

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

What is the Tablīghī Jamā‘ah?

(Compiled by Abu Muhammad Yahya)

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The Tablīghī Jamā‘ah is a movement founded in India in the early 20th century by **Muḥammad Ilyās al-Kāndahlawī** (d. 1363H/1944CE). It was an offshoot of the Deobandi movement, which itself is rooted in Sufi, Ash‘arī, and Maturidī theology, along with Hanafi legal tradition.



Their main goal is "reviving Islamic practice" among lay Muslims, especially encouraging prayer, dhikr, and basic religious knowledge. They are known for their organized "khurūj" (going out for da‘wah) for 3, 10, 40 days or more.

However, despite some outward good, the group is based on serious innovations and methodological deviations, especially in ‘aqīdah (creed) and manhaj (methodology).

❌ Key Deviations of the Tablīghī Jamā‘ah

1. Sūfī Foundations and Practices

- The founders of Tablīghī Jamā‘ah were steeped in Sufism, particularly the Chishtī Sufi order.
- Muḥammad Ilyās and his successors encouraged Sufi practices like:
 - Silent dhikr circles with specific numbers.
 - Bay‘ah (spiritual allegiance) to Sufi shaykhs.
 - Veneration of saints and tombs.

Evidence of deviation:

The Prophet ﷺ said: "Whoever introduces into this affair of ours that which is not from it, it is rejected."
— *Bukhārī & Muslim*

These rituals and orders are innovations not found in the Qur‘an or Sunnah, nor practiced by the Salaf.

2. Weak Understanding and Neglect of Tawḥīd al-'Ulūhiyyah

- The Tablighī Jamā'ah focuses heavily on rituals and external revival (e.g., appearance, praying in the masjid), but largely neglects the core of the da'wah of all prophets: Tawḥīd of worship.
- Their da'wah almost never addresses grave-worship, saint-veneration, or du'ā to the dead, despite these being widespread in the regions they operate.

Evidence:

"And We certainly sent into every nation a messenger, [saying], 'Worship Allah and avoid ṭāghūt (false gods).'"

— *Surah al-Naḥl* 16:36

This focus was central to the da'wah of the Prophet ﷺ, but absent in Tablighī methodology.

3. No Concern for Correct 'Aqīdah

- Their methodology is "don't discuss differences in 'aqīdah", claiming it causes division.
- As a result, they:
 - Do not warn against grave worship, Shirk, or Bid'ah.
 - Allow Ash'arīs, Maturidīs, and even grave-worshippers to remain as they are, under the slogan of "unity."

Issue: The group's teachings often lack a comprehensive understanding of Tawḥīd, especially **Tawḥīd al-'Ulūhiyyah** (Oneness of Worship), leading to practices that contradict pure monotheism.

A correct understanding of Tawḥīd is foundational to Islam, and any deviation can lead to major errors in belief and practice.

Shaykh al-Islām Ibn Taymiyyah said:

"The first obligation upon the servant is the knowledge of Allah, and this is achieved through knowledge of Tawḥīd."

Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān (حفظه الله) said:

"They do not call to the correct 'aqīdah, and they have no concern for calling people to Tawḥīd. Rather, their concern is about going out for da'wah, regardless of whether the person is upon correct belief or not." (*Al-Ajwibah al-Mufīdah*, p. 84).

4. Reliance on Weak and Fabricated Narrations

The Tablighī Jamā'ah often utilizes texts like "Faḍā'il A'māl," which contains numerous weak or fabricated narrations, to motivate their followers.

Reliance on unauthentic narrations can misguide and introduce innovations into the religion.

Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān said: "It is not permissible to rely on weak ahādīth that do not have a basis in establishing rulings or in acts of worship."

5. Blind Following of the 4 Madhhabs and Deobandi Taqlīd

- The group promotes strict taqlīd (blind following) of the Ḥanafī Madhhab, inherited from their Deobandi roots.
- They discourage ijtihād, dismissing evidence from Qur'an or Sunnah if it opposes the Hanafi school.
- They have no commitment to following authentic ahādīth over madhhab rulings.

Imam al-Shāfi'ī said: "If you find an authentic narration of the Prophet ﷺ, then that is my madhhab."

6. Innovated Practice of Khurūj (Going Out for Da'wah in Set Days)

- The Tablighī Jamā'ah institutionalized "khurūj" with specific numbers (3, 10, 40 days, 4 months) — but there is no basis for this in the Sunnah.
- They treat it as an obligation or superior act of worship without evidence.

Shaykh al-Albānī رحمه الله said: "This going out [in specific time frames] has no basis in the Book or Sunnah. It is an innovation in the religion." (*al-Fatāwā al-Jāmi'ah*, 1/67)

7. Defending Deviant Sects and Figures

- The group encourages silence about groups like the Ash'arīs, Deobandīs, and Maturidīs.
- They host figures who praise philosophers, grave worshipers, and even unity with the Shī'ah in some cases.
- They reject the Salafī methodology of warning against deviation and people of innovation.

The Tablighī Jamā'ah often collaborates with groups holding deviant beliefs, such as the **Ash'arīs** and **Māturīdīs**, without addressing their theological errors.

Associating with deviants without clarifying their errors can lead to the spread of misguidance.

Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Bāz said: "It is obligatory to warn against the people of innovation and to boycott them."

8. Excessive Veneration of Leaders

There is a tendency within the Tablighī Jamā'ah to excessively venerate their leaders, attributing to them statuses that may lead to shirk (associating partners with Allah).

Elevating individuals beyond their rightful status can lead to deviations similar to those observed in other misguided sects.

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said "Do not exaggerate in praising me as the Christians praised the son of Mary, for I am only a servant. So, call me the servant of Allah and His messenger." Sahīh al-Bukhārī

9. Neglect of Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil

The group emphasizes personal piety but often avoids addressing societal wrongs or correcting misconceptions, even when clear violations of Tawḥīd occur.

Enjoining good and forbidding evil is a fundamental tenet of Islam.

Allah Said "You are the best nation produced [as an example] for mankind. You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong..." Surah Āl 'Imrān 3:110

Avoiding this duty can lead to the spread of innovations and misconceptions within the community and society.

10. Refutations from Major Scholars

✓ Shaykh Ibn Bāz (رحمه الله):

"The Tablīghī Jamā'ah has many mistakes. They have no concern for Tawḥīd, nor warning from Shirk or Bid'ah... So whoever wants to go out with them must teach them the correct 'aqīdah..." (Fatāwā Ibn Bāz, Vol. 8)

✓ Shaykh al-Albānī (رحمه الله):

"The Tablīghī Jamā'ah, although it calls to Islam, it lacks sound knowledge and is built upon innovation. Their call is not upon the way of the Salaf." (*al-Fatāwā al-Jāmi'ah*)

✓ Shaykh Muqbil al-Wādi'ī (رحمه الله):

"They are people of innovation and Sufi deviation... They do not seek knowledge, nor correct the beliefs of the people." (*al-Maḳālāt al-'Ilmiyyah*)

✓ Shaykh Ḥammūd al-Tuwayjirī (رحمه الله):

"Their methodology is built on ignorance. They do not study, nor teach proper 'aqīdah. They have no foundation in Salafī manhaj." — *Al-Ajwibah al-Mufīdah*

✓ Shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Fawzān (حفظه الله):

“Their methodology is built on ignorance. They do not study, nor teach proper ‘aqīdah. They have no foundation in Salafī manhaj.” (*al-Ajwibah al-Mufīdah*)

✓ **Conclusion:**

While the Tablīghī Jamā‘ah may appear sincere and outwardly active, their methodology, foundations, and beliefs contain clear opposition to the Sunnah and the way of the Salaf. Scholars of Ahl al-Sunnah have warned against joining them, going out with them, or adopting their approach.

Their call is not upon the methodology of the Prophets, whose first priority was always:

Tawḥīd and cleansing the heart from Shirk and Bid‘ah.