, impact, and more importantly, why are people attracted towards it.

In Pakistan, not much research has been done on Tablighi Jamaat; just a few remarks, here and there, by religious leaders. A lot has been written in India though. On top of the list is Yoginder Sikand's PhD thesis on Tablighi Jamaat. Western thinkers, Olivier Roy and Mariam Abu Zahab are considerably an authority in this regard. A doctoral dissertation by a Spanish researcher, Eva Borreguero, is another worthwhile study. In addition, some other researchers have written on the subject both in the East and the West, including Barbara D. Metcalf, who is associated with the history department of the University of California. Barbara's work is of great significance. But, again, Western thinkers have looked at the Tablighi Jamaat from their own set of lenses. The pivotal point of their research has always been the challenges posed by the Tablighi Jamaat to the society, civilization, culture, and security of the West.

In this paper, an effort is made to look at the Tablighi Jamaat from a South Asian perspective, particularly Pakistan, where it grew. One is humbled by the studies conducted by Western thinkers as well as the Indian researcher, Sikand (2002), who threw light on the erstwhile oblivious parts of Jamaat's story.

The author had opportunity to participate in three of its annual congregations and five three-day preaching visits to observe the activities and functioning of the Tablighi Jamaat from close quarters. This also gave an opportunity to interact and discuss the subject with leading lights of the Jamaat. The understanding gained through these observations and interactions most probably outweigh the wisdom offered by secondary sources. It may be said at the outset that the Tablighi Jamaat leadership is, wittingly or unwittingly, taking the Jamaat forward on the sufi mystical tradition of South Asia. Some even view it as an alternative. The leadership does not seem to be much concerned with the reservations expressed by the religious scholars and Western thinkers.

Origin

Sikand identifies Tablighi Jamaat as part of the Sufi Reformist Project launched by Darul Uloom Deoband, which was established in 1867 in Saharanpur, India.⁴ Tablighi Jamaat is part of the third element of the Deoband Project, Tassawuf-o-Ehsan (spiritualism and beneficence). The other three elements are: Tawheed or Oneness of God and the Sunnah; following the Hanafi school of thought; and finally, jihad.⁵

There is a general misconception that the Deobandi school of thought is void of mysticism. On the contrary, Deobandis not only agree on mysticism but most of the scholars associated with sufi Naqshbandi school of thought are Deobandis. It is because of the deep roots of mysticism among the people that some of the Deobandi jihadi organizations show their commitment towards mysticism. For instance, the outlawed Jaish-e-Mohammad's chief, Masood Azhar, has emphasized on mysticism in his writings and has his own disciples.

Most of the Deobandi scholars identify mysticism as the essence of Shariah but oppose the "un-Islamic" rituals performed at the shrines. There is a strong relationship between first and third elements of Deobandi school of thought. The relationship indicates that, in the context of the Muslim community in the sub-continent, the Oneness of God can take hold only if the relationship between the shrine and the individual remains within the Islamic boundaries. Mufti Abul Ata comments, that "un-Islamic" and Shariah by force had made meditation and daily worships the most important component of mysticism. Beyond that, some of the ignorant people readily accepted that mysticism was not bound to follow Shariah, he says. In his view, Deobandi scholars served a serious blow to the unwanted business of infidelity and heresy practiced in the name of sufi mysticism.⁶

Origins of the Tablighi Jamaat are found in the same idea. When Maulana Muhammad Ilyas laid the foundations of this movement in Mewat in 1927, Hindu movements of Shudhi and Sanghtan were on their peak. The objective of Hindu movements was to bring the neo-Muslims back to the fold of their ancestral religion. Sikand (2002) identifies it as the key-factor for launching the movement of Tablighi Jamaat. Darul Uloom Deoband had established a department of "Safeguarding and Proselytizing Islam (*shoba-e-tableegh-o-hifazat-i-Islam*)."⁷ Syed Muhammad Mian, a writer of Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam writes that as a result of this initiative, more than 11,000 Hindus re-converted to Islam.⁷ Correcting the religious actions of the common Muslim remained the focal point of the movement started by Maulana Muhammad Ilyas.

Maulana Muhammad Ilyas wished people got back to the religion. But it was not possible through seminaries and convents alone, he thought. Only those who were already close to religion, he argued, would come to such places. Thus, he thought it was necessary to go from door to door and sincerely ask them learn the religion. Since, his movement's target audience was the common Muslims, he organized

and structured it accordingly. He based his approach on the convent system thinking it might be helpful in attracting the people towards the Jamaat. He formulated six principles for daily worship on the same lines as a mentor did for his disciples and keeps them connected to the system of daily worship or as it is thought to be necessary for a disciple to demonstrate his association with the mentor or the convent by attending the weekly, monthly and yearly gatherings.

In sufi, mystical, schools of thought, there is an order but sometimes it is not. But, in Tablighi Jamaat, meetings were pretty disciplined. Taking cue from the convent system, the Maulana did not impose strict conditions and rules on participants to make it simple. The level of the syllabus for preaching was kept according to a common man's understanding level.

The aim was to make the common people understand the principles through parables from the lives of the Prophet's companions and sufi mystics. That is how the Tablighi Jamaat spread. It is interesting to note that Maulana Mohammed Ilyas established educational institutions in Mewat on the lines of the convents, where common people would come for a limited time. They were provided with basic knowledge about Islam and worshipping. However, as the Jamaat spread, the approach and methods of preaching were altered.

When setting up educational institutions at a large scale to attract Muslims towards religion became difficult, mosques were brought into use as schools and they were affiliated to an educational institution. However, the preaching method remained that of the sufi mystics. Sermons based on scholarly arguments were avoided. The basic principle, named "Taleem" (literal meaning: "on gaining knowledge") was: those who have higher knowledge of Islam should share it with others and those who have little should learn from others.⁸ The method was derived from the one practiced by As'haab-e-Suffa (Companions of Prophet Muhammad dedicated to teaching Islam in the Prophet's mosque in Medina).⁹ Tolerance is a hallmark of Tablighi Jamaat's system of "Taleem" and special attention is paid to promoting it among students at all times. Jestering during classes or showing a reaction to derisory remarks is strictly forbidden.

Tablighi Jamaat has used mosques belonging to Sunni sub-sects for "Taleem" and other activities. Never has a Shia mosque been used. Tablighi Jamaat has never reacted whenever they were not allowed to use a mosque's premise because of their Deobandi identity. Even on such occasions, Tablighi teachers are advised to behave politely. At times, they have faced such problems even in Deobandi mosques.

Tablighi Jamaat does not believe in charismatic leaders. They are to be respected and venerated which again is part of the sufi mystic tradition. The whole emphasis is on bringing out a man good character. That is why members of the Tablighi Jamaat do not approach non-Muslims themselves. The idea is that non-Muslims should feel an urge to emulate their good character and they should approach them. This is the "Method of Proselytizing non-Muslims." When Tablighi Jamaat members visit non-Muslim countries on proselytizing missions they do not get in touch with non-Muslims but attract them with examples of good character towards Islam. When a non-Muslim shows interest in knowing more, he is informed of the golden principles of Islam and never is he asked to change his religion.¹⁰

Tablighi Jamaat has, undoubtedly, penetrated deep into South Asian Muslim societies, impressing people from all walks of life including rulers, civil and military bureaucracy, businessmen, sportsmen and even members of the showbiz community. Participation of former military generals, rulers and political leaders in Jamaat congregations is sometimes shocking to some although the tradition of rulers and

political leaders attending Jamaat congregations is quite old as it gives them an opportunity to gain popularity. Such a trend towards the Jamaat in South Asia should be seen in the South Asian perspective. While political leaders use Jamaat congregations to gain popularity, their presence verily extends legitimacy to Jamaat as well.

And this is the factor that prompted others to initiate such a movement, some from the same school of thought as the Jamaat, namely Deobandi. These movements went on to strengthen the Tablighi Jamaat's idea of proselytizing. All such movements, but, push people towards the traditional religion. Dawat-i-Islami (associated with Bareilvi school of thought), Tablighi Jamaat Ahl-i-Hadith (associated with Ahl-i-Hadith school of thought), and Majlis Siyanatul Muslimeen (associated with Deobandi school of thought) are some of the examples of such movements.

An overview of criticism on Tablighi Jamaat

a) Criticisms Leveled by the Religious Circles

As mentioned in the introduction, the Tablighi Jamaat faced criticism from all schools of thought, including the Deobandi. The criticism is leveled on two fronts:

- 1) Belief system
- 2) Preaching Method

On belief system, the most significant objection is that the Tablighi Jamaat pays more attention on good deeds and not on reforming the belief system. The objection is based on the argument that "if the belief system is not right, all other deeds stand rejected in the eyes of God." Sufi mysticism is blamed for this flaw. As the Salafite scholars argue:¹¹

Serious differences exist between *Ahl-i-Tauheed* (the theists) and the Tablighi Jamaat on belief system and approach. Those associated with the Tablighi Jamaat are *Matueedis* and negate the attributes of God. They are sufi in the matters of worship and morality. They administer the oath of allegiance to their disciples according to the four sufi ways which pushes a man into the dark valleys of perversion.

Salafi and Hanbali scholars, namely, Sheikh Ibn Baaz, Sheikh Abdul Razzaq Afifi, Sheikh Nasirud Din Albani and Salih bin Fauzan issued verdicts against the Tablighi Jamaat along the same lines.¹² Strict Deobandi scholars raise similar kind of objections. Particularly, final part of the Jamaat syllabus, known as "Fazail-i-Amaal" remain the main target of these objections. This part consists of the anecdotes from the lives of the sufi saints. Dr. Muhammad Saleem, who parted his way with Tablighi Jamaat after a long association, writes in his book *Tablighi Jamaat ki ilmi-o-amali kamzorian* (Shortcomings of Tablighi Jamaat in Areas of Knowledge and Action):¹³

I wish the elders of the Tablighi Jamaat had expunged the heretic portions in its syllabus and compiled it in such a way that whatever remains is not apostate. Weak and forged narratives are thrown out to save people's beliefs.

Elders of the Tablighi Jamaat generally avoid responding to criticism, but, they do respond if a criticism is raised from within the Jamaat. However, they use that part of the syllabus that has never been criticized by Jamaat fellows.¹⁴ Since the Tablighi Jamaat is a reformist movement for Muslims, and not a grand literary or a sectarian movement, objections of this nature carried no value, particularly when the Jamaat follows the sufi order yet remaining within the Deobandi school of thought. For example, Naqshbandis

and Awaisis, more or less, follow the sufi traditions in the same way as the Barelvis or other sufi schools of thought.

On the preaching methods of the Tablighi Jamaat, the objection is raised to the sufi-style long visits for the purpose of proselytizing. These visits are rejected as monastic in nature. In the opinion of Dr. Muhammad Saleem:¹⁵

The sufis have always preached monastic way of life by urging disciples to stay away from the material world, which is in fact the centerpiece of mysticism. Tablighi Jamaat has this shade of mysticism. Staying away from their homes for a year and sometimes over a year, these people cut themselves off from their families. They write letters to, or call, their families but they do not tell them about their location so that they cannot find them.

Countless objections are raised about the time-period of the visits, schedules, emphasis on the six principles¹⁶ and the method of administering the oath of allegiance. These acts are labeled as impermissible innovations in religion.

Western scholarship has criticized Tablighi Jamaat for its potential links to jihad, terrorism and political Islam. On the contrary, religious circles in Pakistan, particularly religious scholars, who are also engaged in politics, criticise Tablighi Jamaat for pushing the people away from jihad and politics. They say:¹⁷

For God's sake, look beyond the three meditations, six [Islamic] principles and the sufi-style wanderings to see what is happening in the world. At least read a newspaper or listen to radio in the convents and centers of proselytizing wherever you are, to know how badly Muslims are treated in this world. Have you ever discussed jihad in your centers? Have you done any preparation for the Third World War? If you haven't, it is time to wake up, lest on the Day of Judgement all sufis and Tablighis find themselves laden on the back of a donkey.

A well-known Deobandi scholar, Zahidur Rashidi expressed his reservations on the Tablighi Jamaat to its elders and described it in his column "Nawa-i-Haq" (Call for Truth), thus:¹⁸

Among the complaints made in their presence of Maulana Saad, Maulana Zubair and Maulana Ibrahim was that some of the statements issued at the Tablighi Jamaat congregations suggest that the activities carried out from the Tablighi Jamaat platform are the only way of preaching and proselytizing. And, that other religious issues, particularly jihad, have lost their significance. Other complaint was that the element of consultation in the process of decision making is weakening and most of the decisions are based on intuition. Appropriate attention is not paid to the syllabi of the seminaries running under the Tablighi Jamaat. In general accounts, coming of the Christ and appearance of Imam Mehdi are mentioned in such a way as if the events are about to take place soon and we must make preparation. Most responsible religious scholars of Pakistan have already termed these points as anti-Shariah and are preparing counter-points. Maulana Saad, representing the Indian elders of Tablighi Jamaat had promised to introduce reforms along these lines, but after so many years nothing has come out. I have kept my silence all these years. But after listening to a group of religious scholars who were discussing a sermon delivered by Maulana Muhammad Ahmed Bahawalpuri, I feel compelled to break my silence. So, I dare to unveil some of the details of my meeting with them. A few days back, I wrote in the same column about the importance of preaching, the contribution made by the Tablighi Jamaat and its impact on the global level. I commend Jamaat's contribution. But negation of parts of the Islamic teaching or ignoring some religious stalwart is unacceptable. So, I exhort you to look into these aspects of the religion: parties, seminaries, mosques, convents, mujahideen, study circles and groups working for implementation of Islamic values and working for the sacredness of the Prophet's Companions, centers of knowledge and Darul Ifta (offices for issuing religious decrees) guiding common Muslims, institutions and personalities that expose the Western onslaught on Islamic thought and culture, that point out the ideological perversion of modernist circles, and the global system of preaching and reformation of the Muslim Ummah. All those working on these aspects serve the cause of

religion and God will reward them according to His will and the contribution made by these people. But, if any one school of thought claims to be the only standard-bearers and negates others, it will be seen as trying to undermine the concept and role of the religion.

Due to the association of hundreds of thousands of people with the Tablighi Jamaat, the Jamaat-e-Islami, and all those affiliated with them, has demanded a political revolution. They argue:

Is it possible for the elders of the Tablighi Jamaat to ask the government to implement Islamic judicial and economic systems? If it is not possible, then, what's the use of these millions of people coming to the congregations? We do not accept this Jewish system.¹⁹

Tablighi Jamaat elders' response was lukewarm who disapproved getting involved in politics.

b) Suspicions and Concerns Raised in the West

Let us now look at the criticism coming from the West. French researcher, Olivier Roy, sees the Tablighi Jamaat as different from other political and violent Islamic movements and identifies it as a "neo-fundamentalist" movement, which only emphasizes on correcting actions, attitudes and habits.²⁰ Roy and Barbara, both see it as distinct from political and violent movements of Islamism too. Barbara's analysis of the impact of this movement on the West shows that this Deobandi movement may not be as relevant in the Western context as generally perceived.²¹

Some writers, however, express their concern about the impact of the Tablighi Jamaat on the Asian and Muslim communities in the West. Such concerns revolve around the point that the association of Muslim populations, particularly of the youth, with religious tradition is leading them towards isolation and that it has the potential of posing diversified types of challenges to the Western societies at social and cultural levels. For instance, Muslim women are taking veil more seriously. The role played by other traditional and modern Muslim movements is also important. Tablighi Jamaat might not be able to pose any serious challenge at a political level, but individuals associated with it may be able to use other organizations' platforms. Therefore, the best response for the West is to take measures on a broader ideological level rather than at the organizational level.

c) Terrorism and the Tablighi Jamaat

Policy-makers in the West are concerned with Tablighi Jamaat's, direct or indirect, linkage with terrorist organizations. According to the Center for Policing Terrorism, an American research organization, people associated with the Tablighi Jamaat in the United States are estimated to be around fifty thousand. Suspicions about the Tablighi Jamaat were raised when the so-called "American Taliban"—John Walker Lindh and Omer Padilla came to limelight. They had an association with the Tablighi Jamaat and so did the "Australian Taliban"—David Hook—who also had been associated with it. Similarly, one of the terrorists, who carried out the July 7 bombings in London, had been associated with the Jamaat. The British police have arrested 23 suspect terrorists so far, who, one way or the other, had a relationship with the Tablighi Jamaat. But the question arises whether the entire Tablighi Jamaat could be blamed for terrorism because some individuals were suspected of involvement in terrorism?

Following issues have been pointed out so far.²²

- 1) Is Tablighi Jamaat directly involved in terrorism? The answer is negative. But, the possibility of members getting involved in terrorism in their individual capacity has not been ruled out.
- 2) Other than the American and Australian Taliban and British suspects, At-Takfi, who was awarded death sentence in May 2004 blasts in Casablanca, had also been associated with Tablighi Jamaat. In this regard, examples can be quoted from Kazakhstan, India and the United States, which are based on police investigations. This is the reason why the West does not consider Tablighi Jamaat a high risk group. But, the possibility of Jamaat members getting influenced by other violent groups is not discounted.
- 3) Another point under consideration is the possible branching off of a violent group from within the Tablighi Jamaat that may show tendencies to get involved in acts of terrorism. No solid evidence is available though, except for a coup attempt against Benazir Government in 1995, hatched by few military officers, who had been Tablighi Jamaat-associates. And there were individuals from jihad organizations as well, suggesting that the plot was an isolated act.
- 4) The possibility of Jamaat-associated youth moving towards extremism is taken as a serious threat. In this regard, much evidence is available in Pakistan and the West. Most of the people associated with jihad and violent sectarian organizations have also been associated with the Tablighi Jamaat. According to Tariq Pervez, who heads National Counter-Terrorism Authority, Tablighi Jamaat attracts the youth and brings them into the mosque, but, then, cannot control them. In the mosque, people associated with jihad and sectarian groups, and, in some cases, their networks are also present. Most vulnerable are the new entrants to the Tablighi fold. Already attracted towards religion, they can easily be convinced to take up another agenda in the name of religion.²³ For a young person, who is in need of an identity in the West, Tablighi Jamaat provides an outlet for renewing relationship with the religious tradition. Mosque is always the starting point as discussed in the preceding pages.

The author personally experienced a few cases during his research work²⁴ on jihadi organizations. Many members revealed their earlier association with the Tablighi Jamaat; some of them were still in some sort of a relationship. They said they joined the Tablighi Jamaat to get the basic knowledge about Islam in proselytizing visits, and secondly, to acquire spiritual purity. Interestingly, the out-lawed Jaish-e-Muhammad used to send its recruits to proselytizing visits with the Tablighi Jamaat to get them oriented in a religious environment.

- 5) The loose organizational structure of the Tablighi Jamaat is viewed as the biggest threat as it makes it quite easy for terrorist groups to penetrate ostensibly for recruiting new members and hiding from the law enforcement agencies. Some evidence was found in the US, Europe, Philippines, Indonesia, Yemen and Morocco when members of terrorist organizations traveled for operational and training purposes under the cover of Tablighi Jamaat. This phenomenon has emerged in Pakistan too and is a matter of grave concern. Law enforcement agencies claim that many terrorist organizations, including Lashkar-i-Janghvi, have hid themselves in Tablighi Jamaat to avoid arrests, and, in some cases, to carry out terrorist activities.²⁵

A research report in monthly *Hum Shehri* (We the Citizens!), published in Lahore carried a revealing bit of information: since 1990, important figures, commanders and leaders from terrorist groups, have participated in Tablighi Jamaat congregations in Raiwind and other Pakistani cities, and on occasions held their own meetings during the congregation. For example, according to media reports, important Taliban commanders were spotted in a congregation held in Bannu this February. They distributed provocative and misleading literature, sometimes secretly and sometimes openly. *Hum Shehri* reporters claim to have witnessed Taliban in Tablighi Jamaat congregation themselves and they say the law enforcement agencies have recorded evidence.

Since congregations of the Tablighi Jamaat are held purely for preach Islamic principles, and, they are normally disciplined and peaceful, police vigilance is quite lenient. Clearly, we do not suspect Tablighi Jamaat of terrorist activities or aiding in terrorist activities, but the reality is that the high-ups of Tablighi Jamaat do know about terrorists amid their congregations. If media reporters can trace such activities taking place in Tablighi Jamaat congregations, it seems pretty unlikely that the high-up of the Tablighi Jamaat are not aware of the fact, remarks the reporter.²⁶

A stark evidence of terrorist groups' infiltration into Tablighi Jamaat is provided by a letter released to newspapers by a rebel Taliban faction in Darra Adam Khel which acknowledges that some sensible boys of Tariq Group have stopped working for Tariq; some have left the organization while others have hid themselves in Tabligh (preaching).²⁷

There are many examples that show how terrorists were exploiting the loose structure of Tablighi Jamaat. And despite the fact that the terrorist threat is increasing, Tablighi Jamaat seems to be unwilling to change its organizational structure partly because some Tablighi Jamaat elders believe that introducing a political party style organization, the Jamaat will lose the image of a preaching group and will look like it had started pursuing the interest of some particular group. Hence negating the Tabligh principle, "Every believer is a preacher."²⁸ When reminded of the issue of terrorists' using Tablighi Jamaat's loose structure, they say, the Jamaat will not discriminate against individuals; we are not concerned about their personal deeds outside the congregation. People need guidance and we simply provide that guidance to whoever seeks it. We provide an opportunity for people to voluntarily tread the right path by providing the right environment, the Tablighi Jamaat elders argue,²⁹ adding that it is after all the state's responsibility to punish terrorists and criminals, even when they are associated with the Tablighi Jamaat. Following this line of argument, Sikand (2002) rules out the possibility of Tablighi Jamaat's involvement in terrorism.³⁰

- 6) Fingers are also pointed at the financial resources of the Tablighi Jamaat. Although the Tablighi Jamaat contends itself by saying "Allah is the provider: human beings are just a means," the fact remains that people associated with preaching, and sometimes governments in South Asia have helped construct preaching centers, and running expenditures are met small donations. Tablighi Jamaat does not fund the preaching visits because participants manage their traveling, board and lodging themselves. However, better-off Tablighi Jamaat members do reach out to poor members, and financial support is flagged quite high in Jamaat, sometimes equal to the act of preaching itself.

Conclusion

One can disagree with Tablighi Jamaat's impact on society or its role in attracting Muslims towards Islam, however, one cannot discount the fact that the Jamaat successfully introduced renovation in the archaic convent system. The question raised in religious circles is where will the Jamaat go from here. A movement that was founded 78 years ago, should have adapted itself to the changing mores of the society, but the elders of Tablighi Jamaat seem least concerned about altering the structure or the method of preaching. Tablighi Jamaat elders need to pay attention to fears about terrorism and security. They need to restrict the radicals from using its platform. Tablighi Jamaat elders may take terrorism as a short-lived trend but the propensity of Tablighi Jamaat members getting attracted to radical movements contradicts its own objective of peaceful reformation. The question remains, what are the chances that the Tablighi Jamaat will continue to be used by criminal networks? The tradition of tolerance and

consultation is pretty strong in Tablighi Jamaat. This consultation must not be confined to the arrangements and schedules of the preaching visits. It must be extended to other sensitive issues as well.

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