

JAMAAT-I-ISLAMI: IDEOLOGY

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Abstract:

Jamaat –i Islami- a religious revival movement was established by Abu Ala Madudi on 26 August 1941. The Islamic political philosophy of Madudi represents the ideology of the Jamaat. This philosophy is based on his two concepts; one, sovereignty belongs to God and purpose of every Muslim is to establish Gods rule on earth, and second, Islam is a complete and comprehensive way of life governing all aspects of life social, economic, political etc. Thus the main purpose of the Jamaat-i Islami (community of the Muslims) according to Maududi was to establish sovereignty of God on earth known by other terms also, like Islamic state or Darul Islam. In this paper an attempt has been made to throw light on the ideology of the Jamaat-i Islami.

Key words: Ideology, Islamic State, Jamaat-i Islami, Abu Ala Maududi, Sovereignty of God.

Introduction:

This movement also like TJ emerged at a time when socio-political conditions in British-India especially for Muslims were not favorable. The cultural onslaught of western colonists and militant hindu nationalists especially irtidad (shuddi and sangathan) movements had a deepening effect on the ideology of the Abu Ala Madudi- the founder of the Jamaat in 1941. Initially he was a devoted congressman who wrote admiring biographies of Gandhi and Madanmohan Malaviya, a key leader of the Hindu Mahasabha whom he called 'sailor of India's boat' (Maududi 1992 [1919]: 28-9). However, in 1920 Abu Ala Maududi grew disenchanted with the Congress, which he believed favored Hindus against Muslims. Under the cloak of secularism, he maintained, the Congress pursued the ideology of the Hindu Mahasabha, a party with avowedly Hindu goals (1938:151). In 1928, Maududi left Delhi for Hyderabad, capital of the Muslim princely state of the Nizams, where he devoted himself to the study of Islam. It is here he realized and discovered that the main reason for the decline of Islam or Muslim rulers including Mughals were abandonment of pure Islam', asali Islam (1937: 71). He bemoaned the fact that

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most rulers were more busy conquering lands than following the Shariah and maintained rejecting true Islamic faith and accepting western values were responsible for the abject conditions of the Muslims. It is in this backdrop Maududi conceptualized Islam as a comprehensive and complete code of life governing all aspects viz. social, political, economic, spiritual etc. Besides in colonial electoral politics, when notion of state was a key slogan, Maududi put forward his own concept of state, where the purpose of every Muslim was to establish Sovereignty of God (Allah's government or hukm-i Illahiy) on earth. These two concepts viz. Islam as a complete way of life and Sovereignty of God form the crux of the ideology of the Jamaat.

Ideology:

The starting point of the Jamaat's or Abu Ala Maududi's ideology is that "Islam is not a jumble of unrelated ideas and incoherent mode of conduct. It is rather a well ordered, a consistent whole, resting on a definite set of clear cut interrelated and interdependent postulates (Maududi: 1960: 133). For instance Sovereignty rests with Allah, who is seen as the source of Islam-being complete way of life. Thus Islam need not to be divorced from various sectors of society, because it is divine applicable for all times and all climes. Unlike Tablighi Jamaat , which divorced a religion from politics, Maududi viewed religion-Islam as a comprehensive and complete way of life governing all aspects viz. spiritual, political, economic etc. He viewed Islam as a system to be practiced by individuals in all aspects. Thus, Maududi's ideology that 'Islam is a complete way of life' lies at the root of Jamaat's ideology. This is the premise on which the entire edifice of Jamaat's ideology is based. Likewise Mustanair Mir (1985:244) as quoted in *Fundamentalisms* observed writes;

"One of the most important contributions of Maududi in twentieth-century Islam has been his presentation of Islam as a system of life, a complete code of conduct that governs all aspects of human existence. Maududi insists that in order to be viable, Islam must be obeyed and implemented in its entirety. Since it is a system of life, the elements constituting Islam cannot be separated from one another. A person cannot be a true Muslim if he fulfills Islamic obligations in his personal life but neglects Islamic teachings in his political and economic behavior."

Similarly Abu Ala Maududi (1972:102-3) writes;

It is not enough to give "an Islamic color to one or a few aspects of life, the all-inclusive supremacy of Islam alone can give us an opportunity to fully enjoy the spiritual, moral and material benefits that are the natural and inevitable results of working according to the guidance of the Lord."

The key Qur'anic concept that Maududi has used to advance his idea of Islam as a complete system and a way of life is *deen*. Throughout his commentary on the Qur'an, Maududi keeps coming back to this holistic and primarily political meaning of the word *Deen*. At one point, translating the word *Deen* as "law," Maududi writes: "This use of the word categorically refutes

the view of those who believe that a prophet's message is principally aimed at ensuring worship of the one God, adherence to a set of beliefs, and observance of a few rituals. This also refutes the views of those who think that deen has nothing to do with cultural, political, economic, legal, judicial, and other matters pertaining to this world."

Similarly, Mumtaz ahmad (1991:8) writes;

“ the core concept on which Maududi sought to build the new movement was Iqamat-i-Deen (literally, "the establishment of religion")- the total subordination of the institutions of civil society and the state to the authority of divine law as revealed in the Qur'an and practiced by the Prophet. For Maududi, it is not enough to practice Islam in one's personal life; faith must manifest itself in social, economic, and political spheres as well. The way of life that emerges with the willing acceptance of Allah's sovereignty and His guidance is al-Deen. This means that al-Deen is not a set of rituals; it encompasses all areas of human life, "from the sanctuary of man's heart to the arena of socio-political relations; from the mosque to the parliament, from the home to the school and the economy; from art, architecture and science to law, state and international relations". Besides he viewed divorce of Islam from politics, economy and other affairs of life key to political and spiritual problems faced by Muslims in his time period (Nasr 1996; Adams 1966; Roy 2011; Watt 1988). These problems, as he saw them, were the loss of Muslim political power in colonial India, Muslim failure to adhere to the Sunnah (teachings of Prophet Muhammad PBUH) and Sharia (divine law), and communal fractionalization among the subcontinent's Muslims (Adams 1966; Nasr 1996; Roy 2011). Maududi's ideology of Islam was based upon the fundamental Islamic principle of the sovereignty of God and the Quran's clear injunction of human obedience to God).

However Mustansir Mir (1985:241) writes;

The idea that Islam encompasses the whole spectrum of life and that there is no separation of religion and state in Islam is of course not original with Maududi. His real contribution was "to offer a set of clear and well-argued definitions of key Islamic concepts within a coherently conceived framework" and then build a systematic theory of Islamic society and the Islamic state on the basis of these concepts. Through a systematic treatment of such key Islamic terms as Allah, rab (lord), malik (master), 'ibada (worship), deen (way of life), and shahadah (to bear witness), Maududi demonstrated a rational and logical interdependence of Islamic morality, law, and political theory."

Further the ideology of Jamaat-i-Islami is rooted in the concept of political philosophy (also called Islamism) of Maududi. With his turn to Islamism, Maududi crafted a distinct political theology. He held that Allah sent all his prophets to establish a state. Under the syncretic influence of Hegel and Marx, he read Islamic history anew. All history, he opined, was the history of a constant battle between Islam and jahiliyat- the period of 'ignorance' before the Prophet Muhammad. For Maududi, jahiliyat was an organic system with many forms (for more,

see Ahmad 2009b). Politically, it expressed itself in human sovereignty. In 1946, Maududi (in Ahmad 2009a, pp. 71–72) outlined his position on democracy as follows:

Integral to the creed of Islamic monotheism is that Allah is the Lord and Ruler of people and the whole world. ... We, therefore, say that membership in such assemblies and parliaments, which are based on the democratic principles of the present age, is haram, and to vote for them is also haraam. Because to vote means that we elect an individual whose job under the present Constitution is to make legislation that stands in absolute opposition to the creed of monotheism.

Political philosophy of Madudi is based on his view that God is the ultimate political sovereign and purpose of Muslims was to establish sovereignty of God on earth. Likewise Dr. Sayyid Anwar writes (1980: 23-27)

“shortly before the jamaat was started, Madudi circulated its draft constitution among those who had shown interest in his journal, explaining that no member of the proposed jama’at should acknowledge anyone except God as political sovereignty. Nor should he obey any government not based on the sovereignty of God or recognize the right of anyone except God to legislate. Whosoever deviated from this rule would be expelled from the jama,at”.

Similarly, “Maududi argued that the principal and modalities for setting up a God’s Government were clearly spelt out in the Quran and Hadith in his book *Khailafat wa Mulukiyat* (1969:9-15), he tried to show that all that mankind was required by God to do watch to submit to His, “legal sovereignty” and to perform on his behalf the task of enforcing and adjudicating the norm of individual and social conducts already lay down by Him for all times and climes. At any rate, Muslim had no choice in this matter and certainly no room for innovation”. Unlike democracy where people are the real sovereign, Islamic state is based on sovereignty of God. It is thus non democratic. However Maududi called it theo-democracy or divine democratic. Similarly M.S Agwani (1986: 55) mentions;

“Maududi frankly admitted that an Islamic state thus conceived could not and must not be democratic. Because in democracy ultimate sovereignty rests with the people, in which legislation depends both in its form and content, on the force and direction of public opinion, and laws are modified and altered to correspond and changes in that opinion. Since Islam did not accept the doctrine of popular sovereignty, an Islamic state cannot be called democratic in the sense of the term. A more apt name for it would be ‘kingdom of God, which might be said to correspond to the English term ‘theocracy’. Maududi then went on to add that an Islamic state was not a theocracy either, as there was no priestly class in Islam: “The entire Muslim population rules the state in accordance with the book of God and the example of His Prophet. Maududi therefore, coined the term ‘the democracy’ and divine democratic government. In other words, in an Islamic State, so far as there was an explicit command of God and His Prophet, No muslim ruler or legislator have the right to make least alteration in it. This was true of its constitution which stood already ‘enacted by God’ and was ‘unchangeable’”.

Islamic state is also a totalitarian state because it does not tolerate parties of differing opinion. Everything is based on divine Law of Quran and Sunnah. Likewise Maududi(1973: 27-29) writes:

“No doubt the Islamic State is a totalitarian state and comprises within its sphere all departments of life. But this totalitarianism and universality are based upon the universality of Divine Law which an Islamic ruler has to observe and enforce”

Besides showing hostility to democracy & secularism as outlined above, JI ideology rejects all other innovations and ideologies like capitalism, Communism, socialism, family planning methods etc. “Maududi believed that communism and capitalism were the product of western civilization and fascism was an acute form of capitalism”. “The difference between the capitalism, communism and fascism were of a minor nature. They had a common cultural outlook. This outlook was the belief that whether god existed or not, man need not obey Him nor did he require His guidance”, which in turn directly contrasts to the Maududi’s ideology where he views purpose of Muslim to establish sovereignty of God and to obey Him. “As for the nationalization of the means of production under communism, Maududi’s objection was that it would mean ‘comprehensive control of bureaucracy which would give rise to evils a thousand times greater than those of present economic set up. Hence, Maududi “considered the moral evil of the age to consist in having accepted sovereigns other than God—the will of the people, the law of rulers, the nation-state, custom, personal preference” and held that “the sufferings of the age in their entirety are to be traced to this error” (Adams 1966: 382).

Maududi’s solution was for individual Muslims—not just the classically trained scholars—to exercise reason and intellect to apply Islam as a blueprint for all aspects of life, not just religious life (Adams 1966; Nasr 1996). This solution for resurrecting Islam and bringing Muslims together (and the two were inextricably bound in his view) challenged the traditional order and power structure of the classically trained Islamic scholars, or ulama, of his time. He challenged the ulama’s reliance on the past and their exclusive claim to the interpretation of religious sources, arguing instead that Islam needed to be interpreted with a view to the political exigencies of the era (Nasr 1996, Adams 1966). Paradoxically, he wanted to simultaneously revive the past glory of the “khulfiya rashida” (the era of the “Rightly Guided Caliphs” of the first era of the Muslim community). Maududi sought an Islamic state, which was “nothing more than the culmination of a successful dā‘wat [religious work or mission]” (Nasr 1994: 105). Islam, as it was once applied in the time of the Prophet and the early Caliphs, would be applied again; the effort would be all encompassing, involving society, culture, and politics. In some of Maududi’s most influential writings the focus was, as Nasr has explained, on “purifying the Islamic faith, explicating its ethos, and putting its teachings into practice, all with a view to modernizing Islam while extracting Western influence from Muslim minds” (Nasr 1996: 56).

Conclusion:

In response to the challenges, Maududi tried to explore the basis of Islamic system in the light of Quran and Sunnah and came up with the unique ideology called political philosophy (Islamism also) of the Jamaat. He called Islam as one nation and used the word “*umma*” for it. He maintained that the purpose of every Muslim was to create Islamic state based on the rule of Allah or sovereignty of God. He rejected democracy viewed it as a means for majority to impose its rule on minority. He also rejected territorial nationalism, and regarded it as the basis of division of human beings on the basis of region, language, and race (Adams 1966: 382). He even rejected rather equated processions, meetings, flags, slogans, resolutions, irresponsible orations, and provocative writings in favor of such nationalism with disbelief (in Islamic nationalism). (Maududi 1968 : 21-27) (Rudad 1958 39-43). He viewed human relationships and divisions on the basis of kinship, community, region, nation essentially dividing humanity. Instead he tried to unify the humanity and Muslims in particular on the basis of unity and sovereignty of God. This unity and sovereignty of God is one of the basic postulates of the ideology of the Jamaat on which the rest of Maududi’s philosophy (including the initial: Islam as complete way of life) follows logically and consistently. This is because God being the ultimate sovereign and omnipotent is also the source of divine religion-Islam making it complete, applicable for all times and all climes. Besides, seeing Islam solution to all problems of humanity, he saw it compatible to modernity. In some of Maududi’s most influential writings the focus was, as Nasr has explained, on “purifying the Islamic faith, explicating its ethos, and putting its teachings into practice, all with a view to modernizing Islam while extracting Western influence from Muslim minds” (Nasr 1996: 56). Consequently today, Islam is the fastest growing religion among the most modern nations of the world, irrespective of the Islamophobia campaign at the back of which are Western and European capitalists, in order to invade the Islamic nations for their selfish interests. (Huntington. S: 1996).

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