Study on Islam and Nationalism in Pakistan

From Official Islam to Islamism: The Rise of Dawat-ul-Irshad and Lashkar-e-Taiba

This study ventures to highlight the relation between Islam and nationalism in Pakistan. These two notions may appear self-contradictory since Islam transcends the frontiers of nation-states, including Pakistan. At the same time, the ideology of Pakistan has been built on the basis of the Muslim identity of the followers of Islam inhabiting the territories of British India. This paradox is even more evident from the discourse of the Islamist groups which are gaining momentum in Pakistan, especially in Punjab.

In the last decade or so, Lahore, Gujranwala (Murdike), and Multan have developed into a triangular circle of annual religious congregations and international conferences. Jhang is the other significant center for similar congregations. According to credible newspaper reports and independent observers, the Tablighi Jamaat's annual congregation at Raiwind is considered the second largest congregation of Muslims after the Haj. It is attended by 2 million participants, while the Lashkar-e-Taiba's annual congregation is attended by 1 million participants. The Anjuman-e-Sipah-e-Sahaba and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi's congregation in Multan had an attendance of 500,000. Similarly, the Jamaat-i-Islami's annual congregation in Lahore is attended by 500,000 participants. In a country with a population of over 130 million, an annual turnover of 4 million people on religious congregations is not a large but significant number.

It is interesting to note that the social class base of the Tablighi Jamaat's participants is most diverse. They come from all over the country; low- and middle-income groups are preponderant, but the rich and prosperous are also visible in the congregation. Punjabi, Pakhtun, and Mohajir presence is conspicuous. The participants include traders, merchants, petty government officials, high-ranking public officials, professionals (engineers, doctors, educationists), businessmen, and industrialists. By contrast, Dawat/Lashkar-e-Taiba congregations are dominated by the lower-middle classes, peasants, traders, merchants, petty government employees, and mostly young men from various parts of Punjab and some from NWFP.

How should one interpret these congregations and the expansion of religio-political groups? These annual congregations perform several functions. First, they provide an opportunity for social networking and solidarity among the participants. Second, the leaders of these religious groups use it as a forum to send their political and religious messages across. Third, these annual congregations also serve as important indicators of the size and support base of each religious group and its organizational skills. Fourth, the Lashkar-e-Taiba uses these congregations to narrate success stories of the jihad (holy war) and for sharing experiences of waging 'holy wars' in different parts of the world. They have a motivational purpose because they explain the bravery, sacrifice, and success of martyrs. Fifth, they

promote the concept of the Muslim ummah, as a significant number of participants from other Muslim countries also attend these congregations. Lastly, these congregations are ranked as important international media events.

This paper will first propose a definition of the notion of religio-political groups, then it will examine the rise of such groups under Z.A. Bhutto and during the Afghan war, and finally, it will focus on the Dawat-ul-Irshad and Lashkar-e-Taiba. It will show that Pakistan's difficulties in establishing a national identity have remained the same while, since the 1970s, the country has experienced a shift from official Islam to Islamism.

Religio-political groups are very much like any other interest group. In most cases, their membership is open and encourages formal and informal association. They articulate the interests of those who are associated with them and aim to influence the public policy process and the government. However, a distinguishing characteristic of religio-political groups is that they are not restricted by the boundaries of interest or ethnicity alone, but also rely on cultural and ideological affinity among the members. Thus, these are groups of association, solidarity, and belief.

The Pakistani case reveals that in their orientation, outlook, and interpretation of religion and its role in society, they may have divergence and variation emanating from the philosophies of their respective schools of fiqh/sect. But their basic thrust is doctrinal. Islam is presented as the panacea for all ills that confront Muslim societies in general and Pakistan in particular. Therefore, their broad goal is to establish the supremacy of the Koran and enforcement of the Shariah (Islamic law). Most Pakistani religio-political groups regard territoriality as manifested through the State, superficial and transient for a community of believers. At best, they see the State as an instrument to transform society according to their doctrine of Islam. They claim to promote fellow feeling and unity among believers, i.e., the ummah. Their primary target is society, and they aim at the transformation of society through the imposition of Islam and the doctrinal worldview that they expound.

Religio-political groups are vehicles for social networking. They fulfill an important associational function. In them, besides the practice and preaching of religion, individuals with shared interests and orientations band together. Like any other associational activity, membership within a religio-political group also produces awareness about one's identity. By function and association, they restrict the formation of a pluralistic society. One relates, interacts, and reinforces one's identity not only within a group but also in opposition to other groups.

Religio-political groups also influence the process of identity formation. Negating Islamic identity is equated with opposing Pakistan. Consequently, the liberal and progressive manifestations of Pakistani identity have remained underdeveloped and weak. Over the years, the religio-political groups have become not only militant in responding towards imagined or real enemies—the 'West' or 'India'—but have also become the champions of 'Pakistani ideology'. In this new sense, Islamic sentiment in Pakistan is instrumentalized by organizing the jihad and Mujahideen for Kashmir, Afghanistan, and other 'Islamic causes'. A number of religious groups invoke the concept of jihad to show support and solidarity for the 'Kashmir freedom fighters'.

Religio-political groups and their existence is not a new phenomenon in Pakistan. They have been existing and playing a role in social and political life since 1947; what is certainly new is their political activism, in some cases militancy, and most importantly, their rapid expansion in the country. Currently, there are 58 registered religious political parties and 24 armed religious militias. Similarly, deeni madrasas (religious schools) have also been in existence for centuries, but what is new is their proliferation, sectarian overtones, expansion in support base, and diverse and ambiguous sources of funding.

What are the forces and factors that have triggered political activism among the religious groups? The immediate causes of religious political activism in contemporary Pakistan can be traced from three sources. First, the policies of the State towards religion and especially Zia's Islamization policy; second, extraneous factors, particularly the Iranian revolution (February 1979) and the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (December 1979). These events were turning points and had considerable influence in intensifying the demands and pressures of Islamization in Pakistan, viz., enhancing the role of the State in giving direction to religious discourse in the country. Third, it was in the context of the Iranian revolution and Soviet intervention that in the West, Islam began to be viewed largely through a 'security lens'. It was the American policy response to these events which fostered the perception that Pakistan was a 'frontline state'. It was in pursuance of this broad goal that America evolved a policy of 'dual containment', i.e., containing Iran and the Soviet Union. To attain this goal, it encouraged Pakistan to forge an alliance among various religious factions in Afghanistan. The result was the emergence of an 11-party coalition under the umbrella of the Hizb-e-Islami, under the leadership of Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. From its inception to degeneration (the Geneva peace process in 1987), this alliance worked in close association with religious organizations in Pakistan, particularly the Jamaat-i-Islami and the military regime of Zia-ul-Haq. In short, the collaboration between the US and Pakistan was instrumental in forging unity among various Afghan groups and religious groups in Pakistan. The American policy intellectuals promoted a favorable policy environment and gave legitimacy to these Afghan warriors by using the metaphor 'Mujahideen'—those who were fighting a holy war against the infidels. This metaphor had an effect not only on the popular consciousness of Afghans but also gave a boost to the revival of Islamic sentiments among the religious groups in Pakistan. Thus, by the 1980s, Islam had come on center stage as a powerful political as well as cultural and religious force, affecting the political thinking and feeling of virtually all elements of the population, not only in Pakistan but in a large number of Muslim societies.

These developments provided the military regime in Pakistan an opportunity to not only provide patronage to the religious groups but also to develop an institutional linkage that lent legitimacy to their functioning.

Here, it may be useful to give a snapshot view of the interplay of religion and politics in Pakistan in the framework of the current Constitution. During the civilian government of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (1971-7), religious groups developed into a potent opposition force. In his pronouncements and policy choices, Bhutto oscillated between socialist, developmental rhetoric and Islamic symbolism. These professions and policy outcomes produced contradictory trends: first, a compromise on the formulation of a Constitution. The 1973 Constitution declared Pakistan an Islamic Republic, with Islam as the religion of the State. Thus, foundations for enforcing the Shariah and the potential of giving legitimacy to religious

groups were laid. The size and representation of religious political parties in the parliament was insignificant, but given the nature of debate on ideology and dismemberment of Pakistan, they played a role larger than their size in the making of the Constitution. The 1973 Constitution has more Islamic clauses as compared to previous Constitutions. It carried references to the Islamic way of life, compulsory teaching of the Holy Koran, Islamiat, and encouraged learning of Arabic. It gave a commitment to promote the institution of zakat, organize mosques under the Auqaf department, and declared that no law repugnant to the Holy Koran and Sunna would be adopted.

Second, the social and cultural permissiveness of the Bhutto regime

and a popular tilt towards 'folk Islam' rather than 'high Islam' prompted the religious groups to accelerate demands for Islamization (Gellner). The third important element of the 1970s was the formation of JUI-NAP coalition governments in the NWFP and Baluchistan. Although the duration of these coalition governments was short (1972-3), the provincial governments were able to embark on symbolic policies of Islamization (e.g. respect for the Ramadan Ordinance). This encouraged other religious groups to demand greater Islamization of laws and policies. After its dismissal from the government, the JUI leadership played upon the idea that had their government been allowed to continue, they would have introduced more Islamic laws. It is in this context that Jamaat-i-Islami continued to press for declaring the Ahmadiyas a minority, vociferously criticized the socialist policies of Bhutto, insisted on enforcement of the shariah, declared Bhutto a 'kafir' and demanded his ouster. Thus, during the Bhutto years, despite socialist rhetoric and social and cultural permissiveness, religious issues remained a potent political force.

Fourthly, Bhutto's holding of the Islamic Summit in 1974

brought Islam to center stage and gave a new life to religious groups and Islamic political parties. The Bhutto regime's Islamic rhetoric, songs, symbols, and calls for the ummah's unity created a euphoria for Islamic revival and unity of the ummah (the gathering of heads of Islamic States), captured the imagination of the people, and created an environment of expectancy for Islamic unity and possible Islamic social order. In his speech as Chairman of the Summit, Bhutto evoked images of Islamic glory, its great tradition, its principles of justice, equity, fairness in the comity of nations, and a desire for unity among the Muslim States. He made a passionate appeal before the heads of Islamic States to work for evolving a regional block of Muslim States—a 'Muslim Commonwealth'.

In an age when no nation can sustain its insularity, at a time when communications and economic forces are serving to promote larger groupings of nations and countries, we owe no apology for the reassertion of the common affinities amongst the countries of the Muslim world. It is time that we translate the sentiments of Islamic unity into concrete measures of cooperation and mutual benefit. (Bhutto 1980)

The speech, the gathering, and its reportage by both the print and electronic media had a deep impact on popular consciousness. Last, in 1974, the religious groups succeeded in getting the Ahmadiyas declared as a minority. This declaration gave a new sense of confidence to religio-political groups. In subsequent years, they became more vociferous in

demanding Islamization, while the PPP regime under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto slowly and gradually succumbed to these demands. Despite these conciliatory gestures, Bhutto could not win the confidence of the religious groups, which perceived him as secular-minded and not a practicing Muslim. Therefore, between January and July 1977, the religious groups not only built an alliance against the Bhutto regime but waged a one-point agenda of enforcing Nizam-e-Mustafa (i.e. enforcement of the shariah). As Bhutto announced the holding of national elections in March 1977, the religio-political groups announced a coalition against his regime. They formed the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA). The coalition consisted of nine parties, but the Jamaat-i-Islami and Jamiat-ul-Ulama-e-Islam dominated it.

These elections were held in an atmosphere of distrust, hostility, and political confrontation. The PPP emerged as the winner, but the opposition parties alleged that the elections were massively rigged. The government failed to prove its innocence of these charges; thus, between March and July 1977, the PNA movement brought the demand for Islamization to the core of Pakistan politics. The movement paralyzed the government—traders, merchants, the Tullaba of deeni madrasas, Jamaat-i-Islami workers, and students protested in the urban centers in Punjab and Karachi—the army intervened and dislodged the Bhutto Government (Richter).

Bhutto claimed that the PNA movement was not a ‘desi’ (indigenous) but ‘an international conspiracy’, implying that it had American support because his government pursued an independent foreign policy. He had embarked Pakistan on a nuclear program and worked for the unity of the Islamic ummah; therefore, the US Government provided material and intellectual support to the movement. He alleged that the US, the army, and the religious groups acted in concert to overthrow his government (Bhutto, 1979).

In subsequent years, the policies of the military regime under Zia, its close collaboration with the religious groups—particularly the Jamaat-i-Islami—and the explicit US support to the military regime were to give weight to Bhutto’s argument. Additionally, as noted earlier, the Iranian revolution and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan changed the fortunes of the Zia regime and the religious groups, particularly the Jamaat-i-Islami, which showed eagerness in supporting the Afghan jihad under US patronage.

Zia’s virulent de-Bhuttoization campaign in the post-1977 period weakened the liberal/socialist socio-political groups, which were in their infancy and had already suffered setbacks under Bhutto. To counter the perceived threat from the PPP, the Zia regime allowed exceptional scope to the religious groups, particularly to the Jamaat-i-Islami for a return to active politics in the universities, colleges, labor unions, and other organizations (Nasr). This arrangement got a further boost with President Reagan assuming power in 1981, and the US policy towards the Soviet Union and using the Islamic groups to contain the Soviet Union became handy.

THE US-PAKISTAN RECRUITMENT & TRAINING CONNECTION

During the 1980s, the State expanded its patronage and coercive capacity through new techniques of manipulation. Involvement in the Afghan war made it imperative for the Zia regime to gain the support of Islamic groups. Therefore, through psychological warfare, the intelligence agencies manipulated public opinion to support the war (Ahmed). In the process, the State itself began to cultivate groups which could sustain Islamic fervor. Therefore,

during the Zia years, demands for restoration of democracy and imposition of Islamic laws grew as parallel currents, growing simultaneously but not complementing each other.

A recent study provides graphic details of how the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) of the US and the Inter-Services Intelligence Agency (ISI) in Pakistan developed a nexus with the religious groups to sustain a military and political war effort in Afghanistan (Cooley). This nexus was built around the concept of Islamic jihad against the 'infidel' Soviet forces. According to Ahmed Rashid, 'the effort of the two (CIA-ISI) was to turn Afghan jihad into a global war waged by all Muslim states against the Soviet Union' (Ahmed Rashid, 1999).

In fact, the Afghan war not only gave new life to the coercive capacity of the State but also provided an incentive to expand its manipulative capacity. The ISI got deeply involved in the training and recruitment of Mujahideen; it had to devise strategies to motivate the Afghan groups to sustain the war. The collaborative arrangement between the US and Pakistan relied extensively on recruitment and training. According to Cooley, the US experts gave training to the ISI on a broad range of tangible and intangible areas, 'endurance, weapons, sabotage and killing techniques, communications, and other skills'. It is estimated that the US experts (the Special Forces, Green Berets, etc.) provided over 60 skills, which in turn were imparted by the ISI to 'Afghan holy warriors'. The military regime under Zia performed this task ably, which further strengthened the coercive and manipulative capacity of the State.

The CIA-ISI collaboration in pursuit of the Afghan war had two consequences for religio-political groups. First, it led to factionalism and fragmentation of the religious parties because religious groups began to jostle for procuring funds and training. This tension produced personality-centric factions among the religious groups. In 1980-81, the JUI got split into about 11 factions, while the JUP got divided into 5 factions (Fig. 5.1). Second, each of these factions began to center around a religious leader, who aimed to create his own madrasa. Religious education and training for jihad became complementary. The madrasas developed into sanctuaries of religious zealots and political power. The factional religious leaders began to encourage some form of military training; therefore, jihad was portrayed as a tool to achieve a higher goal for the glory of Islam. Thus, for motivation and mobilization, jihad was propounded as a legitimate concept to wage war against infidels. Supporting the Afghan Mujahideen against Russia was portrayed as supporting Islam. Besides jihad, the other consequences of the Afghan war were proliferation of portable weapons, the drug trade, and a scramble for donations for the madrasas. According to Ahmed Rashid, between 1947 and 1975, about 870 new madrasas were set up. He points out that in 1976-90 (14 years), 1,700 new madrasas emerged—most of these were established in 1977-88. Factors like zakat funds, foreign donor support, and Islamization policies facilitated the expansion and growth of seminaries. In 1997, there were 5,500 seminaries, half of them in Punjab. There is an almost equal split between Barelvi (1,200 seminaries) and Deobandi (1,000 seminaries), compared to some 200 Ah-e-Haqq and 100 Shia seminaries. It is estimated that around 200,000 students study in these seminaries. Through zakat funds and foreign support, these schools have been able to procure millions of rupees as donations. These deeni madrasas impart religious teaching and memorization of the Koran. Those students who have middle-level (eight years of education) are allowed to take the Dars-i-Nizami course, which leads to Saanvi-i-Allama (equivalent to Matric 10 years), Dars-i-Mutwast (Intermediate), Dars-i-Aam (B.A. level), Dars-i-Alaimia (M.A. in Arabic/Islamic Studies).

Each madrasa has its own curriculum, which also has a tilt towards its own particular sect. The 1979 education policy through the University Grants Commission (UGC) recognized these madrasas as degree-awarding institutions. However, the UGC has no control over the curriculum of these schools. Besides religious education, the Dars-i-Nizami courses offer teachings on fiqh (interpretation of Islam), Hadith, Tafseer, philosophy, history, and Islamic jurisprudence. Most children come from the lower-income groups of parents who cannot afford to send them to other government schools. These madrasas provide free meals, give token stipends, provide some clothing, and during holidays give pocket money for travel home.

The overall effect of the Zia regime's education and other policies was: (1) they revived religious symbolism and lent legitimacy to religious groups; (2) they gave a new status to religious schools, which were allowed to award degrees; (3) and they provided funding to these schools. Thus, the religious groups made a transition from the periphery to the mainstream in education and politics.

THE GENEVA PEACE PROCESS AND PARTING OF WAYS

With the initiation of the Geneva peace process, the US began to disengage from the Afghan war, but it was a disengagement without dismantling the infrastructure that it had built for jihad against the Soviet Union. The religio-political groups involved in jihad were not fully convinced about disengagement; therefore, the culmination of the Geneva peace process marked the parting of ways between the US policymakers and the 'holy warriors'. A new phase began in the development and orientation of the religio-political groups. These groups began to seek greater autonomy from the Pakistani State and the US experts. The US once again put on the 'security lens'; now the religious groups were portrayed as 'terrorists' and 'engines of Islamic fundamentalism' (Mark). In this context, the 'clash of civilizations' was portrayed as being larger than its size (Huntington). Thus, the pattern of religion and politics in Pakistan underwent a paradigm shift.

Religio-political groups began to take not only an anti-America but also an anti-democracy position. The changing equation in the US-Pakistan strategic partnership brought the realization among the religio-political groups that in the post-Geneva period, the US not only disengaged itself from the Afghan war and religious groups but was also hostile to those which persisted in pursuing 'holy war'. It is in the light of this paradigm shift that one may analyze the emergence of the Taliban in Afghanistan (1994) and the Lashkar-e-Taiba (1987) in Pakistan. This changing equation has propped up and enlarged what are called jihadi organizations and militant militias; the Lashkar-e-Taiba makes an interesting case study of this phenomenon.

There is considerable historical, religious, and theoretical literature available on the Jamaat-i-Islami, Tablighi Jamaat, and various factions of the Ulema-e-Deoband. Some of these studies are rich in detail, description, and analysis. They also provide a good overview of the interplay of religion and politics in Pakistani society (Mumtaz; Metcalf; Esposito; M.Z. Hussain; Shafqat). However, there is little literature that reviews the emergence of jihadi organizations. How and why do some religious groups consider jihad as an essential and integral component of Muslim renaissance? What tactics have they adopted to integrate jihad with modern education? How is military training imparted? There are at least four such

groups that have ventured to synthesize religious and modern education. These religious groups have invested heavily in education, opened up schools, colleges, and universities. They have even launched their own publications and developed their websites. The distinguishing feature of these religious groups is that they have been able to use technology as an instrument for the expansion of Islamic education. These groups are Minhaj-ul-Quran (Maulana Tahir-ul-Qadri), Tanzim-e-Islami, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, and the Dawat-ul-Irshad, the group on which we shall now focus.

Dawat-ul-Irshad/Lashkar-e-Taiba

The Dawat-ul-Irshad Markaz was established in 1987 by two professors from the Engineering University, Lahore: Hafiz Saeed and Zafar Iqbal. The third founding father was Abdullah Azam, an Arab from the International Islamic University, Islamabad. However, Azam was killed two years after the creation of the new organization in a bomb blast in Peshawar.

The personal history and early life of Professor Hafiz Saeed, who continues to be the principal architect of the Dawat educational system and its militant arm, the Lashkar-e-Taiba, is indicative of the imprint of religious education and how it may have influenced his worldview. Professor Hafiz Saeed's family migrated from Haryana (India). At the time of Independence, 36 members of the clan were killed while migrating to Pakistan. Along with his mother, he settled in Sargodha. His mother taught him and his five brothers and sisters the Holy Koran.

Hafiz Saeed's Religious and Political Philosophy

His maternal uncle Hafiz Muhammad Abdullah Bahawalpuri gave him religious education. He did his M.A. in Arabic and Islamic Studies from Punjab University. For two years, Hafiz Saeed taught in a Saudi university, at Riyadh. Later, he returned and joined as a research officer in the Islamic Ideology Council. Subsequently, he was appointed as a lecturer in Islamic Studies at the Engineering University. He has recently retired from the university.

Markaz-e-Taiba, headquarters of the Dawat, is situated on the Grand Trunk Road at Murdike near Gujranwala. It covers an area of 200 acres. The compound was set up in 1990 with a 'rumored price of 18 crore rupees' (Khalid Ahmed). It is residential, provides trade skills, and ensures observance of the Ahl-e-Hadith school of thought. The Markaz forbids TV, outlaws pictures, but cassettes of warrior songs are available. The religious philosophy of the group is Sunni-Ahl-e-Hadith-orthodox and puritanical. The Markaz publishes a magazine, Aldawa (Urdu), with a reported circulation of 80,000.

The Dawat-ul-Irshad propounds a clear educational philosophy and is vigorous in propounding its worldview. The twin principles of its educational philosophy are developing a jihadi culture by combining Islamic teaching and preaching with modern education, producing a reformed individual who is well-versed in Islamic moral principles and the techniques of science and technology, to produce an alternate model of governance and development. Second, by relying on jihad as a skill for military training, inculcating a spirit of motivation for waging jihad. For this purpose, jihad mythology is used as an important tool to train the potential Mujahideen by narrating tales of bravery, sacrifice, and success of martyrs and by building faith in martyrdom. Thus, the edifice of the Dawat/Lashkar reformist

philosophy revolves around the ‘twin fields of education and jihad’. There is a symbiotic relationship between the two: the one cannot be separated from the other. Based on this philosophy, a Dawat university is under construction at Markaz Dawat-ul-Irshad, Murdike. It is expected to have five faculties, which will include economics, languages, religious studies, computer science, and management. Boarding and lodging facilities would be available, and Muslims from all over the world would be encouraged to join the university.

Hafiz Saeed's religious and political philosophy is challenging and innovative. It has been correctly observed that jihad has varied meanings and interpretations among Muslims, from a ‘spiritual, intellectual struggle’ to a ‘recourse to armed warfare’. Similarly, for Western observers, it also poses problems of interpretation and implications (Sivan). Hafiz Saeed provides yet another interpretation which is both problematic and challenging. He postulates a complementarity between holy war and education. According to Hafiz Saeed (Ekbeer, August 1999):

Islam propounds both Dawa and Jihad. Both are equally important and inseparable. Since our life revolves around Islam, therefore both Dawa and Jihad are essential. We cannot prefer one over the other. This was also the practice of the Prophet (PBUH). If beliefs and morals are not reformed, Dawa alone develops into mysticism and Jihad alone may lead to anarchy. Therefore, recognizing the salience of Dawa and Jihad, the need is to fuse the two together. This is the only way to bring about change among individuals, society, and the world.

Thus, the distinguishing characteristic of the Lashkar is its emphasis on integrating tabligh with jihad. The two are portrayed and propounded as inseparable. Hafiz Saeed further contends that jihad and modern education are intertwined. He reminds Muslims that when they ‘gave up Jihad, science and technology also went into the hands of others. This is natural. The one who possesses power also commands science, the economy, and politics.’

So jihad is presented as a military skill and essential for political power. Among the religio-political groups, Dawat-ul-Irshad is clear in advocating that modern education does not conflict with religious education: the two need to be merged. It strongly propounds the teaching of modern management, computer sciences, and communication along with religious education. Modern technology should be used and adopted to pursue Islamic education and for providing military training. This concept of jihad, on one hand, gives a boost to training and education, and on the other, declares armed warfare as a legitimate goal. It does have seeds of popular appeal and motivation.

Hafiz Saeed maintains an analytic distinction between ‘Islamic politics’ and ‘democratic politics’. He maintains that politics is a vital component of Islam, but that the Western concept of democracy and elections is un-Islamic. Hafiz Saeed is clearly guided by considerations of power. To him, politics means control over people, ‘harnessing their capabilities and evolving an efficient administrative machinery’. Dawa and jihad perform these tasks; this is Islamic politics; it enhances the potentialities of Muslims. It is in this framework that he rejects Western democracy and propounds that politics must lead to harnessing people’s capability and administrative efficiency. Politics must have a purpose and a sense of direction. Obviously, he believes that Western democracy does not fulfill this basic purpose.

Muslims should not change according to changing circumstances; instead, they should revert the circumstances towards Islam. Those who have abandoned Islamic politics and adopted democratic politics and attempted to merge Islamic politics with the former, they changed themselves. They could not bring any change in society; they lost in the process. We are strict and rigid in our approach; therefore, we stand committed to our fundamentals.

Pursuing this logic, Hafiz Saeed defines fundamentalism and says: 'unless one strictly adheres to one's beliefs, only then can one build faith in one's basic principles and convictions. We are convinced that without strictly adhering to our beliefs, we cannot bring any meaningful change. Islam does not absorb un-Islamic ways; it reforms these. Our problem is that we keep on bringing un-Islamic ways into the Islamic system; therefore, Islam becomes restricted.' He does have a puritanical approach and asserts that 'the need is to save the Ummah from this dangerous trend. We need to arrest this trend and instead of adopting other systems, must restructure the entire system on Islamic principles.'

It is in this spirit that he focuses on the 'twin fields of education and jihad' to bring about a transformation in Pakistani society in particular and Muslim societies in general. The basic direction of the Dawat/Lashkar is clear that without military training, education is meaningless. Therefore, training has a special place in the workings of the Lashkar. Training of Mujahideen is done in two stages. The trainers are also divided into two categories: ordinary trainers and specialist trainers. The first stage of training of ordinary trainers comprises 21 days. But before this training, the trainees are asked to go into society for 15 days on a Dawa tour, where they are expected to preach to others. Then there is a three-month waiting period, after which a character evaluation and assessment of the trainees is made from the people of the area. After about four months of evaluation and assessment, the second phase of training starts. This training imparts skills in warfare and guerrilla tactics: how to throw a bomb, how to operate a rocket launcher, carry loads, and march through mountainous areas, the tactics of guerrilla warfare. This training combines three months of religious and commando training.

The Lashkar-e-Taiba claims that the trainee-Mujahideen are recruited from all social classes. Some are rich and prosperous, others belong to the middle classes, and a large number are of humble social origins. These people are genuinely motivated to fight against the infidels and create an Islamic order. Dawat does not regard Osama bin Laden as a criminal and does not support American and Saudi policy towards him.

In 1998, the Lashkar revealed that during 1993-97, 10 of its leaders were martyred in the Kashmir jihad (8 were from Punjab, 1 from Swat, 1 from Afghanistan). Punjabi recruits dominated the Mujahideen fighting in the Kashmir jihad. Upon return from various jihads, the Mujahideen narrate their stories in front of congregations, where these are received with respect and admiration.

Conclusion

The foregoing analysis indicates that the role and significance of religion has undergone radical transformation in Pakistan. The number of religious groups and madrasas has multiplied. Their congregations and conferences have also become more regular and visible. Some of these groups are prolific in pamphleteering Islamic publications. The lower- and middle-income groups, particularly in Punjab, seem to be more vulnerable to Islamic causes,

symbols, and this jihadi culture. This transformation is visible and pronounced, but does not necessarily mean that it could be converted into an expandable support base or ‘vote bank’.

The Lashkar-e-Taiba asserts that a return to the Islamic system is the only choice, and that it provides a fresh model of education and Muslim renaissance which will revive the Islamic spirit. Through education and jihad, the Lashkar appears to be ‘reconstructing’ an Islamic identity. Hafiz Saeed argues that the Lashkar is playing a major role in transforming Pakistani society: through its educational institutions, it is producing a new breed of Pakistanis. These men are semi-educated but motivated to wage ‘holy war’. The Lashkar leadership is correct in diagnosing that people are alienated from the present political system, but this alienation does not mean that they are eager to accept the alternative that the Lashkar-e-Taiba offers.

From the point of view of the Pakistani nation-building process, Islamist movements such as the Dawat-ul-Irshad/Lashkar-e-Taiba play a rather ambivalent role. On the one hand, they put a stress on the equation between Islam and Pakistan, and on the other hand, they promote transnational activities on behalf of Islam, an activity which is bound to blur the identity and the frontiers of the nation-state. Building bridges between the transnational aspirations of such Islamist movements and the demands of nation-building is becoming a daunting task in Pakistan.

Note

I have translated largely from the following Urdu publications. For an extensive and wide-ranging discourse on Hafiz Saeed’s worldview, see his interview in Takbeer (Urdu), Karachi, 12 August 1999, pp. 37-39. For reports on annual congregations, narration of martyrdom syndrome, see Zindagi, 15-21 November 1998, pp. 38-41. For information on university, educational philosophy, training, and other aspects of the organization of congregations, see Aldawa, October 1996, pp. 15-19; December 1996, pp. 17-40; March 1996, pp. 41-43; 1992, pp. 50-53; August 1995, pp. 47-48.

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