



THE *TABLIGHI JAMAAT* AND ITS IMPACT ON  
MALAYSIAN SOCIETY

BY

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A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for  
the degree of Master of Art in Islamic and Other  
Civilizations

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## ABSTRACT

This research has been undertaken to examine the methodology of *Da'wah* used by the *Tablighi Jamaat* and to explore the Islamic influence and spread of the movement in contemporary Malaysia. To carry out this study, the researcher used data collected from books, journals, articles, newspapers, government reports and websites. Also, the researcher carried out interviews with five individuals, two of which are not members of the *Tablighi Jamaat*, while the other three are, and among them is the *Amir* of *Tabligh* for Malaysia. Fieldwork was conducted on numerous occasions at the Sri Petaling *Markaz* as well as various other *Masaajid* in Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Malacca and Johor Bahru. Towards this end, the researcher found that despite criticism around the world about the *Tablighi Jamaat* and weaknesses its members may possess in terms of Islamic knowledge, the initiative to carry the message of Islam is seen within them. In Malaysia, the cultural impact upon society is apparent and rich. This however does not conform with the practices of *Tabligh*, which is seen to be an opposing factor to the method of Islam practiced in the country. This research discovered from interviews that the differences between them can pose tensions within communities which at times seem to be harmless petty issues, yet could escalate into feeling a threat towards ones culture should a different practice of Islam be introduced. Members and leaders of the *Tablighi Jamaat* in Malaysia feel due to recent visits by political party leaders, including the Prime Minister, that they are achieving their mission one step at a time.

## ملخص البحث

وقد أجري هذا البحث لدراسة منهجية الدعوة التي تستخدمها جماعة التبليغ ولاستكشاف التأثير الإسلامي وانتشار الحركة في ماليزيا المعاصرة. لتنفيذ هذه الدراسة، استخدم الباحث البيانات التي تم جمعها من الكتب والمجلات والمقالات والصحف والتقارير الحكومية ومواقع الانترنت. أيضا، قام بما الباحث مقابلات مع خمسة أفراد، اثنان منها ليست أعضاء في جماعة التبليغ، في حين أن الثلاثة الآخرين منها، وبينهم أمير التبليغ عن ماليزيا. أجري العمل الميداني في مناسبات عديدة في المركز سري بيتالينج فضلا عن مختلف مساجد أخرى في كوالالمبور وبينانغ وملاكا وجوهور باهرو. تحقيقا لهذه الغاية، وجد الباحث رغم من الانتقادات حول العالم حول جماعة التبليغ وضعف أعضائها من حيث المعرفة الإسلامية، أنهم يملكون زمام المبادرة لنشر رسالة الإسلام. في ماليزيا، الأثر على المجتمع الثقافي هو واضح وغنية. لكن هذا لا يتوافق مع ممارسات التبليغ، والتي ينظر إليها على أنها عامل المنافس لطريقة الإسلام الذي يمارس في البلاد. اكتشف هذا البحث من المقابلات أن الخلافات بينهما يمكن أن تشكل التوترات داخل المجتمعات التي تبدو في بعض الأحيان إلى أن تكون قضايا تافهة وغير مؤذية، ولكن يمكن أن تتصاعد إلى الشعور تهديدا نحو الثقافة. يشعر أعضاء وقيادات جماعة التبليغ في ماليزيا بسبب زيارات مؤخرا من قبل قادة الأحزاب السياسية، منهم رئيس الوزراء، أنهم يحققون مهمتهم بخطوة خطوة.

## APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts in Islamic and Other Civilizations.

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Ahmad F. Yousif  
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts Islamic and Other Civilizations.

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Dean, International Institute of  
Islamic Thought and  
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## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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To my family, firstly my parents, from the deepest part of my heart, I thank you! There isn't a day which passes that I don't ask Allah to forgive you both and to bless you with goodness. My constant travels in search and spread of Islamic knowledge has rendered us apart for over a decade, and I'm sorry. There were, and continue to be times where dropping everything and returning home to help you feels right, yet I know not only do you support me along this quest, but you encourage me to continue, regardless of the hardships upon you. I wish to be that child who supplicates to Allah for you after your death, taking the rewards thereof with you.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract .....	ii
Abstract in Arabic .....	iii
Approval Page.....	iv
Declaration .....	v
Copyright Page.....	vi
Acknowledgements .....	vii
List of Figures .....	x
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction .....	1
1.2 Research Objectives .....	3
1.3 Research Methodology.....	3
1.4 Literature Review .....	7
<b>CHAPTER TWO: FOUNDER AND BIRTH OF THE <i>TABLIGHI JAMAAT</i>11</b>	
2.1 The Foundation: .....	11
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RISE OF THE <i>TABLIGHI JAMAAT</i> IN CONTEMPORARY MALAYSIA.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: PRINCIPAL CHARACTERISTICS, PHILOSOPHY AND METHODOLOGY OF MALAYSIAN <i>TABLIGH</i> FOLLOWERS .....</b>	<b>25</b>
4.1 Philosophy.....	25
4.2 Methodology and Principal Characteristics .....	30
4.2.1 <i>Jamaat</i> Excursions .....	30
4.2.2 Daily Routine .....	32
4.2.3 <i>Gasht</i> .....	36
4.2.4 <i>Tablighi</i> Literature .....	38
4.2.5 <i>Tablighi</i> Schools .....	39
4.2.6 <i>Ijtemas</i> .....	39
4.2.7 Behaviour and Attitude .....	41
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: AREAS OF CONTENTION AFFECTING ISLAM IN MALAYSIA.....</b>	<b>43</b>
5.1 Cultural Influence.....	44
5.1.1 Clothing.....	48
5.1.2 Local Practices .....	50
5.1.3 Language .....	51
5.1.4 Food in the Masjid .....	52
5.2 <i>Gasht</i> Backlash.....	54
5.3 Women and Family .....	57
5.4 Government Support .....	62
<b>CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>68</b>



**BIBLIOGRAPHY .....76**  
APPENDIX: INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS .....83

## LIST OF FIGURES

<u>Figure No.</u>		<u>Page No.</u>
3.1	Masjid Benggali, Georgetown Penang, Malaysia	19
5.1	<i>Tabligh</i> members preparing to listen to <i>Bayaan</i> at Sri Petaling, Malaysia.	48
5.2	Prime Minister Najib Razak seen at Sri Petaling <i>Markaz</i>	63
5.3	Prime Minister of Malaysia, Najib Razak, supplicating with members of <i>Tablighi Jamaat</i> at Sri Petaling <i>Markaz</i>	65
5.4	Najib Razak seen addressing <i>Tabligh</i> efforts in Malaysia	67

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

“What is the *Tablighi Jamaat*?” In almost every country around the globe where one travels to and where Muslims are found, this question can and has been asked. For many it is not merely curiosity but it has been a part of their upbringing and how they define themselves as Muslims. Some may have gone out in *Jamaat* at one point or another in their life, while others may only be hearing about *Tabligh* today. No matter what the case, the simple fact that this movement has, within less than one hundred years, spread at such a rapid rate and so extensively, is enough to warrant further research.

Islam, as a divinely inspired way of life, came through the Prophet Muhammad (may the peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in its entirety and has been practiced for centuries. As such, it addressed all of humankind and its system was and is universal in its application, regardless of nationality, culture or time period. When one considers this point, it is only natural that upon hearing of a new movement that distinguishes themselves in a very particular manner, one would have many questions. If the religion of Islam is considered complete, why the need for a new set of practices? What are the *Tablighi Jamaat*'s true origins? What was and is its purpose? Are its essential practices, methodology, theology, philosophy and ideology different than those of Muhammad or are they simply a renewal or revival of Islam's true teachings that many believe have been lost over time?

In search of answers to these and many other questions related to the *Tablighi Jamaat*, one would be hard-pressed to find a selection of English books that has done the topic justice in an objective manner. Most, if not all, are written with the purpose of influencing the reader either towards or away from the movement. As a graduate of the Islamic University of Madinah in Saudi Arabia, one may think that the ideal and only way to create awareness about a new movement within Islam is through refutation, as is the case with most dissertations at various Islamic universities across Saudi Arabia. But being raised in the multicultural society of Canada, and upon the values and practices of the *Tablighi Jamaat*, it becomes a passion to research this topic in a more effective fashion.

To refute is not a challenge for many writers; but to objectively merge opposing or varying perspectives into one research can, at times, confront one's own feelings towards the subject, thus increasing the complexity of the task. What this research aims to do is to address the above concerns objectively, one of the reasons being to refrain from adding to the existing divisions amongst present day Muslims. This research should leave its readers to make their own intellectual decision regarding *Tabligh* and take their own stance. Not only that, but it should also broaden the minds of those who are devout followers and promoters of the *Tablighi Jamaat* and perhaps encourage further research on the topic.

As an added advantage, being a former member of the movement allows for a broader perspective of the problematic issues that have emerged with respect to the ongoing impact that the *Tablighi Jamaat* has on Malaysian society. These include a number of issues, in particular the 'Indianization' of Islam, such as those apparent in the realm of clothing, food and language, as is evident in lifestyle and actions of the members of the movement. Additionally, Indonesia, an environment similar to

Malaysia, faces the matter of members sleeping and cooking in the *Masaajid*. These, and other related issues, are points of contention between *Tabligh* members, who strictly adhere to their principles without alteration, and those who oppose or resist its influence.

## 1.2 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- Define the origin and founder of the *Tablighi Jamaat*.
- Explain the philosophy of the movement as taught by their leaders.
- Identify key characteristics of the movement.
- Examine the methodology of *da'wah* used by the *Tablighi Jamaat*.
- Explore the influence and spread of the *Tablighi Jamaat* in contemporary Malaysia.

## 1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This qualitative study will combine three methods of research: library, internet and fieldwork. In order to fully grasp the social, political and historical context surrounding the emergence of *Tabligh*, books related to the history of the Indian subcontinent will be crucial. *The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan*<sup>1</sup> is one such resource that sheds light upon various socio-political incidents that affected the region. A number of papers and journal articles will also be used, as books written entirely on the *Tablighi Jamaat* in the English language are very limited.

The internet will serve as a database where facts found in books can easily be double-checked, specifically the location of some of the *Tablighi* centres. Websites of these centres are particularly useful when it comes to recent facts and figures

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<sup>1</sup> Ziya-ul-Hasan Faruqi. *The Deoband School and the Demand for Pakistan*. Calcutta: Navana Printing Works Private Limited, 1963.

pertaining to the movement as well as current issues and activities. The internet is a unique tool in the sense that it aids in the search of articles found in scholarly journals. This process can be very long and tedious if done manually in a library so the internet is extremely welcome in speeding up and streamlining this process, particularly in this case where books on the topic at hand are few.

With regards to fieldwork, the benefit of having spent a number of years going out with the *Tablighi Jamaat* and being exposed to its practices and having firsthand experiences with them is invaluable as a resource for this research. One can easily conclude this knowing that documentation of this movement is limited. This personal observation and participation becomes all the more important and allows for a deeper understanding of the *Tablighi Jamaat*. Personal experiences and discussions with key members of the *Tablighi Jamaat* will be offered as support or proof for various statements within the research.

Taking into consideration that members of the *Tablighi Jamaat* are found in almost every *Masjid* in the world, it will be easy to interview and observe them and their leaders (commonly referred to as “old workers”). It is clear that fieldwork is essential for this research, hence the need for interviews and observations to be carried out at the Malaysian *Tablighi Markaz* (centre) in Sri Petaling.

The transcripts of 5 interviews which were conducted for the purpose of this research are found in the appendix of this research. The following individuals were selected and interviewed based on either their status within the *Tablighi Jamaat*, their interactions with them, and their educational background.

We begin with the author of *Tabligh: The Misunderstood Jewel of the Last Century*<sup>2</sup>, Muhammad Hanapi Noor. This retired lecturer from the School of Biological Sciences at the Universiti Sains Malaysia is one of the pioneers of the *Tablighi Jamaat* in Malaysia. Having studied in the United States of America, where he became well acquainted with the movement, he then returned to Malaysia with great desire to spread the message of *Tabligh*. He has authored a number of books about *Tabligh* in Malaysia which are readily found. He is one of a select set of individuals who have written about their experiences thus greatly contributing to this research. A trip to Penang was made with intent of interviewing Noor in order to gain a deeper insight into the challenges that the *Tablighi Jamaat* faces here in Malaysia in addition to discussing the contents of his book.

Chandra Muzaffar, President of JUST International, was also interviewed for similar reasons. He is an activist and author with numerous books available related to social justice. Muzaffar significantly contributes to the understanding of social change within Malaysia and grants the reader an interesting insight into what he feels towards the *Tablighi Jamaat* and their impact upon Malaysian society. He has never gone in *Jamaat* before, but knows individuals who have. When answering questions, he is generally to the point and well spoken. Although his knowledge about the movement is not deep, his ability to analyze social change was a desirable asset for this research.

Retired Professor from University Putra Malaysia, Serdang, Dr. Syed Abdul Kadir Alsagoff is an active and long time member of the *Tablighi Jamaat*. His contact with them reaches back to his days as a student in the United States of America beginning at the Ivy League Cornell University. He later went off to the Islamic

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<sup>2</sup> Muhammad Hanapi Noor. *Tabligh: The Misunderstood Jewel of the Last Century*. Penang: Hanapi Publishing House, 2007.

University of Madinah, Saudi Arabia where he completed a diploma in Arabic Language, following which he returned to the United States and completed a PhD at Auburn University in Atlanta. Alsagoff, being a Malay of Yemeni descent is one of the most passionate members of the *Tablighi Jamaat* the researcher has come across in Malaysia. His time spent away in *Jamaat* is incalculable and incomparable with other members of the movement. His eagerness is felt in personal as well as digital interactions with him. He never failed to return calls or text messages, and showed great interest in this research by assisting in arranging meetings with other members of *Tabligh*. The most valuable of them all was an interview with the *Amir of Tablighi Jamaat* in Malaysia, as we will discuss shortly.

Emeritus Professor Dr. Mohamed Aris Othman, a well-known specialist in sociology, former Deputy Dean of International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization as well as former Chairperson of Masjid Jamek Kajang in Selangor shared valuable knowledge towards this study. His experience, whether it be through education, in dealing with society at a community level or within the university realm, is outstanding. Having never been a member of the *Tablighi Jamaat*, Othman explains how he has dealt closely with them from the time he was Chairperson of the *Masjid*. During his tenure he was welcoming towards other Islamic groups that wanted access to the Masjid and its facilities. Friends of his are members of the movement and whenever a foreign *Jamaat* is visiting his community he opens his door to welcome them into his home. Being a social scientist however, was the greatest advantage afforded to this research as it allowed for greater understanding of how the movement has affected the local cultures of Malaysia.

Lastly, one of the most interesting aspects of this research was to finally meet and interview the *Amir of the Tablighi Jamaat*, Abdul Hamid Bin Hasyim. As a local



Malay, he travelled to Pakistan after secondary school to study at a traditional *Madrasah* operated by the movement. Upon his return, and with years of experience in *Tabligh*, Hasyim was appointed as the leader in control of all delegations entering Malaysia as well as those leaving the country. He monitors all affairs at the Sri Petaling *Markaz* and thus is a difficult individual to meet with. Once granted an interview, one can notice how humble and cooperative Hasyim is towards explaining the movement in the Malaysian context. His contribution towards this research was immense, as he is the authority for *Tabligh* in Malaysia. He provided this study with full details pertaining to the movement's daily routine, both at Sri Petaling and throughout the country, the numbers of *Jamaats* dispatched during the year, and relations between religious and government authorities, to name a few. Please note that this interview was conducted in Arabic and transcribed by the researcher into English for the purpose of this study.

#### **1.4 LITERATURE REVIEW**

There are a few books written specifically about the *Tablighi Jamaat* that are useful in describing its key characteristics. Books written by *Tablighi* leaders and their students are now readily available in the English language, having been translated from their original Urdu. Since many of these books are not available in Kuala Lumpur, a recent trip to South Africa allowed for the purchase of a number of these key resources. Included, also, are several published biographies of major members of the *Tablighi Jamaat*.

The author of *Tabligh Made Easy*<sup>3</sup>, Afzal Hoosen Elias, states that “these days there are people who criticise the *Tabligh Jamaat* without checking their activities and there are also those who despite being active members of the *Tabligh Jamaat* do not know why they are undertaking certain tasks.” It is mainly due to this statement that Elias wrote his book. He not only clarifies frequently debated issues pertaining to the *Tabligh* philosophy and methodology, but also provides substantial evidences from the Qur’an and the *Sunnah* to support his arguments. This book provides a detailed list of the majority of the *Tablighi Jamaat’s* practices which allows for further investigation and examination. Elias supports the work of *Tabligh* through his writing and it is crucial to this research’s objectives that information about the *Tablighi Jamaat’s* practices comes from those who endorse it.

To fully comprehend the belief behind the *Tablighi Jamaat*, Muhammad Tayyib Saheb compiled *The Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband*. This book explores the various rulings and methods undertaken by the scholars of Deoband, India, in their attempt to define Islam. Famous for its contribution towards the *Tablighi Jamaat*, Deoband is a hub for Islamic education within India, and renowned worldwide especially among members of *Tabligh*. Saheb allows for a greater awareness of the theological ideologies maintained by the leaders of the *Tablighi Jamaat*. This work sheds light on the belief of the Deoband scholars with regards to the Oneness of Allah, the teachings of Prophet Muhammad, the ways of the companions, traditional culture and customs, pious saints of the past and various other topics. The author examines the preference of the Deobandi scholars for the *Madhhab* (school of jurisprudence) of Imaam Abu Hanifah. Saheb demonstrates how moderation is vital when dealing with *Hadeeth*, thus resulting in a sense of broadmindedness in the ideologies of the

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<sup>3</sup> Afzal Hossen Elias. *Tabligh Made Easy*. Karachi: Zam Zam Publishers, 2003, p. 5.

Deoband scholars. He stresses his view on the importance and mission of the *Darul Uloom Deoband* (Educational Institute in Deoband) with a powerful statement, “if knowledge is not on the back of *Tableegh*, then it will result in a ritual movement which will bring about the downfall of knowledge.”<sup>4</sup>

Another relevant book is that which was edited by Muhammad Khalid Masud. When it comes to demonstrating the influence and reach of the *Tablighi Jamaat*, *Travellers in Faith* provides valuable input. It is a collection of papers written by various authors that focuses primarily on the *Tablighi* movement’s spread throughout the world, highlighting key countries. Especially impressive was the chapter describing the history of the *Tablighi* movement in Canada. This is particularly significant since personal experiences with the group are directly linked to the people and places mentioned therein. Canada’s first and second *Tablighi* boarding *Madrasahs* (schools) are named, one of which was home for two years. This book indicates that the order to build such schools came from direct instructions via one of the leading members of the *Tablighi Jamaat* in India.

Facilitating the examination of opposing stances and issues of contention is the work entitled *The Jamaat Tableegh and the Deobandis*, by Sajid Abdul Kayum. It has the capacity to clarify various misconceptions about the *Tablighi Jamaat* as well as open one’s eyes to essential issues of Islamic creed. Abdul Kayum displays an extensive amount of research on the topic, from its founders to its problems regarding the Islamic creed, in a style aimed at convincing the reader of the *Tablighi Jamaat*’s lack of credibility. He discusses, scrutinizes and refutes various controversial philosophical issues and false claims found within the realm of the *Jamaat* in a

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<sup>4</sup> Muhammad Tayyib Saheb. *The Maslak of the Ulama of Deoband*. Afzal Hossen Elias, (trans.). Karachi: Zam Zam Publishers, 2007, p. 87.

concise manner aimed at convincing the reader on the spot. This will allow for an assessment from a pro-*Tablighi* standpoint.

The above mentioned works are only a few of the many which contributed towards this research. It is important to note, however, that any new findings herein came not only from written literature, but also from interviews contributing greatly to modern knowledge of the movement, particularly within Malaysia.

## CHAPTER TWO

### FOUNDER AND BIRTH OF THE *TABLIGHI JAMAAT*

#### 2.1 THE FOUNDATION:

The origin of the *Tablighi Jamaat* dates back to the late 1800's and early 1900's. Its founder, Muhammad Ilyas Kandhalawi<sup>1</sup>, also known as *Hazratjee*,<sup>2 3</sup> was born in 1885 and lived in Delhi with his father, Muhammad Ismail. Ismail was the Qur'an teacher to the children of Mirza Ilahi Baksh who had a close relationship with the last Mughal Emperor. Mirza had built a Mosque in Delhi, and it was there that Ismail lived while teaching Qur'an until he died in 1898.

Muhammad Ilyas began his early education in Islam as a student of his father. He was the younger brother of only two sons in the family. His brother, Yahya, was a learned Islamic scholar who had taken on the responsibility of operating and maintaining their family business. He did so without the help of Ilyas due to an illness he had which rendered him too weak to perform such demanding work. Yahya decided to support Ilyas throughout his pursuit of knowledge.<sup>4</sup> Later, Ilyas left to study with the teacher of his older brother; Rashid Ahmad Gangohi. It was at his hands that Ilyas pledged allegiance and was sworn into the *Saabiriyyah Chishtiya Sufi* order.<sup>5</sup> Soon after, he was struck with the death of Gangohi which left him in a state

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<sup>1</sup> Farish A. Noor. *Islam on the Move: The Tablighi Jama'at in Southeast Asia*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2012. p. 28.

<sup>2</sup> Sajid Abdul Kayum. *The Jamaat Tableegh and the Deobandis: A critical analysis of their beliefs, books and da'wah*. (no place): Ahya Multi-media, 2001, p.14.

<sup>3</sup> Muhammad Sa'd Sahib. *Priceless Advices-For All Workers of Deen*. Zeyad Danka, (trans.). Stanger: Darul Mazeed, 2010, p. 92.

<sup>4</sup> Wahiduddin Khan. *Tabligh Movement*. Farida Khanam, (trans.). New Delhi: Goodword Books Pvt. Ltd., 2007, pp. 6-7.

<sup>5</sup> Marc Gaborieau. "What is left of Sufism in Tablighi Jama'at?" In *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions*. Editions de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (ed). Vol. 135. Juillet-Septembre, 2006, p. 57. <http://www.assr.revues.org/3731>. Accessed on October 6, 2011.

of shock and rendered him unable to attend classes at the *Darul Uloom* Deoband where he was enrolled. Nevertheless, in 1908 he resumed his studies and graduated in 1910 upon which he went to Basti Nizamuddin found in present day New Delhi. It was at this point in time that he decided to take over teaching and running the *Madrasah* (Islamic School)<sup>6</sup> which had been established by his father with the intent of educating poor students at no charge.<sup>7</sup>

As time went on he had difficulty keeping the school running due to lack of funds as well as its having an education system that, to him, seemed inappropriate for its time. He wanted to make some changes, so he decided to write to one of the school's sponsors, *Haji Rashid Ahmad*, and express his views. It was following this event that Ilyas started to implement a system for *Da'wah* and *Tabligh*.

Sayyid Taalib Ar-Rahmaan, the author of *Jamaa'ah At-Tabligh: 'Aqaaiduhaa wa Ta'reefuhaa* (*The Jamaa'ah At-Tabligh: Its beliefs and definitions*),<sup>8</sup> quotes a statement from Muhammad Ilyas regarding his reasons for starting the movement, in which he says that he was guided towards this way of *Tabligh* when he saw in his dream the *Tafsir* of a verse from the Qur'an. From this verse he derived that one should not hope for the guidance of others, rather one should have intention to be guided, and that it is an indication symbolizing a time when people would leave from place to place, travelling constantly without settling in one place.<sup>9</sup> It was also stated by Maulana Nadwi that after Muhammad Ilyas performed *Hajj* in 1925 he announced how he conceived the idea of *Tabligh*, saying: "During this stay in Madinah, I

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<sup>6</sup> Muhammad Khalid Masud. "The Growth and Development of the Tablighi Jama'at in India." In *Travellers in Faith: studies of the Tablighi Jama'at as a transnational Islamic movement for faith renewal*. Muhammad Khalid Masud, (ed). Leiden: Brill, 2000, p. 6.

<sup>7</sup> Wahiduddin Khan, p. 7.

<sup>8</sup> Sayyid Taalib ar-Rahmaan. *Jamaa'ah At-Tabligh: 'Aqaaiduhaa wa Ta'reefuhaa* (*The Jamaa'ah At-Tabligh: Its beliefs and definitions*). Islamabad: Darul Bayan Linnaashiri wa At-Tawzee', 1999.

<sup>9</sup> Sayyid Taalib Ar-Rahmaan, pp. 26-28.

received orders to do this work. I was told, ‘We shall make you perform this work.’”<sup>10</sup>

There were, at that time, many groups and organizations preaching Islam, including that of Muhammad Ilyas. He eventually came into contact with a similar movement in the town of Ferozpur Namak, which is where he developed his unique methods of *Tabligh*. The first form of *Da’wah* he introduced, which took place between the years 1926 and 1928,<sup>11</sup> was called *Gasht*. This meant visiting Muslims within the area, inviting them towards improving their Islam by coming to the *Masjid* to pray and listen to a short talk. Ilyas introduced it with two additional key features: explaining the correct meaning of the *Kalimah* (Islamic Creed) as well as allowing the *Gasht* to broaden its scope to include the surrounding localities since at first it was only practiced within the vicinity of the poor Mewat region of India.

Mewat, located in the southern part of Delhi, was the main starting point for Ilyas’ *Tabligh* because he considered the inhabitants to be Muslims who had strayed from practicing their religion. The Meo people (inhabitants of Mewat) had mass-converted to Islam through the efforts of “the well-known sufi Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia and his descendants.”<sup>12</sup> It is after him that the famous city of Nizamuddin was named after. Although the conversion took place, its effect on the cultural practices of the people was negligible. These illiterate people continued to practice their festivals to the extent that one would be hard pressed to find an individual who could clearly pronounce the Islamic testimony of faith which is commonly vocalized in the Arabic language.

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<sup>10</sup> Muhammad Khalid Masud, p. 8.

<sup>11</sup> Farish A. Noor, p. 28.

<sup>12</sup> Wahiduddin Khan, pp. 7-8.

Contrary to common practice of most major Islamic movements, this indicates that he set out to spread the teachings of Islam to those who were already Muslim. Farish Noor points out in his book, *Islam on the Move: The Tablighi Jama'at in Southeast Asia*, “the slogan that Ilyas coined – Oh Muslims! Become Muslims – sums up the aims of the movement.”<sup>13</sup> Confirming that the *Tablighi Jamaat* was not intended to target non-Muslims, Muhammad Sa'd Sahib, who is the grandson of Ilyas' successor Maulana Yusuf Sahib, quotes a famous statement of Ilyas as “The objective of this effort is to bring alive all the *sunnats* of *Rasulullah*.”<sup>14</sup>

By 1932, after Muhammad Ilyas performed his third *Hajj*, he decided to expand the activities of the movement and held gatherings for those who were interested in his views of *Da'wah*. Simultaneously he dispatched small groups of followers to the neighbouring towns inviting others to attend his gatherings. In 1933 the groups were being sent out even farther into the country, although Ilyas tried to avoid sending groups to cities where other *Ulema* were active.

As time went on, the *Tablighi Jamaat* extended across all of India and started to make its way to the neighbouring countries. Ilyas died in 1944<sup>15</sup> after being ill for an extended period of time and was buried next to his father's grave in Nizamuddin. His successor was his son Muhammad Yusuf Kandhalawi, known as the second *Amir* of the *Tablighi Jamaat*, and the third *Amir* being In'aamul Hasan who died in 1995. Each of them were in some way related to each other.<sup>16</sup> It was during Hasan's time that the movement rapidly spread across the world. “By the late 1960s, Tablighi

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<sup>13</sup> Farish A. Noor, p. 28.

<sup>14</sup> Muhammad Sa'd Sahib, p. 32.

<sup>15</sup> Vali Nasr. “South Asia from 1919.” In *The new Cambridge History of Islam*. Francis Robinson, (ed). New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010, Volume 5: The Islamic World in the Age of Western Dominance, p. 559.

<sup>16</sup> Alex Alexiev. “Tablighi Jamaat: Jihad's Stealthy Legions.” in *The Middle East Quarterly*. Volume XII: Number 1, Winter, 2005, p. 4. [http://www.meforum.org/686/tablighi-jamaat-jihads-stealthy-legions#\\_ftn7](http://www.meforum.org/686/tablighi-jamaat-jihads-stealthy-legions#_ftn7). Accessed on July 26, 2013.