

**Marketing Muhammad:
Competing Sunnah-brands on post-modern Islamic identity markets**

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As the title tells, the paper tries to compare and analyze the production and marketing of symbolic Sunnah-systems, image- and behaviour-systems of an ideal Muslim so to say, on an increasingly pluralistic religious market applying the metaphor of Religious Economics. Freedom of religion has led to the emergence of increasingly deregulated religious markets, with competing actors offering their salvation goods in order to increase their market shares. Challenged by and coping with modernity and globalization, world religions have undergone a dramatic transformation during recent decades with consumers' preferences of new religious goods and services shaping the religious change. Once a religious market is open to competition, more exclusivist and demanding groups create new religious products and practices, advertising their new way of life through semantics, which heavily rely on the cultural codes of individualism, experience, consumerism, and pragmatism. Under the condition of increasing consumer-autonomy religious actors cultivate corporate identity, establish brand names, by making the specific qualities of their salvation goods visible in public spaces. In a competitive race for numbers these religious actors compete for impact and recognition, marketing Muhammad.

Personalizing Sunnahs: "ISLAM means I Submit to the Law of Allah and Muhammad"

The term New Religious Movement (NRM) tries to take hold of some of these present processes of transformations of religious organizations from a socio-religious perspective.

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

For visual impressions of the fieldwork, see: <http://picasaweb.google.de/thomas.gugler>,

Da'wat-e Islami in Pakistan: http://www.zmo.de/muslime_in_europa/ergebnisse/gugler/index_en.html

Da'wat-e Islami in Spain: http://www.zmo.de/muslime_in_europa/ergebnisse/gugler/index-spain2.htm

Da'wat-e Islami in UK: http://www.zmo.de/muslime_in_europa/ergebnisse/gugler/index_uk08.htm .

Especially migrants, who are sometimes forced to cope with the anonymity of metropolizes, tend to prefer smaller religious groups, which enforce the tendency to prioritize religious identity over other chosen identities, and resemble migrants' predominantly rural backgrounds in providing mutual social and emotional support. NRMs usually take the form of small religious units. The *differentiae specifica*e of NRMs are that i) membership is not predetermined by family background, ii) converts are recruited from a specific social sphere, mostly the new middle class, iii) a charismatic leader (in Urdū: *amīr*, *negrān*) regulates all aspects of life (marriage, eating and sleeping habits, clothing and hair - especially beard - style), iv) the markers of belonging are clearly visible, and v) the organizational structures are characterized by a certain fluidity. NRMs have a high turnover rate, with people joining for a short time and then deciding for one reason or another to drop out again. Membership usually consists of first-generation converts, called reverts or born-again, who tend to be exceptionally enthusiastic, even zealous. In the Diaspora converts are mostly second-generation migrants who are disillusioned with the society that excluded them, often unemployed and as yet unmarried. This supplies NRMs with a steady flow of inexperienced but healthy members who are unencumbered by responsibilities. Charismatic groups are highly cohesive. As with other small groups of highly religious young men, the network is held together by a strong in-group love and not out-group hate, as outsiders usually assume. Indeed, social bonds and mutual social and emotional support are the crucial elements in the development of a common identity. In an atmosphere of unconditional acceptance and support, NRMs reward conformity and implicitly punish alienation. At the same time NRMs are generally disruptive at the family level and occasionally at the social level. As a rule, they reject prevailing religious beliefs. A common characteristic of strongly held belief systems is that they are relatively simple and straightforward – they tend to be painted in primary colours, without the messy grey areas that older religions have acquired. NRMs have charismatic leaders and preach sharp boundaries. Their identity markers are mostly simple, and they use plenty of them. The activities of the members are monitored closely by a designated observer or “caretaker”. Besides social support and relief from personal anxiety, members experience the benefits of travel opportunities and health-promoting behaviours (strict prohibition of drugs, alcohol and sexual promiscuity). Another characteristic is the relatively high homogeneous age, geographical roots and place of recruitment. The new forms of religiosity are communitarian, exclusive in the sense that a clear line divides the saved from the damned, and inclusive in the sense that all aspects of life come under the aegis of religion. They are individualistic, very mobile, weakly institutionalized and anti-intellectual.

Missionary activities are of the essence for new religious movements, and the majority of society is usually suspicious about those.



Sikh boy embracing Islam at the Faizan-e Madina in Athens. His new name is “Saif Ullah”.

Barelwiyat ka agent kaun?

The *Ahl-e Sunnat wa'l Jama'at* have opposed the astonishingly fruitful missionary efforts of the Deobandi Faith Revival Movement *Tablighī Jamā'at* in many different ways, often reinforcing the traditions of hatred and mistrust between Barelwis and Deobandis. The most popular and widely circulated publications declaring *tablighī* activities anti-Islamic and “*Wahhabi bidat*” are written by the charismatic *munazir* (debater) Allama Arshād ul-Qādirī (5. March 1925 – 29. April 2002). He wrote *Tablighī Jamā'at*, *Tablighī Jamā'at āhādīs kī rośnī me* (Urdū: TJ in the light of hadīth), *Zalzala* (Urdū: Convulsion), *Zer-o-Zabar* (Urdū: Complete Destruction (of Dēoband), written during his third imprisonment for causation of communal violence in 1979), and *Da'wat-e Insāf* (Urdū: Call for Justice). In all these publications he cites evidence that *tablighī* activities destroy fundamentals of Islam like family or freedom of choice and explains how lay preachers betray ordinary Muslims through “cheap fake-symbols of piety”. After a few years Arshād ul-Qādirī has then made a very interesting U-turn in his politics of power, i.e. power of defining what tradition is and what not. Religious traditions, which have always been in a constant state of change, sometimes seem as ephemeral as fashion trends in the post-traditional world of late-modernity. Strategies of change of religious traditions, processes of retraditioning, seem to be

highly rational and aim to implement change in ways that maximize membership and resources.

As publishing hatred-pamphlets alone did not show the intended limiting effects on the success story of the Tablighī Jamā'at, Arshād ul-Qādirī began to stress the idea, that the Tablighī Jamā'at should better be “destroyed by its own weapons”. After studying the Tablighī dynamics of mobilization, Arshād ul-Qādirī strived to set up a rival Barelwī organization, which in its impact and activities should be comparable to the TJ. His first attempt was the World Islamic Mission (www.wimnet.org),² *Al-Da'wat-ul-Islamīyat-ul-A'lamīyah*, which Arshād ul-Qādirī and the Karachi-based Shāh Ahmad Nūrānī (1. Oct. 1926 - 11. Dec. 2003), since 1973 head of the *Jam'iyat-e 'Ulamā'-ye Pakistān* (JUP), launched in Mecca in 1972. With its head-office in Bradford (<http://www.wimuk.com>), the WIM was the first Barelwī organization, which systematically funded missionary travels on the global stage, setting up several educational institutions as well. However, the WIM faced serious difficulties in organizing and upholding an incoming flow of funds and in this respect the organization must be called a failure. It never had the abilities to do what it was supposed to.

The next trial to set up a rival Barelwī Tablighī Jamā'at should prove to be far more fruitful. In September 1981 Arshād ul-Qādirī attended a meeting with other Barelwī *ulama* in Karachi at the house of Shāh Ahmad Nūrānī. During this meeting Muhammad Wiqaruddīn Qādirī (1915-92) proposed the name of Muhammad Ilyās Qadirī as the amir of a tabligh movement called Da'wat-e Islāmī. Ilyās Qadirī is *khalifah* of Muhammad Ziauddīn Ahmad Qādirī Madnī (1877-1981), and the only *khalifah* of Wiqaruddīn Qādirī. Ilyas Qādirī 'Attar was chosen for a number of reason: i) his name resembling the founder of Tablighī Jamā'at, ii) DI was founded to mobilize primarily youngsters, which the 31-year old has already proven to be good in as he was the then president of *Anjuman Tulaba-ye Islām*, JUP's youth wing (Behuria 2008:72) iii) him being a Memon, making it likely to keep up flows of funding from the Memon business communities in India and Pakistan.

Spiritual Marketplace

The Barelwī tradition was so forced by the Tablighīs to redefine itself against new players on the market. They did so by cultivating specialized identities, serving a small market niche. The obvious paradox is that markets are not very good at tradition. Markets thrive for

² Compare: <http://www.wimmauritus.org> .

innovation, on ephemeral fads and fashions. Markets constantly itch for new products. The tradition's logic as a community of memory and commitment must undermine or counterbalance rather than reinforce market logic. At the end of the 20th century, Barelwī leaders had to reconnect to the writings of Imam Ahmad Raza (1856-1921), translating those sets of beliefs and practices serving as benchmark for Barelwī identity into contemporary language and a system of public and shared codes and schemas, that provide interpretive frameworks and rules, that organize action and create an environment conducive to conversion.

Stressing universal brotherhood among Muslims, Da'wat-e Islāmī expanded rapidly in Sindh. With its headquarters at the "Faizan-e Madinah" in Karachi, Da'wat-e Islāmī (www.dawateislami.net) has by now become a transnational tabligh movement. Since end of 2007 Da'wat-e Islāmī is officially the largest religious movement in Pakistan, as Tablighī Jamā'at is not seen as a Jamā'at by the Islamabad Department of Religious Affairs. Da'wat-e Islāmī is active in about 66 countries, the most important centres being in South Asia, South Africa, and the UAE. The movement is also maintaining centres, called "Faizan-e Madinahs", in North America and European countries (particularly in Greece, Spain and the UK). During Ramazan 2008 Da'wat-e Islāmī launched its own television channel "Madani channel", which can be viewed in more than hundred countries.



Piety of action and new voluntarism: Travelling together, sharing and spreading one's faith (Multan).

While Da'wat-e Islāmī copies the structure and activities of Tablighī Jamā'at, their members differ from them in appearance mainly because of their green turban. The green colour of the turban, indicating their focus on the green dome of the Prophet in Madīna (*Masjid an-*

Nabawī), is regarded as their trade mark. The six points of action of the Tablīghī Jamā'at (*che bāten*) are worked out into 72 directives, the Madīna-rewards (*madanī in'amat*), which serve as guidelines to evaluate the daily performance in the *madanī card*, which has to be forwarded to one's *zamindar* once a month. This *madanī card* is also a tool for formalizing the *murīd's* (disciple) relation to the *murshid* (master), as the monthly points collected according to the 72 rewards indicate the *pīr's* love for the adherent (*dost* – friend of 'Attār, *pyārā* – the cherished one of 'Attār, *mehbūb* – dear to 'Attār's heart, or *manzūr-e nazar* – favourite of 'Attār). 'Attārī's handbook of the Sunnas resembles the main book of the Tablīghī Jamā'at, "*Fazā'il-e A'māl*", and is entitled "*Faizān-e Sunnat*" (Urdū: Spiritual Benefits of the Sunnah). The movement requests all followers to take *bay'a*, oath of allegiance, to Ilyās Qādirī 'Attār, guaranteeing consumer-loyalty. The *bay'a* can for example be done by clicking on the homepage www.dawateislami.net on the top point "Become a Mureed".



Advertizing its homepage in the Faizan-e Madina in Birmingham, UK.

Members of the Da'wat-e Islāmī imitate the symbols of piety introduced by the Tablīghīs into the religious market, especially the prayer-marks on the fore-head. They also stress the length of the beard and the uniform dress code, which is a white *shalwār-qamiz*, with *miswāk* and a green beard-comb in its pocket, a green turban (*'imāma-sharīf*), and a brown or white *madanī cādar*. The Da'wat-e Islāmī has an edge over the Tablīghī Jamā'at as it since 1990 runs its own chain of Madrasas, *Madrassa-tul-Madīna*, with more than 1,000 Madrasas in Pakistan alone.³

³ <http://madrassa.fazaneattar.net> . For a discussion see: International Crisis Group: Pakistan: Karachi's Madrasas and violent Extremism. Brussels: Asia Report N° 190 – 29 March 2007.

Sunni Da'wat-e Islami kā maqbūl-e 'ilm-e Tablīghī Niṣāb

In 1992 the *negrān* (Urdū: care-taker) of the Indian branch of Da'wat-e Islāmī, Maulānā Muhammad Shākir 'Ālī Nūrī, also a Memon, split off to form the independent movement Sunnī Da'wat-e Islāmī (www.sunnidawateislami.net), which has its world headquarters in Mumbai in the *Ismā'īl Habīb Masjid*, where Da'wat-e Islāmī's first weekly *ijtemā*'s in India were held from 1988 onwards.



Annual „Sunnī ijtema“ of Sunnī Da'wat-e Islami in Mumbai.

As in *Sunnī Youth Federation*, “Sunnī” here marks the claim to be connected to the *Ahl-e Sunnat wa'l Jamā'at* (Barelwī) school of thought. Followers of the Sunnī Da'wat-e Islāmī differ from followers of the Da'wat-e Islāmī in appearance because of their white turban. As several Indian Barelwī *ulamā'* suspected Ilyās 'Attār to be a secret agent of the Tablīghī Jamā'at, they hesitated to support him when *Madanī work* began in Mumbai in 1988, propagating that those Da'wat-e Islāmī activities – keeping Muslims after prayer at the mosque to listen to *dars*, separate families by sending the men around on travel-tours -⁴ would not be Barelwī, but Dēobandī *bidat*, innovation.⁵ SDI's *darsī kitāb* is a commentary on selected *ahadīth*, too. Resembling Ilyās 'Attār's “*Faizān-e Sunnat*” it was first called “*Faizān-*

⁴ Other points of criticism were that, Ilyas Attār used the title “Amīr-e Ahl-e Sunnat” and claimed that it is obligatory for Muslims to wear the green turban.

⁵ Usually Deobandis claim that Barelwis introduced plenty of bidat. Cf. Qasmi, Matloob Ahmad: What is Sunnat & What is Bidat. New Delhi: Adam Publishers 2008.

e Sharī'at” (Urdū: Spiritual Benefit of the *Sharī'ah*, 1999 written by Maulānā Muhammad Ibrāhīm Āshī) with the subtitle explaining it to be the Barelwī *Tablīghī Niṣāb*, but meanwhile officially renamed “*Barakāt-e Sharī'at*” (Urdū: Blessings of the *Sharī'at*) and rewritten by Maulānā Shākir 'Ālī Nūrī. SDI's publishing house is modelled after the Maktaba-tul-Madina of Da'wat-e Islāmī and named Maktaba-ye Taiba.



Maktaba-ye Taiba being Mumbai's Maktaba-tul-Madina.

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

The three movements stress piety of action as well as the strict and literal imitation of the life of the Prophet (*sunnat an-nabī*) in all aspects of the daily routine. As missionary, *dā'ī*, the lay preacher has to act like a perfect, ideal Muslim, a Super-Muslim, so to speak. Selling Sunnas as salvation goods,⁶ the lay preachers are at the same time promoters and consumers of the commodities they promote. The commodity they are prompted to put on the market, promote and sell are themselves. As the three missionary movements compete for impact, politics of visibility is of the essence for them. The test they need to pass in order to be admitted to the social prizes they covet demands them to recast themselves as commodities, as products capable of catching the attention and attracting demand and customers (Baumann 2007: 6). With the interpretation of Sunnah as a normative system of life-styles the Missionary movements transform the consumer into a commodity. They mark their lay preachers with easy recognizable symbols and marks of belonging, which exemplify modern processes of transformation in systems of religious practice (Graf 2003) with the means of *Identity Formation* (Eisen 1998). This process I want to call *Sunnaization*.⁷

The “Islamic Project”, the virtual direct of change in society, of these three movements is the “Sunnaization”, that is the re-shaping and re-construction of the daily routine and the individual markers of identity based on the examples of the Prophet and the *Salaf*, the pious ancestors, as portrayed in the *Hadīth*-Literature. This so-called “non-political” Sunnaization can be understood as the privatization or individualization of political re-Islamization.⁸ It focuses the private sphere instead of the state and argues with *ahadīth* rather than the *Qur'ān*. Each of the three movements produced its specific commentary on selected hadith *Fazā'il-e A'māl*, *Faizān-e Sunnat* or *Barakāt-e Sharī'at*, focussing on the Sunna of the Prophet, *sunnat an-nabī*. The Barelwī lay preachers have yet no publication on the Sunna of the Salaf, *sunnat as-salaf*, which would be comparable to the *Hayāt as-Sahābah*. These Sunnah-catechisms teach a very specific Islamic etiquette in drinking, eating, walking, greeting, sleeping, brushing teeth, combing the beard, etc. “Sunnaization” is a process to encourage people to establish the “Sunnas of the Prophet”, which means that every individual establishes deep, unambiguous and public visible ties to the Prophet in his personal daily worlds of living. It also means to regulate one's behaviour by either substituting norms of behaviour (for example

⁶ Cf.: Moore, Robert Laurence: *Selling God. American Religion in the Marketplace of Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press 1994. Cf. also: Shields, Rob (Ed.): *Lifestyle Shopping. The Subject of Consumption*. London: Routledge 1992.

⁷ Not to be confused with the concept of *Sunnification* as defined by Burton Benedict in his work *Mauritius – The Problems of a Plural Society* (London: Pall Mall Press 1965), p. 39: “Sunnification means the abandonment of local and sectarian practices in favour of a uniform orthodox practice.”

⁸ Cf. Roy, Olivier: *Globalised Islam. The Search for a New Ummah*. New Delhi: Rupa 2005.
Cf. Roy, Olivier: *Secularism Confronts Islam*. New York Chichester: Columbia University 2007.

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

This re-essentialized Sunnah systems become normative systems of life-styles, apparently emanating the power of transformation to convert a competition-ridden society of egomaniac subjectivity fetishists into a supportive community of loving brothers and sister following Muhammad.



Dars from Faizan-e Sunnat at the haftawa ijtema' of Da'wat-e Islami in Bengaluru, India.

“I have never seen such long beards and such dark spots on the foreheads”⁹

The focus however, is the stage-managing of the lay preachers' imitation of the Prophet in the public sphere. Equipped with the symbols of the Super-Muslim, “all the paraphernalia to win over the hearts of the people”,¹⁰ the lay preacher serves as a role-model for the ordinary Muslim. Neatly dressed-up followers and a demonstrative culture of cleanliness and discipline are central elements of re-essentialized religious symbol systems. As agents of “hard religion” the lay-preachers of Da'wat-e Islāmī compete with Tablīghīs in an aggressive rat-race for

⁹ Arshad ul-Qadri describing the Tablighi Jama'at in: *Tableeghi Jamaat*. Mumbai: Sunni Youth Federation 2000, p. 17.

¹⁰ Arshad ul-Qadri describing the Tablighi Jama'at in: *Tableeghi Jamaat*. Mumbai: Sunni Youth Federation 2000, p. 14.

supplying salvation services. As the lay-preachers also compete with modern and secular recreational activities the modernization of religious rituals include active marketing measures like the staging of religious mass-events (annual *ijtemā's*) with regional TV and sport-stars.



Faisal Iqbal and Imran Farhat, cricket players from the Pakistani National Team at the annual *ijtemā'* of *Da'wat-e Islami* in Multan.

The lay preachers support the in by capitalism transformed modern societies visible trend towards consumer-autonomy and individualization of religious participation and created programmes for expressive individualism and religious event culture – religion as an experience-factory. As a youth-movement especially the *Da'wat-e Islāmī* systematically focuses on new consumer groups, who tend to be secondarily in traditional Islamic religious fields, which are usually dominated by male elders. The imitatio Muhammadi is not just a means to generate *sawab*, but also social capitals like trust- and authenticity-capitals. The Islamic dress code serves in the here and now as a *freedom-ticket* with which young Muslims can autonomously generate social capital, which allow them to re-shape the Islamic religious field in their immediate environment. One can also talk about the Missionary Movements of health & wealth religions, which not just propagate a healthy lifestyle (no drugs, no promiscuity), but also integrate their followers in permanent-expanding trader-networks, thereby creating long-term social-structural processes of middle class formation.



Madani Qafilah Maktab registers volunteers after the ijtema' in the Faizan-e Madina Bradford, UK.

Simul iustus et peccator [simultaneously saint and sinner]

Central elements of this new religiosity is its increasingly engagement of the audience in interactive tasks, like responding to questions during a sermon, new voluntarism, like pressuring people to join missionary tours, and a new focus on seeker spirituality, emphasizing expressive individualism and emotional experience over doctrine and ritual.¹¹ Religious restructuring also seems to be characterised by a new and specific fluidity, allowing different communities to borrow from others' traditions. The direction of religious change is from confessionalism toward pietism, riding the wave of individualism and privatization of religion. Revivalists stress individual conversion and the increasing efforts of individuals to lead lives of moral purity. The semantics of the new morality, as codified in the Faza'íl-e A'māl (TJ), Faizan-e Sunnat (DI), Faizan-e Šarī'at (SDI), and Barakāt-e Šarī'at (SDI), speak an unambiguous language. This new morality is central for the identity of the born-again: though born as a Muslim, all Da'wat-e Islāmī adherents I interviewed, told me that they were perfect sinners before they entered the environment of Da'wat-e Islāmī and now they are "slowly slowly insha'Allah" steadfast on the path of betterment. This attitude mixes with the awareness, that every action is *'ibādat*, worship and proof for the love to the Prophet.

¹¹ Wuthnow, Robert, 1998: *After Heaven*. Berkeley: University of California Press.



Doing du'a, with tears visualizing the sincerity of repentance. Annual ijtema' of DI in Multan.

The spirit of being perfectly sinful however is permanently reaffirmed, for example through spiritual practices that help individuals experience the sacred, like in the "*Fikr-e Madina*" (anxiety for paradise), when the adherent sits alone, isolated, crying for the Beloved Prophet to save him and asking himself: "What all did I do today? Why did I move from A to B? What made me say all my words? What will I respond at the Day of Judgement when questioned about my activities of this day?"

This "ritual" is emotionally that intense, that just me asking about it, usually brings tears to the eyes of my interview-partners. And after many interviews, in which I had to make clear, that I have no interest to accept Islam, my interview partners requested me at least to try *Fikr-e Madina* when I get home and "insha'Allah experience a Madina transformation" in myself. Seemingly like: "If you are not willing to become a saint, at least feel like a sinner."

The frontier tradition of revivalism, after redefining the purpose of worship, ergo has a greater emphasis rather on prayer and preaching than on *kalima* and *shahada*, i.e. a greater emphasis on individuals' emotional experience. The lay preachers' emotional obsession with the Day of Judgement has not yet received appropriate scholarly attention. Probably the most widely circulated tablīghī publication is Ashiq Ilahis "What happens after Death?" [marne ke ba'd kia

hoga?] Its obvious preoccupation with the Day of Judgement is implicitly built on massive world destruction fantasies, which take very sharp and concrete forms at times. Chapter titles like “Disgrace of the Infidels”, “Pressing of the Unbelievers and Hypocrites”, “Allah’s address to the Martyrs”, “Dragons tormenting in the grave”, “Boiling water poured over heads”, “Punishment for Arrogants”, “Screaming and crying of Hellish people”, and “Laughter of the Heavenly People” tell a colourful picture primarily painted in black and white. The lay preachers’ projections on the Day of Judgement seem to mix feelings of sadness and disgust with the world, “Mostly women and wealthy in Hell”, with deep depersonalization and a cosmic narcissism: “Stature, Piety and Beauty of the Heavenly men”, “Heavenly men will be beardless”, “Health and Youth of the Heavenly men”, “Mutual love of the Heavenly”, “Maidens with big, beautiful and lustrous eyes.”, and “Polygamy for males”. The lay preachers’ reemphasis on the post-resurrection identity underlines the communal aspects of the new religiosity.

Another central aspect of the new religiosity is the new relationship among tradition, community and authority. The market condition creates an environment, in which lay preachers without any formal Islamic education act as religious entrepreneurs using moral language to sell Sunnah-salvation-items in a consumer-friendly way. The participation of lay preachers in these new tradition-systems, which are in a constant state of change as change is a built-in feature of tradition, transforms those into lived, into experienced traditions. Tradition becomes an activity.

These strategies of change follow larger religious trends, which are in parts comparable to the transformation processes we see implemented through Pentecostals. The tool kit of religious change that translates and reframes religious language seems to be similar. The increasing demand of individual and personal sacrifice is effectively sold as something which has nothing to do with giving up, but becoming individually sacred. Regarding the phenomenology of religions, it seems that we have parallel processes of change here and there: stressing personal transformation through developing a personal relationship with one’s Prophet, the increasing imperative to share one’s faith with unbelievers in an aggressively expressive, joyful, and soulful mode of religion. Especially in the last task it seems that Da’wat-e Islāmī has an edge over the Tablighī Jamā’at, which might be the reason for its success story and the visible change it has brought to Pakistani society.

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