

The Assertion of Barelvi Extremism

By Ismail Khan

ON JANUARY 4, 2011, SALMAN TASEER, THE GOVERNOR OF THE PAKISTANI province of Punjab, was shot to death in the capital city of Islamabad by one of his bodyguards, Malik Mumtaz Qadri. In his confession statement, Qadri said that he committed the cold-blooded murder to avenge the governor's public criticism of Pakistan's blasphemy law.¹ The controversial law provides for punishments, ranging from fines to death sentences, for those found guilty of desecrating religion.² Governor Taseer emerged as an outspoken critic of the law through his advocacy of leniency in the case of Aasia Bibi, a poor Christian woman convicted to death on November 11, 2010 for allegedly speaking "ill" against the Prophet Muhammad (a charge that Aasia flatly rejected.)³ As she waited in prison to be hanged for her offense, Taseer personally visited her and forwarded her clemency appeal to the President of Pakistan.⁴ The governor's efforts on Aasia's behalf—and his labeling of the blasphemy law as a "black law"—outraged many in Pakistan. By late November 2010, religious groups around the country were staging mass demonstrations against the government to show support for the law and to condemn Taseer, with some claiming that the governor himself was guilty of apostasy—a crime punishable by death in Islamic law.⁵

While the high-profile assassination shocked many in Pakistan, not all condemned the murder. Indeed, thousands rallied to Qadri's defense, praising him as a hero for his "religious honor and integrity."⁶ A Facebook page honoring Qadri was created only hours after the murder and soon attracted over a thousand followers; similar websites praising the assassin remain active to this day.⁷ A few days after the assassination, leading religious groups led a demonstration of over fifty thousand people in Karachi in support of the blasphemy law. During the rally, Qadri was lionized as a Muslim hero, while rally leaders sternly warned the crowds against mourning Taseer, whom they claimed had

deviated from Islam. When Qadri was later led to trial in Islamabad, a group of lawyers chanted slogans in support of him; a month after that, students sent flowers and cards to Qadri on Valentine's Day to show their affection.⁸

Scholars from virtually all of the country's Islamic sects, despite the festering theological and sectarian disputes between them, were unanimous in their backing of the blasphemy law. But the response of scholars from the mainstream Barelvi school of thought to the Taseer assassination was especially hardline—with some Barelvi leaders expressly condoning the slaying. This stance came as a surprise to many, since the Barelvi school to which the majority of Pakistan's Sunni Muslims adheres enjoys a reputation for moderation, not least because Barelvi scholars have been at the forefront in refuting the puritanical ideologies that have been linked in recent years to rising sectarianism and terrorism.

Yet, two days after Taseer's murder, over five hundred Barelvi scholars from an organization called the Jamaat Ahl-e-Sunnat Pakistan (JASP) issued a statement that explicitly warned mosque leaders not to offer Islamic funeral prayers to Salman Taseer.⁹ "No Muslim," declared the JASP in its statement, "should attend the funeral or even try to pray for Salman Taseer or even express any kind of regret or sympathy over the incident." As an umbrella group that forms the largest body of Barelvi scholars, the JASP's decisions are widely respected and accepted by other Barelvis—and most, indeed, appeared to pay heed.¹⁰ In Lahore, the Punjab capital where Taseer was to be buried, the Imam of Badshahi Mosque refused to lead ritual services for the dead governor.¹¹ Subsequently, "cleric after cleric" refused to lead the funeral prayer for the murdered governor, according to Taseer's daughter,¹² and other Barelvi organizations reportedly annulled Taseer's marriage to show they no longer considered him a Muslim.

Still other Barelvi scholars rushed to Qadri's defense. Instead of condemning the murderer, one scholar suggested it was the understandable reaction of a pious man against Taseer's contemptible actions to undermine a law to protect the sanctity of the Prophet Muhammad.¹³ Moreover, since the Pakistan constitution provides high ranking officials immunity from criminal prosecution,¹⁴ others argued the vigilante slaying was the only way to punish the governor for his crimes against Islam; Qadri really had no choice in the matter.¹⁵

As Qadri's trial began, a leading Barelvi organization called the Sunni Tehreek threatened to blockade the national parliament should Qadri be sentenced to death.¹⁶ On October 1, 2011, when a Pakistani court sentenced Qadri to death for his crime, Sunni Tehreek announced it would organize a round of protests against the verdict of the court. Unlike JASP, which serves as a platform for esteemed religious scholars, Sunni Tehreek has been characterized as a grassroots "religious force" that has been organized to actively "defend the interests of the Barelvi school of thought." In recent times, the organization has emerged as a key player in Pakistan's sectarian feuds, and it is widely expected that the movement will compete in future political elections as well.

The assassin himself never had a personal history with Islamist extremism. In fact, Qadri claimed to have acted entirely alone, and he strongly denied being influenced by any of the radical political or religious movements known for fomenting jihad within Pakistan. He confessed that he made up his mind to kill the governor only three days before, on December 31, 2010. That day had been a Friday, the Muslim holy day, and across the country local mosque leaders had reignited large demonstrations against the repeal of the blasphemy law. A devout Muslim, and a member of the Barelvi proselytizing organization known as the Dawat-e-Islami, Qadri himself attended a rally that took place in Rawalpindi to show his support for the blasphemy law. He later confessed that he had been inspired to murder the governor by the “rousing speeches” and prayers delivered by the rally’s clerical leaders.¹⁷ One of those clerics was Hanif Qureshi, a notoriously fiery and charismatic Barelvi scholar-activist and founder of an organization called Shahabe-Islam. After Taseer’s murder, Qureshi dedicated a sermon to honor Qadri, and also led a procession to the assassin’s house.¹⁸

As the myriad connections between Qadri and the mainstream Barelvi school of thought came to light, it soon gave way to new worries about the further ingress of radical ideas into society. The outpouring of Barelvi support for Qadri, after all, showed that this could not simply be treated as an isolated act by a deranged individual. Concerns for what this meant for Pakistan’s struggle with terrorism were especially acute because the Barelvis are seen by many as the moderate Islamic antidote to Islamist militancy. In fact, the current government led by the Pakistan People’s Party (Taseer himself was a PPP politician) has actively courted Barelvis as part of their counter-radicalization efforts. Known for their orthodox piety and folksy, Sufi-leaning religious practices, Barelvis have generally eschewed violence and vigilantism. In recent times, Barelvi scholars have led the way among religious groups in tackling what they have decried as the “Talibani-ization” of Pakistani society. They have issued fatwas against suicide bombing as well as learned refutations of the puritanical Islamic ideologies such as Deobandism that have been linked in recent years to rising sectarianism and terrorism.

Yet the case of Mumtaz Qadri and the scale of the Barelvi support for him has rattled many of these popular conceptions about Barelvi moderation—just as it has raised new worries over Pakistan’s struggle with Islamist militancy. As *The Washington Post* reported,

While many factions have lauded the slaying [of Governor Taseer], the peace-promoting Barelvi sect has spearheaded mass rallies to demand the release of the assassin, a policeman. Because most Pakistanis are Barelvis, their stance is challenging the belief long held among liberals here—and hoped for by nervous U.S. officials—that the Muslim majority in this nuclear-armed nation is more moderate than militant.¹⁹

What accounts for the Bareilvi school of thought's seemingly incoherent, even paradoxical stance against the militancy of the Taliban on the one hand, and its broad endorsement of the killing of Governor Taseer on the other? To understand the Bareilvi response to Taseer's assassination, it must be situated within the broader context of Pakistan's religious politics and the sectarian struggle among competing Islamic movements. This dynamic has contributed to the rise in recent years of new forms of Bareilvi activism and communalist assertion, some of which have expressed themselves in militancy, and which will be crucial to understanding the future of Pakistan's fight with Islamist ideology and militancy as a whole.

The Formation of Bareilvi Thought

“BAREILVI ISLAM” OR “BAREILVISM” IS A SUNNI ISLAMIC MOVEMENT AND SCHOOL OF thought that is widespread among the Muslim populations of South Asia, as well as within the South Asian Diaspora. The name “Bareilvi” itself traces its root to the Indian town of Bareilly, which was the birthplace (and thereby the last name) of Ahmed Raza Khan Bareilly, a pioneering scholar and revivalist of the latter half of the nineteenth century whose teachings greatly influenced modern religious thought across the sub-continent. Because of Ahmed Raza's prestige as a scholar, Bareilvis do not necessarily object to being popularly identified with his teachings. As a formal matter, however, Bareilvis are quick to point out that they are not disciples of a nineteenth-century teaching, but rather they are orthodox Sunnis, or “Ahl-e-Sunnat wal Jamaat” (Followers of the Traditions of the Prophet and Congregation) who adhere to true Islam as it was originally practiced by the Prophet and his companions as well as by various saints (*wali*) throughout history.²⁰ Ahmed Raza is seen as a great reviver and defender of Islam as it was originally revealed, and for this reason Bareilvis commonly describe him as the “Imam of the Ahl-e-Sunnat.”²¹

Bareilvis also describe themselves as “Ahl-e-Sunnat” (a shortened version of the formal term) so as to distinguish themselves from their ideological rivals, which include most prominently the Deobandis. Deobandi Islam, like Bareilvism, also emerged during the latter half of the nineteenth century in British-occupied India as a movement of revival and reform. While both of these Islamic movements adhere to the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, Bareilvis and Deobandis follow sharply divergent doctrines and practices. Although the two movements have from time to time found common cause, their historical relationship has mostly been bitter and frequently violent.

Bareilvism originally emerged as a reaction against the propagation of several new streams of Islamic thought—including, though not limited to, the Deobandis. Ahmed Raza himself painstakingly developed refutations of Deobandism, the Ahl-e-Hadith

(whom the Barelvis have decried as the “Wahhabis” of South Asia), as well as the minority Ahmadi sect.²² What has conventionally distinguished the Barelvis from the Deobandis and Ahl-e-Hadith is the latter two’s notoriously puritan understanding and austere practice of Islam, which the Barelvis reject as unorthodox.

While performing the Hajj in 1906, Ahmed Raza asked the *ulemas* of Mecca and Medina to endorse his fatwas and refutations of the teachings of Deobandis and other new schools of thought in South Asia. (Mecca and Medina were then under Ottoman rule, and the authority of the religious scholars in these two holy cities was at the time recognized across the Islamic world.) The Arab scholars, according to the Barelvis, agreed fully with Ahmed Raza’s propositions, and a total of twenty clerics from Mecca and thirteen from Medina endorsed *Hussam al-Harmain*, a book of fatwas compiled by Ahmed Raza.²³ Most of these fatwas concern what constitutes the proper veneration of the Prophet Muhammad, and by these standards, Ahmed Raza accused the Deobandis of not bestowing sufficient respect upon the Prophet—and thus, found them guilty of heresy.

After Ahmed Raza returned from Arabia to India, his anti-Deobandi fatwas began to circulate, and this put the puritan Deobandis on edge. The Deobandi scholars reacted by developing their own refutations of Ahmed Raza’s teachings, accusing the Barelvi movement as well of heresy. This launched what came to be known as the “Fatwa War” between the Barelvis and Deobandis. From 1925 until now it has been claimed a virtually “uncountable” number of fatwas were issued by Barelvi and Deobandi scholars renouncing the other school of thought for their deviant, “un-Islamic” beliefs and practices. These fatwas have addressed a range of matters—from religion to politics, both great and small—and they have only further divided the two schools of thoughts on nearly every issue.

One of the effects of this now century-old feud has been the institutionalization of the rivalry between the two Sunni schools. This rivalry has been as much political as it has been theological, and, since the two groups accuse each other of heresy, it has frequently led to violence. The more inclusive Barelvis have borne the brunt of this. In 1979, for instance, an intense *manazira*, or one-on-one theological debate, between a Barelvi and a Deobandi scholar was held in the Punjabi town of Jhang. Known as the “Manazira-e-Jhang,” the debate lasted for seven to eight hours.²⁴ The Deobandi participant in the debate, Haq Nawaz Jhangvi, would later form an infamous militant organization called Sipah-e-Sahaba, which has since earned notoriety for killing Shiites, Barelvis and minorities throughout Pakistan.

Today, Barelvis commonly believe that the original manifestos of the founders of Sipah-e-Sahaba as well as Lashkar-e-Taiba (whose Ahl-e-Hadith ideology resembles al-Qaeda’s ideology, and which is responsible for the 2008 Mumbai attacks among other attacks), reveal that both organizations were set up principally to wage war on the Barelvis and their shrines.²⁵ While evidence suggests this is a revisionist belief (both militant

groups had other declared foes, not only Barelvis), the fact that this belief is so widespread among Barelvis reveals the degree to which they feel they are targeted and besieged by these Deobandi organizations.

It is understandable that Barelvis should feel this way. In recent years, Deobandi militant organizations like Sipah-e-Sahaba-Pakistan and its splinter militia, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, have serially attacked not only Shiites, but also Barelvis. These Islamists have seized Barelvi mosques, attacked their shrines and targeted their scholars. There have been numerous attacks on Barelvi and Shiite processions honoring the birth of Ali (son-in-law of Muhammad), Hussain (grandson of Muhammad), and even the Prophet in different parts of Pakistan. In 2010, there were additional attacks on prominent Barelvi shrines such as the Data Ganj Bakhsh in Lahore and Abdullah Shah Ghazi in Karachi. Indeed, what is commonly perceived as a sectarian conflict between Sunni and Shia Muslims in Pakistan is more accurately understood as a conflict between Deobandis and puritanical Islamic schools on the one hand, and the Shia and Barelvi communities on the other.

Between March 2005 and April 2011 alone, one independent study has counted as many as twenty-nine attacks on Barelvi shrines.²⁶ Moreover, in 2009, a suicide bomber from the Tehreek-e-Taliban, a Deobandi movement, was responsible for the assassination of the leading Barelvi scholar Mufti Sarfraz Naeemi, who became well-known for his anti-Taliban teachings.²⁷ Barelvis commonly point to the “Nishtar Park Tragedy” of 2006 as a prime example of the Deobandi effort to eliminate Barelvis entirely. In that attack, a suicide bomber hit a high-profile congregation, wiping out the Sunni Tehreek’s top leadership.²⁸ It was later discovered that Lashkar-e-Jhangvi was involved in the act.²⁹

Losing the Center

OVER THE LAST THREE DECADES, BARELVISM AS A SCHOOL OF THOUGHT HAS ALSO become increasingly sidelined religiously and politically, just as the Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith schools have been strengthened. Although exact figures are unknown, the Barelvis are still considered to be the largest Islamic sect in Pakistan, and the country as a whole has undergone a broad-based religious revival, with the overall number of *madrassahs* from all sects and sub-sects increasing dramatically. Despite this, the total number of Barelvi *madrassahs* today stands second after Deobandi *madrassahs*. Dr. Tariq Rahman, a noted Pakistani scholar of education, calculates that with 7000 *madrassahs* in 2002 against 1779 in 1988, the number of Deobandi *madrassahs* has increased by 294 percent. Barelvi *madrassahs*, by contrast, saw only a 121 percent increase during the same period, with 717 *madrassahs* in 1988 and 1585 in 2002. In the view of Barelvis, these numbers reveal an undeniable reality: the struggle between Deobandism and Barelvis has intensified—and the trends suggest Barelvis are losing.

A number of factors account for the strengthening of Deobandi and other puritanical schools relative to the Barelvis over the past decades. In the 1980s, General Zia ul-Haq's domestic Islamization policies and participation in the anti-Soviet Afghan Jihad found enormous political support in movements and madrassahs connected to the Deobandi school of thought as well as the Jamaat-e-Islami.³⁰ Some of these schools also turned out committed militants, which the state has since used to conduct proxy wars, principally in Afghanistan and against "Hindu India." In the view of the ideologically-driven state, these puritan schools were a natural partner, as they were exclusive and selective in their identification of allies and adversaries, contrary to the Sufi-leaning Barelvis who were more inclusive and eclectic, and as a group eschewed political jihadism. (However, it should be kept in mind that Barelvis, too, have participated in the Kashmir insurgency, albeit on a much smaller scale than Deobandis.) Moreover, external assistance from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States has also fed the growth of puritanical Islam within Pakistan—and especially the growth of the Ahl-e-Hadith, which has attracted Arab benefactors because of its affinities with Wahhabism.

In a recent move that has outraged Barelvis, Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan has started operating under the name of "Ahl-e-Sunnat wal Jamaat" (ASJ). The organization adopted the new name after it was banned for militant activities,³¹ which included sectarian strikes on Shias and Barelvis. But the fact that the Deobandi ASJ has now claimed for itself the title of "Ahl-e-Sunnat" is especially scandalous to Barelvis, as they see themselves as the followers of true Islam and the Deobandis as deviant. According to Barelvi scholars, Deobandis have become so emboldened that the claim to represent "true Islam" is now being "stolen" by Deobandi ideologues who have "tried to impose their ideology on peaceful Pakistanis."³²

Increasingly sidelined, and frequently targets of attack, Barelvis have as a whole reacted by becoming more political themselves, and in recent times they have organized to counter puritan ideologies that have been linked to rising sectarianism and terrorism. For these reasons, the present government led by the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has actively courted Barelvis in an effort to rein in militancy and to acquire religious support for their counter-terrorism policies. The PPP government, for instance, has officially called for spreading the message of the Sufis—a policy meant to curtail the influence of puritan ideologies. In 2009, the Pakistani government set up an organization called the Sufi Advisory Council.³³ Among other things, the council was mandated to "propose steps to free religious thought from the rigidity imposed by some *ulema*."³⁴

Barelvis, too, have organized new groups to counter puritan and militant ideologies. In 2009, several Barelvi groups established a new umbrella organization known as the Sunni Ittehad Council; its declared agenda is to tackle extremist ideology. The council, which was originally formed as an alliance of eight Barelvi organizations but is now reported to have twenty organizations,³⁵ has received a great deal of media attention for

their loud and conspicuous messages designed to show how the mainstream *ulemas* support state-led counterterrorism operations. Indeed, the council has even called on Islamabad to speed up military operations in Pakistan's tribal areas against Deoband-inspired radical movements like the Taliban.³⁶

On some levels, it seems natural for Barelvis to cooperate with the PPP government to combat what they have both denounced as the "Talibanization" of Pakistani society. Both PPP and Barelvis have been hit hard by militant Deobandi Islamists. Barelvis have been attacked for their religious beliefs and practices, whereas PPP politicians such as Benazir Bhutto have been assassinated for their progressive principles. Moreover, both the PPP and Barelvis have suffered from the country's tainted alliance between "mosque and military."³⁷ The PPP, for example, is quick to remind that their first government was subverted by General Zia ul-Haq, whose military regime favored puritan religious groups that later became engaged in sectarian and other terrorist activities.³⁸ Above all, the PPP has a large constituency in the rural areas of Sindh and the southern region of Punjab—both areas where Barelvis is the most common form of Islam. The present prime minister, Yusuf Raza Gillani, hails from southern Punjab and is respected as a descendant of a saint, and the very tombs of the Bhutto family in Sindh are visited by locals who seek spiritual solace—a practice common in rural parts of the subcontinent.³⁹

Despite these ties and their common opponents, however, it would be a mistake to conclude that the Barelvis and PPP are seamlessly aligned in the struggle against all kinds of religiously-motivated extremism. The PPP, after all, is a progressive political party, whereas Barelvis is a religious movement. Their principles and agendas are different—and sometimes at odds. What matters most for the PPP as the ruling political party is retaining a numerical majority in the legislature. For this reason, the party has had to court the leading political force of the Deobandi school of thought, Jamaat Ulema Islam (JUI). The Barelvis' primary interest is in securing and propagating their religious teachings through *dawa*. As such, the numerous political parties and movements representing Barelvi populations may or may not align with the PPP, depending on the national and local context.

The limitations of the PPP-Barelvi partnership revealed themselves clearly in the national religious and political debate that unfolded in late 2010 when some PPP politicians including Governor Taseer proposed to re-examine the country's blasphemy laws. Barelvi organizations reacted by staging mass protests against the politician's proposals. Indeed, the same Sunni Ittehad Council created in 2009 by Barelvi scholars to "tackle Islamist militancy" was at the forefront of the protests against Governor Taseer, and the council threatened the state with "anarchy" should Asia Bibi (the Christian woman sentenced to hang for speaking "ill" of the Prophet Muhammad) be pardoned of her crimes.⁴⁰ After Governor Taseer was killed, the council clearly lauded the assassin, with a spokesperson asserting "Don't associate Mumtaz with any terrorist group. He is a true

lover of the Holy Prophet (pbuh).”⁴¹ Needless to say, the Barelvi-PPP partnership against extremism has only further deteriorated since.

Securing the Prophet’s Honor

WHAT DISTINGUISHES BARELVISM MOST VISIBLY FROM OTHER ISLAMIC SCHOOLS IN South Asia is the central importance it attaches to the veneration of the Prophet Muhammad. Unlike the Deobandis who are best known for their austerity, Barelvi religious practice is colorful and folksy, and it also reflects a great degree of variation at the local level. The festive rituals that Barelvis routinely partake in include the celebration of the birth of the Prophet; commemoration of saints (*walis*) at death anniversaries (*urs*); offering prayers at shrines constructed for the blessing of saints (a common Barelvi practice that is often simplistically described as “shrine worship”); as well as recitation of poems in honor of the Prophet Muhammad (*naat*). From the Deobandi and Ahl-e-Hadith perspectives, many of these common Barelvi practices—including, perhaps most notably, those associated with the Sufi belief in intercession through saints—are blatantly heretical.

Since Ahmed Raza’s time, Barelvis have attached enormous significance to the veneration of the Prophet Muhammad, and this constitutes one of the sharpest areas of divergence between Barelvis and the puritan schools of thought. Barelvis regard their practices as reflecting their sincere and intense devotion to the Prophet Muhammad. They claim that the Deobandis and members of Ahl-e-Hadith do not show the full respect due to the sanctity of the Last Prophet. (Since Ahmed Raza’s time, Barelvis have commonly described these puritan schools derisively as “Najdi,”⁴² referring to Najd, the central region in modern-day Saudi Arabia where Wahhabi thought originated and which remains a bastion of reactionary Islam.)

The differences in the outward practices of these South Asian schools are rooted in their divergent doctrines. Barelvis, for instance, follow an esoteric understanding of Islam, and they believe that the Prophet Muhammad is light (*noor*). Deobandis, by contrast, believe that the Prophet Muhammad was merely human (*bashar*). Further, while Barelvis consider the Prophet to be present in this world at all times (*Hazir au Nazir*), Deobandis believe that he, a mortal, has passed away. Some Barelvis describe their devotion to Prophet Muhammad as so powerful that it harks back to an earlier era before Islam was revealed. This love is displayed in the Barelvi belief that Muhammad’s creation “preceded that of Adam and the world in general.”⁴³ For the Deobandis, however, any suggestion that the Prophet is more than human elevates his role to divinity, and there-by corrupts the monotheistic spirit of Islam.

On the basis of their beliefs, Barelvis commonly claim to derive deep spiritual satisfaction through the offering of prayers at shrines or by frequently reciting the Prophet’s

name in tandem after prayers. (Mumtaz Qadri himself was known for his passionate recitations of *naat*, or poems honoring the Prophet.) These physical acts of showing reverence for the Prophet and his followers are so integral to Barelvi understanding of Islam that they form the basis of the Barelvi claim to “Sunniat”—or that it is the Barelvis, and not the Deobandis, who are following true Islam as it was revealed and meant by God to be practiced.⁴⁴

In the Barelvi view, a true Muslim is an “*Ashiq-e-Rasool*,” or a “Lover of the Prophet,” and it is this language of love, combined with the Barelvism’s deeply Sufi messages on spiritual and social harmony, that largely accounts for the popular perception of Barelvi Islam as a moderate and peaceful teaching. At the same time, however, Barelvis also described Qadri’s murder of Governor Taseer as the act of an *ashiq*—or of a devotee expressing his veneration to the Loved One. Moreover, the showering of flower petals on Qadri and the gifts sent to him on Valentine’s Day are best understood as popular expressions of adoration and respect for a person who went to extreme lengths to show his devotion to the Prophet. As one of the assassin’s admirers said, “We love Qadri because he loves the Holy Prophet (PBUH)!”⁴⁵

With love and devotion to the Prophet Muhammad a central part of their faith, Barelvis commonly see themselves as religiously obligated to protect the sanctity of the Prophet. This includes showing no compromise toward all who might dishonor or blaspheme the Prophet. In 2006, for instance, the caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad published by the Danish newspaper *Jyllands Posten* outraged many Muslims and led to protests in many countries. Barelvis were among the most prominent groups in South Asia to voice their condemnation.

The Barelvis’ deep-seated sense of obligation to defend the Prophet has from time to time led to zealous, even violent behavior. One underreported incident in 2008 involved a young Pakistani immigrant in Germany named Amir Cheema who attempted to murder the German publisher of the *Jyllands Posten* cartoons. Cheema was arrested, put behind bars, and he died in prison (reportedly from suicide, although some in Pakistan dispute this.) Since then, Cheema has been eulogized as a hero in Barelvi lore. Barelvi scholars of his native town in Punjab claim that Cheema was an Ahl-e-Sunnat—a true follower of the Prophet.⁴⁶ Before Cheema, Barelvi tradition similarly praised a line of heroes, including Ghazi Ilm Din Shaheed, who was convicted of murdering the Hindu publisher of a book that Muslims saw as libelous toward the Prophet in 1929 Lahore, which was then in British-occupied India. Today, many of the Barelvi websites that have been created to honor Mumtaz Qadri link his story with the heroic stories of Cheema and Ghazi Ilm Din Shaheed.⁴⁷

Barelvism’s devotion to the Prophet also helps to explain the ways in which Barelvis treat Muslim minorities, including Shiis and the Ahmadis. The Shiites, like the Barelvis, follow an esoteric Islamic teaching that is devoted to the Prophet, and the two groups

share many rituals in common. Barelvis have also frequently combined with Shiites against their common foes, especially Deobandis and Ahl-e-Hadith. The Ahmadis, on the other hand, are a minority Muslim sect who, in the Barelvi view, do not accept the orthodox Sunni teaching that Muhammad was the last prophet and, therefore, are guilty of violating the Prophet's sanctity. Since Ahmed Raza's time, Barelvi scholars have thus categorically rejected Ahmadis as an heretical, un-Islamic movement, and the Barelvis have notoriously emerged as some of the most strident opponents of the Ahmadis in South Asia.

The Barelvi rejection of the Ahmadi beliefs has sometimes led to hostility and violence. Most famously, in 1953 massive riots erupted across the Punjab, and especially in Lahore, when members of several religious political groups—including the Barelvi organization *Jamaat Ulema Pakistan*, as well as Deobandis and activists from the *Jamaat-e-Islami*—took to the streets to demand that the government officially declare Ahmadis as non-Muslim. Barelvi leaders like Maulana Abdus Sattar Niazi were among the leaders of the mob, which demanded the removal of all Ahmadis from government posts (including the foreign minister.) The frenzied crowd was ultimately subdued only after the army managed to establish control in Lahore, leading to Pakistan's first taste of direct military involvement in civil affairs.

From time to time, Barelvis have managed to forge common ground with Deobandis against the Ahmadis—despite the fact that Deobandis and Barelvis also see each other as guilty of heresy. In 1974, for example, a joint platform known as the *Tehreek-e-Khatm-e-Nabuwat*, or the Movement for the Finality of Prophet, was created to launch a new campaign for rejecting the Ahmadis and restoring the sanctity of the Prophet Muhammad. That platform involved both Barelvi and Deobandi religious groups and, combined, they were able to exert enormous political pressure on the prime minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The Pakistani government ultimately caved to this pressure, and in 1974 passed a constitutional amendment that officially declared Ahmadis as non-Muslims.

While Barelvi Islam has a reputation for being politically quietist, this is not entirely accurate, since Barelvis have historically been involved in pressuring the state to implement Islamic policies across the country. In 1977, for example, a nine-party coalition that included a large Barelvi contingent was organized to protest the government, which was then led by the Pakistan People's Party. Known as the Pakistan National Alliance (PNA), the coalition consisted of a variety of religious groups as well as a secular nationalist party. The PNA competed in the 1977 elections against Bhutto's PPP, and subsequently alleged that elections had been rigged. Perhaps the most remarkable, though not adequately studied, feature of this episode was the fact that the PNA coalition identified itself as the "*Tehreek-e-Nizam-e-Mustafa*," or the "*Movement for the Establishment of Muhammad's Model*." The movement's agenda was to replace the ruling PPP government with what it described as the "*Model of Muhammad*," which was a reference to the

ideals of the Prophet's system of governance.⁴⁸ Prime Minister Bhutto again caved to this public pressure, and in hopes of reversing his political misfortunes, imposed bans on alcohol, horse racing, and night clubs and bars, and officially changed the weekly holiday from Sunday to Friday.

More recently, in 2002, in the wake of the U.S.-led NATO invasion of Afghanistan, a political alliance that included the Bareilvi JUP party was created called the Muttahida Majlis Amal, or the United Council of Action (MMA). A central plank in the alliance's political agenda was opposing the NATO war in Afghanistan. The alliance additionally aimed to implement an Islamic system of governance, and it was able to introduce some reforms between 2002 and 2007, during its rule in the border province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (formerly known as North-West Frontier Province). The Bareilvi JUP was only a minor partner in the MMA alliance; in fact, most of the seats were bagged by Jamaat-e-Islami and Jamaat Ulema Islam candidates.

The fact that Bareilvis have from time to time cooperated with Deobandis (and also secular nationalists) for political reward or to counter a common enemy has become a subject of ongoing contention within the Bareilvi school of thought. Some scholars have argued, after all, that cooperating with deviants like Deobandis diminishes the Bareilvi claim to Sunnat, and therefore should be avoided at all costs. However, leading Bareilvi scholars such as Dr. Tahir ul-Qadri have also rationalized the Bareilvi cooperation with the Deobandis. In one of his speeches, he tried to persuade other Bareilvis that despite the perception that a movement led by one apostate (such as the Deobandis) against another apostate (like the Ahmadis) may lessen the Sunnat (the Living the Way of the Prophet) among those who participate in the movement, such an alliance can serve a greater public or Islamic interest.⁴⁹

The debate over whether Bareilvis should cooperate with other schools of thought has itself become a source of division within the Bareilvi movement. One especially controversial personality was Ahmed Shah Noorani, a scholar of great prestige and influence who died in 2003. A skilled political leader, he was a key Bareilvi figure in all of the popular Bareilvi movements—from the 1953 anti-Ahmadi riots to the 1974 and 1977 demonstrations against the PPP government. In 2002, Ahmed Shah was also elected president of MMA. For his activism and associations with non-Bareilvi schools of thought, he was often accused by fellow Bareilvis of being "*Qatil-e-Ahl-e-Sunnat*" (Killer of Ahl-e-Sunnat). However, Ahmed Shah also enjoys respect among some Bareilvis because of his political activism and leadership of the Jamaat Ulema Pakistan during his lifetime.

Since Ahmed Shah's death, Bareilvi political activists have been struggling to unite; the JUP itself was splintered into numerous factions. In the view of some Bareilvis, the Sunni Ittehad Council was created in an effort to reunite Bareilvis around a new common social and political agenda.⁵⁰ The council is in fact in the process of transforming itself into a political force and planning to compete in the next election.⁵¹

Shedding Quietism

PAKISTAN'S SECTARIAN STRIFE, GROWING INSECURITY, AND THE FEELING AMONG Barelvis that their communities are under siege have all contributed in recent years to the emergence of new forms of Barelvi activism and communalist assertion. It is within this context that we are best able to understand the widespread support in the Barelvi community for Mumtaz Qadri, as well as the increasing Barelvi hostility toward Deobandi militancy.

Conventionally, the Barelvi veneration for the Prophet Muhammad has formed the basis of the school's diehard support for Pakistan's blasphemy law. The blasphemy law, even though it purports to criminalize blaspheming against all religions, is commonly referred to in Urdu as "Tahafuz-e-Namoos Risalat Act," which means "Protection of the Sanctity of the Prophet Act." This is especially noteworthy from the Barelvi perspective, since the law explicitly concerns the Prophet and sanctity. Barelvis in particular have rallied in support of one specific clause in the law known as 295-C, which was added in 1986 by an act of parliament and meant to uphold respect for the Prophet.⁵² For the Barelvis, 295-C has become a rallying point for asserting their communalist identity and claims to being the true followers of Islam.

In 2000, for example, General Musharraf's government announced that it would be reviewing the blasphemy laws.⁵³ This inflamed Barelvi groups, who poured into Pakistan's streets to protest against the government. In response, Musharraf's government backed off from amending the law. The religious groups later organized into a pro-blasphemy law movement known as the Tehreek-e-Namoos Risalat Muhammadi, or the Movement for the Preservation of the Sanctity of the Prophet Muhammad.⁵⁴ (Incidentally, the "brain behind the movement," Mufti Sarfraz Naeemi, a Barelvi scholar, was killed in 2009 in a suicide bomb attack a few days after his denouncement of terrorism.⁵⁵ He was one of the first Barelvi scholars to have issued a fatwa against suicide bombing in 2005.)⁵⁶

While both Deobandi and Barelvi scholars have championed the blasphemy law, they have done so for different reasons—and this difference, too, has become a source of increasing tension between the schools over who represents "true Islam." The Barelvi support for the law stems from their veneration of the Prophet and their sense of obligation to protect his sanctity. Deobandis, for their part, reject this Barelvi devotion to the Prophet as heretical (claiming it is an act of *shirk*, polytheism). These differences have expressed themselves through the divergent reactions of the two Islamic schools to Taseer's assassination. For example, Allama Tahir Ashrafi, the Chairman of the Pakistan Ulema Council, a Deobandi organization, distanced the Deobandi school from Mumtaz Qadri,

commenting that “sentiments [i.e., the veneration of Muhammad] were being exploited” against Taseer.⁵⁷ (Incidentally, in 2007, this same Deobandi scholar ruled that Muslims should honor Osama bin Laden in reaction to the British government’s granting of knighthood to Salman Rushdie.)⁵⁸

In an apparent tit-for-tat reaction to sectarian strikes and increasing marginalization, Barelvi communities around Pakistan have begun to shed their politically quietest ways and to assert themselves by organizing mass religious processions, organizing new groups, and staging rallies. While the majority of these public gatherings have not been outwardly militant (the tenor at the rallies in defense of the blasphemy law and Mumtaz Qadri were a clear exception to this), they are increasing in frequency and scale, and they are clearly meant as displays of Barelvi strength and unity against their ideological rivals.

This Barelvi activism has brought new pressures to bear on the state—and all at a time when the state’s own capacity to cope with sectarianism and secure the country has been greatly depleted. In July 2010, for example, a famous shrine in Lahore known as Data Darbar was bombed. Frustrated by the government’s failure to stop attacks even inside the provincial capital, Barelvi scholars met with the Punjab Chief Minister and publicly criticized top government officials, claiming they sympathized with the Deobandis and were linked with the Taliban.⁵⁹ Later, in a public gathering against suicide bombing in August 2010, the chief of the Sunni Ittehad Council Fazl-e-Karim, declared that the Punjab Government will come to know “how powerful”⁶⁰ the Barelvis are, and that they will “no longer remain silent.”⁶¹

Meanwhile, Deobandi scholars have accused the same Punjab government of favoring the Barelvis. Only two weeks after the Darbar attack, Deobandi activists responded to the Barelvi criticisms by stating that the Sunni Ittehad Council “is conspiring to cause Deobandi-Barelvi riots.” They further stated that the *Khadm-e-Ala* (the Punjab Chief Minister; literally “the Chief Servant” of the people) seems to be *Khadm-i-Barelvi* (“Servant of the Barelvis”), and they warned that “if the Punjab government does not stop patronizing (the Barelvis), a campaign will be launched to make the next elections a contest between Deobandi and Barelvi schools of thought.”⁶²

Due in part to their lack of confidence in the state to provide security, Barelvis have also begun to organize their communities to defend against sectarian groups. One of the most notable of these organizations is the Sunni Tehreek, which has engaged in frequent clashes with Deobandi activists since it was created in the early 1990s. A 2007 International Crisis Group report described the Sunni Tehreek as a “Barelvi militant group” that was created to “defend Barelvi mosques and interests against take-overs and intimidation by Deobandi groups.”⁶³

The Sunni Tehreek disputes the characterization that it is a “militant” movement, and it has repeatedly claimed it is deliberately slandered when people accuse it of engaging in violence. According to one Barelvi, the Sunni Tehreek is not a “militant”

movement like the groups associated with Deobandis or Ahl-e-Hadith, but a “defensive” organization created to actively repel attacks on the Barelvi community and their places of worship.⁶⁴

However Sunni Tehreek is characterized now or in the future, it cannot be denied that it represents a new kind of Barelvi organization whose importance within Pakistani political life is also growing. Before the Sunni Tehreek’s emergence in the mid-1990s, according to the International Crisis Group, “no prominent Barelvi organization had indulged in organized sectarian violence.”⁶⁵ In 2002, the International Crisis Group described the Sunni Tehreek as representing only a “miniscule fringe” of the Barelvi community in Karachi.⁶⁶ Yet the rapid growth of Sunni Tehreek and similar community activist organizations since then has been undeniable. This growth has been spurred on by rising sectarianism and the Barelvi population’s felt need for enhanced security and for asserting their communal identity. The Sunni Tehreek has since emerged as a major political force—and not only in Karachi, but nationally. In a recent sign of the organization’s growing importance and influence, the Prime Minister of Pakistan recently called upon Sunni Tehreek to participate in an All-Parties Conference whose purpose was to think through Pakistan’s approach to deteriorating relations with the United States.

Conclusion

THE OUTPOURING OF BARELVI SUPPORT FOR MUMTAZ QADRI’S MURDER OF GOVERNOR Salman Taseer has deeply upset many commonly held assumptions about Barelvi moderation and also about the sources of religious extremism in Pakistan. When it was announced on October 1, 2011 that Mumtaz Qadri would be executed for his crimes, a new wave of mass demonstrations involving Barelvi groups took hold across the country. These riots are taking place against the backdrop of a larger revival of Barelvi activism and communalist assertion that has become an undeniable force in Pakistan’s religious politics.

There have been additional indications of new forms of Barelvi militancy in recent months. In September 2011, for instance, it was reported that the Pakistani military had decided to curtail the proselytizing activities of the Dawat-e-Islami, out of fear that the Barelvi organization was penetrating the ranks, seeking to radicalize soldiers.⁶⁷ (Mumtaz Qadri, it must be recalled, was a member of Dawat-e-Islami.) Also in September 2011, amidst rumors that the U.S. might invade Pakistan to disrupt jihadist networks along the country’s Afghan border, the Barelvi Sunni Ittehad Council issued a fatwa declaring jihad against the U.S. to be obligatory should it encroach upon Pakistani soil.⁶⁸ The fatwa additionally urged the Pakistan government to abandon Pakistan’s role as a front-line

ally in the struggle against the Taliban and al-Qaeda, to realign the country geopolitically, and to prepare the country as a whole for a jihad in the way of God.

Importantly, not all Barelvi scholars and organizations have embraced this extremist agenda, and some have actively resisted it. For example, the religious scholar Tahrir ul-Qadri, one of Pakistan's most outspoken critics of Islamic terrorism, has also emerged as one of the few Barelvi scholars to have categorically condemned Mumtaz Qadri's murder of Salman Taseer.⁶⁹ Tahrir ul-Qadri has additionally called for religious moderation as well as new efforts to rein in sectarianism and strife between different Islamic sects. Despite this, however, Tahrir ul-Qadri and his followers are frequently criticized by Barelvi activists for not being in touch with the concerns of ordinary Barelvis. Revealingly, his organization, Minahaj-ul-Quran, is also criticized for not being in line with mainstream Barelvi thought, nor is it a member of the Sunni Ittehad Council.

Taken as a whole, the events surrounding the murder of Governor Taseer provide a number of cautionary lessons for the struggle with Islamist militancy. It has often been proposed that states should actively support and ally with Islamic schools of thought whose ideas run counter to and can compete with extremist ideologies. For example, a number of policy studies, including several issued by Western think tanks, have suggested partnering with and supporting Sufi movements in an effort to curtail the influence of radical Deobandi and Salafist-inspired militancy in South Asia and elsewhere.⁷⁰ While engaging non-violent religious groups is always a sound policy, the case of Pakistan has shown the limitations of certain strategies that involve using "moderate Islam" against "radical Islam"—as well as its potential to backfire.

The advocates of state support for one religious group against another commonly assume that states will dramatically enhance their ability to curtail the influence of religiously-based radical movements if they have the support of religious scholars. Such proposals frequently also link militant radicalism to a specific ideological current, and thus they simplistically equate violence and sectarianism with a particular ideology. While it is true that certain ideological currents today are more prone to violence than others, the Barelvi reaction to the murder of Governor Taseer demonstrates that even purportedly moderate religious ideologies may themselves be exploited and utilized to promote extremist and violent agendas.

Moreover, the proponents of providing state support to some religious groups to counter the influence of other groups frequently neglect the fundamental and often conflicting interests that naturally exist between the modern state and religious groups. They frequently forget, for example, how the Pakistani state's past support of specific Islamic groups to advance the state's own political agendas has inadvertently encouraged the growth of new religious and political dynamics, including the intensification of the now more than a century old sectarian struggle between Deobandis and Barelvis. In light of this, it is worth asking the question: if the Pakistani state were to seek to system-

atically support Barelvis against Deobandis, how might it affect the future evolution of sectarianism and religious politics in the country as a whole?

In the wake of the 1953 riots against Ahmadi Muslims, Pakistan's government established a commission to investigate the causes of religious violence in society.⁷¹ The commission's final report looked, among other things, at the nature of sectarianism, and described how the relentless efforts of Muslim groups to declare other Muslim groups as "un-Islamic" can destroy any possibility for a healthy and normal political life:

The net result of all this is that neither Shias nor Sunnis nor Deobandis nor Ahl-i-Hadith nor Barelvis are Muslims and any change from one view to the other must be accompanied in an Islamic State with the penalty of death if the Government of the State is in the hands of the party which considers the other party to be *kafirs*. And it does not require much imagination to judge of the consequences of this doctrine when it is remembered that no two *ulama* have agreed before us as to the definition of a Muslim. If the constituents of each of the definitions given by the *ulama* are given effect to, and subjected to the rule of 'combination and permutation' and the form of charge in the Inquisition's sentence on Galileo is adopted *mutatis mutandis* as a model, the grounds on which a person may be indicted for apostasy will be too numerous to count.⁷²

These observations are perhaps even more relevant today than they were sixty years ago, at a time when Pakistan struggles to find a new basis for a national politics beyond Islamic ideology. This remains the singular challenge for Pakistan.

NOTES

1. "Mumtaz Qadri admits killing Governor Salman Taseer," *BBC News*, January 10, 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-south-asia-12149607>.
2. The "Blasphemy Law" refers to a set of clauses of Pakistani law which were collectively introduced in the 1980s as part of General Zia ul-Haq's program of state-led Islamization. It must, however, be remembered that the first clause of the law—295-A of Pakistan Penal Code—was introduced by the British in 1927, and that the later clauses were added to this foundation. Because these laws were implemented under the military ruler, there has been an ongoing debate over their legal position. One of the many problems with the law is that it allows for a case to be filed against someone on the basis of them allegedly using "innuendos" and "insinuations" to desecrate religion. Moreover,

critics argue that the law is frequently used to settle personal scores, while others point out that the law targets religious minorities. Furthermore, even when a charge of blasphemy is dropped or the accused person is allowed bail, the accused person often receives death threats and is sometimes the target of vigilante killings. For these and other reasons, even those who support the law in principle sometimes disagree with its misapplication.

3. Rob Crilly and Aoun Sahi, "Christian woman sentenced to death in Pakistan 'for blasphemy'," *The Telegraph*, November 9, 2010, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/8120142/Christian-woman-sentenced-to-death-in-Pakistan-for-blasphemy.html>.
4. "Pressure grows for pardon of Aasia bibi," *Dawn*, November 22, 2010, <http://www.dawn.com/2010/11/22/pressure-grows-for-pardon-of-aasia-bibi.html>.
5. Usman Manzoor, "Events that led to Taseer's murder," *The News*, January 06, 2011 <http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=24207&Cat=2>.
6. Babar Dogar, "Pakistan governor's suspected assassin hailed as hero," *The Washington Times*, January 5, 2011, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2011/jan/5/pakistani-governor-buried-under-tightened-security/>.
7. Waqar Hamza, "Over 1,000 people like Mumtaz Qadri's fan pages on Facebook," *Pakistan Today*, <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2011/01/over-1000-people-like-mumtaz-qadris-fan-pages-on-facebook/>.
8. "Valentine gifts for Mumtaz Qadri," *The Express Tribune*, February 14, 2011, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/118594/valentine-gifts-for-mumtaz-qadri/>.
9. The statement was released from the platform of Jamaat Ahl-e Sunnat Pakistan (JASP), a Bareilvi group; See: Salman Siddiqui, "Hardline Stance: Religious bloc condones murder," *The Express Tribune*, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/99313/hardline-stance-religious-bloc-condones-murder/>.
10. In a report compiled for a leading Pakistani paper, JASP is termed as the "largest body of the Bareilvi group" whose "directions are considered binding on every other organization." See: <http://tribune.com.pk/story/99313/hardline-stance-religious-bloc-condones-murder/>. The JASP calls itself a "religious organization representing the over whelming majority of Pakistan." See: <http://jamateahlesunnat.org/>.
11. "Top prayer leaders deny Taseer his rites," *Pakistan Today*, <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2011/01/top-prayer-leaders-deny-taseer-his-rites/>.
12. "Journalist Recalls Father's Assassination In Pakistan," *NPR*, June 27, 2011, <http://www.npr.org/2011/06/27/137441962/shehrbano-taseer-recalls-her-fathers-assassination>.
13. In one of his sermons, Allama Syed Turab Qadri, a noted scholar, after distancing Qadri's act from any collective involvement, laid down the legal and religious mechanism that deals with someone who violates the sanctity of Islam—and associates it with the Governor's statement. <http://www.alahazrat.net/askimam/content.php?id=1137>.
14. Article 248 (3) of the 1973 Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan states, "No process for the arrest or imprisonment of the President or a Governor shall issue from any court during his term of office." <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/part12.ch4.html>.
15. Interview with a Bareilvi activist (anonymity requested); moreover, Qadri's counsel also tried to prove that Qadri took up arms against Governor because of his "sudden provocation." See: "Defence tries to prove Qadri acted on 'sudden provocation'," *The Express Tribune*, July 24, 2011, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/216265/defence-tries-to-prove-qadri-acted-on-sudden-provocation/>.
16. "ST warns govt of besieging parliament if Qadri given death," *Daily Times*, January 10, 2011, http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011\01\10\story_10-1-2011_pg7_2.

17. "Taseer assassination: Self-confessed killer insists he was 'not influenced'," *The Express Tribune*, January 11, 2011, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/102103/taseer-assassination-self-confessed-killer-insists-he-was-not-influenced/>.
18. The video of the sermon can be accessed here: <http://www.shababeislami.com/mumtaz%20Qadri.html>.
19. Karin Brulliard, "In Pakistan, even anti-violence Islamic sect lauds assassination of liberal governor," *Washington Post*, January 29, 2011, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/29/AR2011012904706.html>.
20. One scholar, for instance, argues that they are not different but instead follow the belief in the way of the saints. See: Saqib Akbar (ed.), *Pakistan Kay Deeni Masalik*, (*Pakistan's Muslim Creeds*), Al-Baseera, December 2010, pg. 13.
21. For his pioneering role, Ahmed Shah Barelvi is often known as "Ala Hazrat" and "Imam ahl-e-Sunnat" (*Imam of the Ahl-e-Sunnat*).
22. As the movement's name suggests, Ahl-e-Hadith members adhere only to the Quran and the *Hadiths* and, unlike Deobandis and Barelvis, do not follow any tradition of jurisprudence (*taqlid*). For their puritan observation, they have been called the "Wahhabis of South Asia," a reference to the strict interpretation followed in Saudi Arabia. The pioneers of Ahl-e-Hadith wrote in and were criticized in the earlier nineteenth century—more than half a century before the life of Ahmed Raza Khan. See for example the critique of Shah Ismail Shaheed's "Taqwatul Iman" (Strengthening of Faith); see: Saqib Akbar (ed.), *Pakistan Kay Deeni Masalik* (*Pakistan's Muslim Creeds*), Al-Baseera, December 2010, pg. 11.
23. Usha Sanyal, 108.
24. Interview with a Barelvi activist (anonymity requested).
25. Interview with a Barelvi activist (anonymity requested). For instance, the interviewee said that the original manifesto of SSP was "kafir kafir, Barelvi kafir" which was changed against "Shia only later." Special reference was made to Manazira-e-Jhang—which took place years before SSP was formally formed.
26. See: <http://terrorismwatch.com.pk/images/Timeline%20Of%20Attacks%20on%20Shrines%20In%20Pakistan.pdf>.
27. Muhammad Faisal Ali, "Suicide bomber kills anti-Taliban cleric Allama Naeemi," *Dawn*, June 13, 2009, <http://archives.dawn.com/archives/34664>.
28. "Bomb carnage at Karachi prayers," *BBC News*, April 11, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4900402.stm.
29. "Lashkar-e-Jhangvi Suicide Bomber Behind 2006 Nishtar Park Killing," *Dawn*, June 15, 2007, <http://watandost.blogspot.com/2007/06/lashkar-e-jhangvi-suicide-bomber-behind.html>.
30. The Deobandi school of thought, for instance, remains the dominant school of thought in the western region of Pakistan, including tribal areas.
31. Syed Shoaib Hasan, "Pakistan 'extremist' is shot dead," *BBC News*, August 17, 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8205158.stm>.
32. Mufti Gulzar Naeema argues that by attaching the whole movement as "Barelvi" only, a banned group has taken the name. Saqib Akbar (ed.), *Pakistan Kay Deeni Masalik* (*Pakistan's Muslim Creeds*), Al-Baseera, December 2010, pg. 13.
33. "Sufi Advisory Council constituted," *Daily Times*, June 8, 2009, http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2009\06\08\story_8-6-2009_pg7_32.
34. The official notification along with terms of reference can be accessed at the Ministry of Religious Affairs' website:

- http://202.83.164.27/wps/portal/Morazu/tut/p/c0/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os_hQN68AZ3dnIwML82BTAYNXTz9jE0NfQwNfA_2CbEdFAA2MC_Yl/?WCM_GLOBAL_CONTEXT=/wps/wcm/connect/MorazuCL/ministry/highlights/reconstitution+of+the+sufi+advisory+council.
- Even the founding chairman of the council condoned Taseer's assassination. See: Imtiaz Gul, "Pakistan's dangerous blasphemy laws claim the governor of Punjab," *Af-Pak Channel*, Foreign Policy (online), January 4, 2011, http://afpak.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2011/01/04/pakistan_s_dangerous_blasphemy_laws_claim_the_governor_of_punjab.
35. "Fatwa for Jihad against America Published," September 26, 2011, *The Nation*, <http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/26-Sep-2011/Fatwa-for-Jihad-against-America>.
 36. Correspondent, "Eight parties form alliance against Talibanisation," *The News*, May 09, 2009, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=22032&Cat=13&dt=5/10/2009>.
 37. For a detailed overview, read Husain Haqqani, "Pakistan: Beyond Mosque and Military." Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005.
 38. It is, however, important to remember that PPP was opposed by Jamiat Ulema Pakistan, a Bareilvi political party; the organization's religious manifesto is counted as one of the domestic reasons behind Zia's Islamization immediately upon his overthrow of the government.
 39. These tombs mark the grave of Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who was hanged after Zia-ul-Haq overthrew his government, and Benazir Bhutto, who was killed in 2007.
 40. "Sunni Ittehad Council warns of 'anarchy' if Aasia pardoned," *The Express Tribune*, November 26, 2010, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/82149/sunni-ittehad-council-warns-of-anarchy-if-aasia-pardoned/>.
 41. Rana Tanveer, "Taseer murder: Sunni Ittehad warns against protests," *The Express Tribune*, January 10, 2011, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/101580/taseer-murder-sunni-ittehad-warns-against-protests/>.
 42. One Bareilvi scholar narrates the genesis of Bareilvi history referencing the inroads of "Najdi movement"; see: Saqib Akbar (ed.), *Pakistan Kay Deeni Masalik, Pakistan's Muslim Creeds*, Al-Baseera, December 2010, pg. 12.
 43. Usha Sanyal, *Ahmed Riza Khan Bareilwi: In the Path of the Prophet*, Viva Books Private Limited, 2006, pg. 96.
 44. This claim is clearly visible in the symbolism of many Bareilvi groups. A few examples include: "Jamaat Ahl-e-Sunnat Pakistan" (JASP); Sunni Tehreek, a Bareilvi outfit with stains of militant activities; the title *Ahl-e-Sunnat wal Jamaat*; Sunni Ittehad Council, an anti-terrorism platform supported by Bareilvi-inspired groups; and even Madani TV, a Bareilvi TV channel (the name refers to Medina, burial city of the Prophet).
 45. "Valentine gifts for Mumtaz Qadri," *The Express Tribune*, February 14, 2011, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/118594/valentine-gifts-for-mumtaz-qadri/>.
 46. One cleric challenged his opponents, in a sermon, that if Cheema was of "your" faith, how come Cheema's *chehlum* (procession on the 40th day of a death) be held, how come people visit his shrine, etc. See: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0RGhEXtEQ1Y>.
 47. Examples include: <http://www.mumtazqadri.info>.
 48. It cannot be said for sure what Bareilvis and other alliance members meant by this term. The slogan has stuck with Bareilvi political movements since, and is used to show their devotion to the Prophet. For example, Dr. Tahrir ul-Qadri used the term as the title of his first book (1978). See: <http://www.irfan-ul-quran.com/quran/english/tid/41/>.

49. "Tahreek-e-Khatam Nabuwat under Deobandi Leadership? Where was your Sunnat?," <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Smzfq8obf0g> (Last accessed July 4, 2010).
50. Interview with a Barelvi activist (anonymity requested).
51. However, SIC's decision to actively participate in the political process is by itself debated within the SIC. See: Karamat Bhatti, "OF RELIGION AND POLITICS – Infighting over SIC's involvement in politics," April 14, 2011, *Pakistan Today*, <http://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2011/04/of-religion-and-politics-infighting-over-sics-involvement-in-politics/>.
52. The full clause reads, "Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by visible representation or by any imputation, innuendo, or insinuation, directly or indirectly, defiles the sacred name of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) shall be punished with death, or imprisonment for life, and shall also be liable to fine."
See: <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/legislation/1860/actXLVof1860.html>.
53. "Owen Bennett-Jones, Pakistan's blasphemy law U-turn," *BBC World*, 17 May, 2000, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/751803.stm.
54. Aoun Sahi, "The price of defiance," *The News on Sunday*, June 21, 2009, <http://jang.com.pk/thenews/jun2009-weekly/nos-21-06-2009/dia.htm>.
55. IBID.
56. IBID.
57. "Sentiments were exploited against Salmaan Taseer: Ashrafi," *Daily Times*, January 9, 2011 http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2011%5C01%5C09%5Cstory_9-1-2011_pg7_18.
58. Duncan Campbell, "Bhutto condemns Rushdie attack," *The Guardian*, June 22, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2007/jun/22/pakistan.religion>.
59. M Ilyas Khan, "Pakistan clerics accuse Punjab leaders of Taliban link," *BBC News*, Islamabad, BBC World, 5 July 2010, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10511046>.
60. News report, "Sunni clerics vow show of strength," *The Express Tribune*, August 8, 2010, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/37108/sunni-clerics-vow-show-of-strength/>.
61. News report, "SUI announces long march against terrorism," *The News*, August 09, 2010, <http://www.thenews.com.pk/TodaysPrintDetail.aspx?ID=30622&Cat=13&dt=8/9/2010>.
62. "Deoband elders' warning to Punjab govt," *Dawn*, July 14, 2010 <http://archives.dawn.com/archives/151111>.
63. Crisis Group Report, "Pakistan: Karachi's Madrasas and Violent Extremism," *International Crisis Group*, March 29, 2007, pg. 26, http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/southasia/pakistan/130_pakistan_karachi_s_madrasas_and_violent_extremism.ashx.
64. Interview with a Barelvi activist (anonymity requested).
65. Crisis Group Report, "Pakistan: Karachi's Madrasas and Violent Extremism," *International Crisis Group*, March 29, 2007, pg. 11, http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/asia/southasia/pakistan/130_pakistan_karachi_s_madrasas_and_violent_extremism.ashx.
66. IBID, pg. 12.
67. Kamran Yousaf, "Dawat-e-Islami comes under military's radar," *The Express Tribune*, September 12, 2011, <http://tribune.com.pk/story/250572/clamping-down-dawat-e-islami-comes-under-militarys-radar/>.
68. This was published in Urdu newspapers; see also "Fatwa for Jihad against America," *Nation*, September 26, 2011,

<http://nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Regional/Lahore/26-Sep-2011/Fatwa-for-Jihad-against-America>.

69. Watch “Dr Tahir Ul Qadri’s Views about Salman Taseer and Gazi Mumtaz Qadri” at

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ufb5UfXTYUg>.

70. See, for instance, RAND’s recommendation of encouraging “Sufism”:

http://www.rand.org/pubs/monograph_reports/2005/MR1716.sum.pdf and Heritage Foundation’s report on supporting pluralism: <http://www.heritage.org/Research/Reports/2009/05/Reviving-Pakistans-Pluralist-Traditions-to-Fight-Extremism>.

71. As discussed, in 1953, Lahore was engulfed in riots against Ahmadis, a minority sect; Bareilvi activists and scholars participated in the protests. The demonstrations got out of control, the army was called in, and a Commission was formed to investigate the causes of riots.

72. “Report of the Court of Inquiry Constituted Under Punjab Act II of 1954 to Enquire Into the Punjab Disturbances of 1953,” pg. 219, http://www.thepersecution.org/dl/report_1953.pdf.