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Hafiz Saeed, the Pakistani leader of Jamaat-ud-Dawa, speaks to the press after being placed under 'preventative detention' by Pakistan, January 31, 2017 (ARIF ALI/AFP/Getty Images)

Jamaat-ud-Dawa: Converting Kuffar at Home, Killing Them Abroad

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Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD, Society for Proselytization), better known as Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT), is the most capable and competent Islamist militant group operating in South Asia. It gained notoriety for holding the Indian mega-city of Mumbai hostage in November 2008, when it sent several assault teams (*fidayeen*) to attack prominent targets, including the luxurious and iconic Taj Mahal Hotel (on the Gateway of India), the Oberoi Trident Hotel, the Café Leopold—popular among tourists and locals alike—the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (formerly known as Victoria Terminus), and the Nariman (Chabad) Jewish Community Center.¹ LeT is the most loyal proxy of the Pakistani deep state –it kills on

instruction abroad while keeping the peace at home² – and as such, most scholarship on the group focuses upon the external utility of the organization to Pakistan. Nonetheless, such studies exhibit little awareness of the important domestic perquisites JuD affords its handlers in the army and the brutal intelligence agency that the army oversees, the Inter-services Intelligence Directorate (ISI). In this regard, JuD, with its Ahl-e-Hadees (also known as “Salafi”) moorings, is at sharp variance with the vast majority of militant groups savaging Pakistan, which are tied to the Deobandi interpretative tradition (*maslak*). As I have previously argued,³ JuD abjures all sectarian violence in Pakistan among Muslim groups.⁴

While JuD’s opposition to sectarian violence has increasingly entered the public domain, JuD’s position on non-Muslim minorities within Pakistan is less appreciated. Paradoxically while JuD may have pejorative views of these religious communities outside of Pakistan and even encourages violence against their adherents, JuD does not advocate violence against them within Pakistan. JuD’s approach instead is to convert them through *dawah* or *tabligh*—both of which refer to preaching and proselytization—and the provision of relief and public services. Extraordinarily, within Pakistan, Hafiz Saeed purports to believe that whenever one is facing hardship, she or he should be helped irrespective of whether that person a Muslim, Jew, Christian, or Hindu and/or the person’s caste, ethnicity, or political affiliation

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In this article, I mobilize key JuD publications to demonstrate that while the JuD preaches murderous *jihad* against non-believers outside of Pakistan, it collaborates with the state in trying to dissuade Pakistanis from undertaking violence within the state, whether against state or non-state targets, to include Pakistan’s various religious minorities. Unsurprisingly, some of JuD’s numerous publications deal with the Hindu and Christian minorities within Pakistan, which are the largest religious minorities in the country. In this essay, I exposit what JuD says about these non-Muslims who live among Pakistani Muslims, including Ahmadis, about which the organization is generally silent. I argue here that while it support brutal slaughter of so-called *kuffar* (pl. of *kafar*, “nonbeliever”) abroad, it argues for the conversion of religious minorities at home through the provision of medical and other social services, emergency relief and extensive proselytization.

The remainder of this article is organized as follows. In the second section, I provide a brief overview of JuD. In the third section, I describe the key textual sources for this analysis. In the fourth, fifth, and sixth sections respectively, I describe JuD's views towards Ahmadis, Christians, and Hindus. I end with a discussion of conclusions and implications.

Who is the Lashkar?

LeT came into being in 1986-1987, when Zaki ur Rehman Lakhvi merged his Ahl-e-Hadees militant group with , Jamaat ud Dawah (JuD), another Ahl-e-Hadees organization that had been established by Hafiz Muhammad Saeed and Zafar Iqbal. The ensuing organization took the name Markaz al-Dawah Irshad (MDI, "Center for Preaching and Guidance"). Hafiz Saeed, the current Amir of the organization, and its sprawling subsidiaries established LeT as its armed wing a few years after MDI's establishment. While scholars do not know the exact year that Saeed raised LeT, they generally assess that it was established in 1989 or early 1990.⁶

Following a suicide attack on India's parliament by a Deobandi militant group known as Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), the United States declared both LeT and JeM as "Foreign Terrorist Organizations" (FTOs) and pressured Pakistan's military dictator and president, General Pervez Musharraf, to ban the organizations.⁷ Pakistan, despite commitments to the contrary, did not act in good faith. Pakistani intelligence warned the leaders of LeT and other prized proxies, which allowed them to set up new names for their organizations, establish new bank accounts, and transfer their assets. Saeed publicly announced that MDI would be dissolved and replaced by JuD.⁸ Saeed resigned as LeT's Amir and took up the helm of JuD. Yahya Mujahid, spokesperson for LeT cum JuD and a founding member of MDI, proclaimed that "We handed Lashkar-e-Tayyaba over to the Kashmiris in December 2001. Now we have no contact with any *jihadi* organization."⁹ In practice, the vast majority of LeT's assets and personnel were subsumed into JuD, while organizational nodes and operatives outside of Pakistan continued to operate under the banner of LeT. In the organization's various publications, Saeed is still referred to as the "Commander of the Mujahideen."

In the last decade, JuD spawned numerous related organizations, such as the Idara Khidmat-e-Khalq (IKK, Organization for Humanitarian Assistance), declared by the US Department of Treasury to be an FTO in April 2006.¹⁰ In 2009, JuD constituted a new humanitarian front, Falah Insaniat Foundation (FIF, Foundation for Welfare of Humanity) which the United States also designated as an FTO in 2010. In 2012, the United Nations designated FIF pursuant to UN Security Council Resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011).¹¹ Most recently, in early August 2017, JuD has floated a political party named the Milli Muslim League (MML) headed by a senior leader of the JuD named Saifullah Khalid.¹² The MML is fielding a candidate in the September 17, 2017 by-election to fill the seat left vacant by Nawaz Sharif's recent ouster even though the MML has not yet completed its registration with the Pakistan Election Commission.¹³ The MML plans to field more candidates in the 2018 elections. This represents a serious retrenchment from the organization's long-standing position that it has no role in electoral politics and that elections and democracy are in fact anathema to its interpretation of *shariat*. While little is known about the MML given its recency, speculation is rife about its relationship to Pakistan's deep state. Some analysts interpret the development of MML as a positive sign that Pakistan is trying to rein in its proxy by giving it a nonlethal domestic role that will allow the state to decommission its jihad function gradually.¹⁴

I reject this interpretation. As I have previously argued and also note here, LeT is the only militant organization in Pakistan that argues explicitly against violence within Pakistan while also offering the perquisite of loyally executing lethal attacks at the behest of the deep state.¹⁵ While only time will tell which interpretation is correct, I see the emergence of the MML as a further effort by the deep state to formally embed JuD within Pakistani politics. The timing of the MML's nascence is also notable because it coincides with the army's exhaustion with both of the mainstream political parties (the Pakistan Peoples' League and the Pakistan Muslim League of Nawaz Sharif) and the ongoing failure of Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) to develop a national presence. In effect, the army has few options to engineer Pakistan's political leadership in the forthcoming general elections.¹⁶ While the MML is unlikely to fare well in elections (as no religious party ever polls more than 10 percent in a free and fair Pakistan election),¹⁷ the MML can play a useful role as a member of a coalition groomed by the army and the ISI.

Unlike Pakistan's raft of Deobandi militant groups that frequently splinter, JuD has undergone only one temporary split, which occurred in July 2004 when several leaders were annoyed that Saeed was emplacing relatives to top positions. Lakhvi particularly was piqued by this blatant nepotism, and feared that Saeed was sidelining him in an organization he co-founded. Lakhvi subsequently broke with Saeed and formed the Khairun Nas ("Good People," a reference to the companions of the prophet). However, this rupture was very brief and Khairun Naz rejoined JuD, likely thanks to an ISI intervention.¹⁸ For these varied reasons, I use LeT and JuD interchangeably, reflecting the organizational reality on the ground.

Methods and Sources

This particular essay is tied to two larger projects about LeT for which I, working with Mustafa Samdani, compiled a maximally comprehensive sample of Dar ul Andlus publications, the sole publisher for JuD.¹⁹ This sample included materials I collected during dozens of trips to Pakistan between 1995 and 2013; materials Samdani collected during an extensive stay in Pakistan between 2016 and 2017; as well a list of all Dar-ul-Andlus publications available on WorldCat, a master catalog of library materials from 16,131 partner institutions in 120 countries.²⁰ WorldCat lists 54 books that were published by Dar-ul-Andlus between 1999 and the end of 2016. Samdani and I requested the volumes from inter-library loan facilities at Georgetown and Harvard Universities' libraries. We next reviewed these publications to identify sources that clarified JuD's positions on religious minorities, among others. While the vast majority of the texts address legitimate targets of jihad—all of which reside *outside* of Pakistan—a limited number of texts deal with religious minorities within Pakistan, who are not objects of LeT's jihad. Instead, as I show here, they are targets for conversion.

The key publications I use in this essay include JuD's foundational document, titled *Hum Kyon Jihad Kar Rahe Hain*, which translates as "Why We Are Waging Jihad."²¹ This publication broadly lays out the organization's immutable position that persons who are *kalima-go* (one who has uttered the *kalima* or affirmation that there is no god but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet) are not to be killed. Instead they are to be reformed through

dawah (invitation to JuD) and *tabligh* (proselytization). I also briefly draw upon Abul Hassar Mubbashir Ahmed Rabbani's 2015 treatment on *takfiri*, titled *Masalah-yi takfir aur is ke usul c zavabit* (*The Problem of Takfir and its Principles and Regulations*).²² In this volume, Rabbani lays out the extremely onerous circumstances under which a Muslim can be declared a *kafar* (nonbeliever) through *takfir* (the process of apostatizing someone), and qualifications religious scholars must have to do so.

To understand how it views Hindus in Pakistan, I turn to Abdussalam bin Muhammad's 2007 treatise, titled *Hindu Customs Among Muslims*.²³ JuD has published volumes on Christianity such as al-Rahman and Malakavi's 2007 *Isaiyat?* ("What is Christianity?")—an exposition of several books of the Old Testament of the Christian Bible²⁴—which mainly reveal what JuD believes about Christianity rather than what the organization believes about Christians who live in Pakistan among Muslims. One text, however, that does provide such insights into the question is Maulana Amir Hamza's 2004 *Shahrah-e-Bahisht* ("Highway to Paradise").²⁵

Strategic Silence: JuD and the Ahmadis

Ahmadis have long suffered endless campaigns of murderous violence, generally perpetrated by sectarian Deobandi militant groups (e.g. Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Sipah-e-Sahaba-e-Pakistan) as well as individuals who believe that Ahmadis are *wajib ul qatal*²⁶ and those who murder them will receive divine rewards. Since the 1950s, Ahmadis have long drawn the ire of Pakistan's Islamists, who lobbied to have them declared "non-Muslim" because they do not recognize the ordinal finality of the prophet and recognize a living prophet. In 1974, Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto—an ostensible liberal—declared them to be non-Muslim by constitutionally redefining their status. This constitutional provision rendered Ahmadis a non-Muslim minority overnight—despite their prominent role in the movement to secure an independent Pakistan—while expanding legal and extra-legal justifications for killing Ahmadis with ever-more impunity.²⁷ Despite the widespread antagonism against Ahmadis and the prominent campaign of violence against them, Sandani and I found no JuD publication that directly or even indirectly refers to Ahmadis. Over the course of the last two years, JuD refused to clarify this matter despite repeated queries. Given JuD's political

savvy and the evermore salience of this affair in Pakistan's domestic politics, this silence appears to be strategic rather than accidental.

At one level, one could interpret the organization's resolute belief, as articulated in *Hum Kyon Jihad Kar Rahen Hai*, that those who are *kalima-go* (those who say the *kalima*) are not to be killed as indirect justification for not murdering Ahmadis and treating them as other deviants, principally by redeeming them through *dawah*. In fact, this may be a "reasonable Muslim" interpretation of this injunction against killing those who are *kalima-go*. Such a straightforward reading is problematized by the fact while the Ahmadis believe they say the *kalima*; when they do, many Pakistanis believe that they are committing apostasy. Ahmadis cannot employ the terms *masjid* (mosque) to describe their place of worship, *namaz* or *salaat* to describe their prayer, or even the word "Quran" to describe their holy book. They can be charged formally with blasphemy if they do so.

The only JuD document that came close to addressing the specific issue of Ahmadis in Pakistan is Rabbani's *Masalah-yi takfir aur is ke usul o zavabit* ("The Problem of Takfir and its Principles and Regulations").²⁸ Here, Rabbani argues against violent or other political opposition to Muslim rulers, irrespective of their shortcomings. The only time a wayward Muslim leader can be subjected to *takfiri* is when he explicitly encourages *kufr* (the act of disbelief). Unfortunately, Rabbani offers no historical or contemporary example of a leader who meets these criteria. However, he does note that "it is only when someone explicitly states that they do not believe in the finality of the prophet, or rejects the Quran, prayer, and fasting altogether, that they can be called an infidel and exiled from the realm of Islam."²⁹ This is the most germane pronouncement that the organization makes about Ahmadis, albeit without mentioning them directly. After all, while they do not reject the Quran, prayer, or fasting (although they are not permitted to call these actions by their rightful names), they do reject the ordinal finality of the prophet and recognize a living, contemporary prophet. This statement does suggest that Ahmadis should be considered *kuffar*. However, the statement clearly applies only to Muslim leaders. As noted, the organization resolutely refuses to clarify whether or not it considers Ahmadis to be *kalmia-go*—and thus exempt from violence—which is the position of JuD's Deobandi militant competitors. JuD appears to be maintaining a strategic silence about a very controversial and imperiled group.

Hindus Among Muslims Pakistan

Pakistan is home to some 800,000 Hindus, 94 percent of whom live in Sindh. Sindh is Pakistan's second most populated province with about 51 million people,³⁰ although this number is contested and impossible to verify since Pakistan has not conducted a census since 1998.³¹ A mere 4 percent live in the Punjab, and smaller numbers yet in Balochistan and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa.³² Not coincidentally, in recent years, Pakistan's Sindh province has been an important area for JuD activity. Even though Hafez Saeed has declared an unending war against Hindus in India, he averred that "his organization will not allow destruction of Hindu temples and other holy places of non-Muslims in the country."³³ JuD's principle tools to secure conversions are provision of social services, medical care, and disaster relief work as well as its dedicated humanitarian relief arm, the FIF. In Sindh, JuD's medical teams have provided relief to Hindu-dominated areas of Sindh plagued by preventable child deaths.³⁴ JuD also took advantage of floods in 2011 to provide relief to Hindu-affected areas in the form of tents, food, and ample proselytization.³⁵ FIF has been active in efforts to ameliorate the ongoing draught in Sindh by digging wells and installing hand pumps, and by "helping the poor and marginalized sections of Hindu minority with economic incentives,... facilitating admission of Hindu children into Madrasas without converting them to Islam,... [and is] opening new seminaries for the purpose."³⁶ FIF boasted about imparting Islamic education at a relief camp in Badin (in Sindh) which housed about 2,000 persons displaced by the 2011 floods in Sindh. A FIF volume explained that "We have taught them namaaz (Islamic prayer), as well as the required prayers to recite before and after a meal. Even the Hindus sit in the session."³⁷

While JuD works through these means to convert Sindh's Hindus, others have more draconian methods, such as kidnapping Hindu girls and forcing them to convert and marry local Muslims. About 1,000—mostly Hindu but some also Christian—girls are abducted and forcibly converted and married per year. This provoked the Sindh government to attempt to pass a bill against these sectarian activities. However, religious groups such as JuD opposed this measure arguing that it was part of a conspiracy to make Pakistan a secular country. Of the measure, Hafiz Saeed said, "We will not remain silent on this controversial law."³⁸ The religious groups successfully killed the proposed legislation. What has outraged JuD,

however, is the degree to which Pakistanis have appropriated practices moored in Hinduism. Thus, when it comes to Hindus in Pakistan, JuD seeks to encourage Muslims first to become aware of these accretions, then eschew them.

The *muddeer* (director) of Dar al Andalus, M. Saifullah Khalid, opens *Hindu Customs Among Muslims* with a prefatory avowal that the “Hindu is the worst polytheist and propagator of Polytheism in the world....It is deplorable that today’s Muslim is imitating and emulating the unholy and ugly Hindus like anything.”³⁹ After reciting several ways in which Muslims have taken on Hindu habits, he concludes that “it is difficult to tell a Muslim from a Hindu.”⁴⁰ Bin Muhammad begins this exposition by declaring that many changes occur when a person truly embraces Islam, the most important of which regards the selection of friends and identification of enemies. So “strong is this bond [with Islam] that he is prepared now to wage war against his friends of the past (who are still non-believers). He won’t spare...even his life for the sake of his newfound truth—Islam.”⁴¹

After this opening, the reader anticipates that bin Mohammad will advocate violence against Hindus. However, the author recounts incidents from Islamic history to describe the suitable treatment of polytheists. Instead of selecting from sections of the Quran calling for violence against the *kuffar*, however, he recounts the story of Samama bin Assal—a *kafir* and chief of the Banu Hanifa clan who tried to murder the prophet Mohammad. Before he could kill the prophet, his companions captured him and tied him to a pillar in the prophet’s mosque in Medina. When the prophet Mohammad approached his would-be assassin, he asked him “How are you?” Samama retorted, “O.K. if you kill me, I’ll be avenged upon but if you set me free, I can pay you as much as you may desire.” The prophet reportedly ignored his intemperate response. In this way, the prophet visited Samama on two other occasions. On the third such visit, the prophet ordered the companions to release him.⁴² Upon being discharged, Samama went to a nearby garden where he performed ablution. He went back to the mosque where he was held captive and declared that he had embraced Islam. Samama confessed to the prophet that, while he hated the very face of the prophet and Islam before becoming a Muslim, “now it is the most beloved of all religions to me.”⁴³ Similarly, bin Muhammad relates the story of a woman named Hinda Bint Uqba who mutilated the corpse of the prophet’s uncle. Once she embraced Islam she proclaimed to the prophet, “I had every

wish you and your followers lick the dust before embracing Islam but now I very much wish that you and your colleagues should be the most honoured ones in the world” (bin Muhammad 2007, 16). In both cases, the author asks the reader to note the change of heart of these non-believers before and after submitting to Allah.

The selection of these two stories is puzzling. As *Surat-ul-Tobah* makes clear, the author could have selected episodes where *kuffar* are treated with violence until they elected to succumb to Islam or perish. Instead, the author impresses upon his readers the notion that kindness can turn the heart of the non-believer into a believer. There is an obvious tension in this volume: how can the author expect his readers to understand when polytheists should be killed as JuD argues elsewhere in its myriad publications and when they should be treated as advocated herein. The author never explicitly articulates that this treatment is reserved for Pakistan’s own Hindus, although it is implied by the context of the discussion.

Having established the fundamentally base and vile nature of Hindus and the redeeming capacity of kindness and generosity towards them, the author turns to the real subject of this volume: Muslims who have adopted the mannerisms of Hindus. This is an important point that merits further reflection: JuD appears to have no problem with Hindus in Pakistan *per se*, rather with Muslims who ape their affectations. The author begins with the concession that most of Pakistani Muslims’ ancestors were Hindus, which implies that he is talking about Pakistanis rather than all Muslims generally, and that some of these accretions are historically understandable even if they are detestable. However, since “Allah favored [the Hindus] with the blessing of Islam...[it became] incumbent upon them all to follow Islam in its entirety and they should have abhorrence for the non-Muslim culture.”⁴⁴ The author has written this booklet in the spirit of educating Muslims who may be unaware that many of their habits and petic practices are actually imbricated with Hinduism. Specifically, he addresses the following topics, each addressed in turn below: concepts of worship in Hinduism and Islam; dubious social and customary practices in which Pakistani Islam is steeped; and problematic rituals that Pakistani Muslims practice in error.

Concepts of Worship

Ahl-e-Hadees adherents believe in the oneness of god (*tawheed*). Hindus are polytheists who “believe in numberless gods and goddesses” and thus are particularly anathema to JuD. ⁴⁵ To the author’s chagrin, he observes that some [Barelvi] Muslims have embraced a similar notion of *wahdat-ul-wajood* (unity of being) according to which “everything is a reflection of God’s grandeur, hence God is to be found in everything around us,” ⁴⁶ which he rejects as misleading.

Bin Muhammad next observes the ways in which Hindus pray and remember god and draw parallels to the ways in which Muslims in South Asia do the same. First, the author dilates upon a practice called “sandhia” according to which Hindus shut their eyes and nose while remembering their three most important gods. In the morning, the author claims they offer *sandhia* facing the east. At noon and in the evening, they raise their hands and face the west while doing so respectively. He draws attention to similar practices enjoined by adherents of Sufi paths who hold their breath with eyes shut while remembering god. Similarly, he denounces the way Muslims revere mystical leaders akin to the ways in which Hindus revere their pantheon of deities. Bin Mohammad notes that Sufis encourage the practice of chanting ““Lá iláha illallah” (there is no god but Allah) while concentrating on particular body parts while doing so or meditating on the word “Allah.” He expositis that Muslims have developed these practices in effort to find “Muslim” analogues of things that Hindus do and say under similar circumstances, such as chanting “Ram Ram” (Ram is an important Hindu god) or “Om” while meditating. Instead, the author instructs his readers on the specific ways in which Allah has instructed Muslims to remember him when undertaking specific actions (waking up, entering the toilet, while coming home, when sneezing, etc.). Muslims have also adopted the Hindus use of *tasbeh* (rosary beads) to chant their spiritual mantras,⁴⁷ which he denounces as un-Islamic that the prophet urged his followers to use their fingertips rather than *tasbeh*. As these are all inherited practices from Hindus, Muslims must shun them straightforwardly as polytheistic practices.

Dubious Social and Customary Practices

The author repines that Muslims have adopted several social and customary practices from Hindus. He first takes on the issue of greetings. Muslims, like Hindus in South Asia,

continue to give deep bows, including the touching of feet, upon greeting elders or social superiors, even though the prophet forbade kneeling or bowing for humans because such demonstrations of respect are reserved for Allah alone. Another “social malpractice” is the habit of saying “Ya Ali Madid” (Help me Ali!) as a salutation. This is reminiscent of the way in which some Hindus will invoke a similar request from their own deities as a form of greeting. In contrast, the prophet provides explicit guidance on the appropriate etiquette when acknowledging others. Upon encountering someone, one says “As-Salaam-Alaikum” (“may Allah’s blessing be upon you”). The person so addressed is to respond with “Wa-Alaikum-Salaam” (“And upon you as well”). In some circumstances, handshakes are also permissible.

Second, he turns his ire to the fact that many Muslims still retain a belief in astrology, which is derived from their Hindu ancestry. He denounces those “ignorant Muslims who also believe in the special attributes and powers of stars” as “under the evil influence of Hindus.”⁴⁸ He mocks the practice of those Muslims who revere the polar star (*Qutb tara*) to such an extent that they will not sleep with their feet pointing in that direction. He also denounces Muslims who, like Hindus, rely upon astrological forecasts before undertaking an array of activities (marriage, starting a business, etc.) or seek out *maulvis* who engage in a lucrative business practice called *istikhara* (a prayer through which one seeks goodness from Allah). Whereas Deobandi militants groups may respond to these Hindu accretions embraced by Barelvis violently, bin Muhammad advocates preaching to these ignorant people to help them understand the path of the true and virtuous Muslim.

Third, he scrutinizes the use of various talismans among Muslims. He observes that it is common among Hindus to hang shoes (or even painted images of shoes) on the front or back of vehicles. While Hindus engage in this “stupid show” to avoid accidents on the roads, Muslims too hang from their rearview mirrors an image of a tablet with the impression of the prophet’s feet.⁴⁹ In the view of the author, this is little more than idol worship and redolent of the kinds of images with which Hindus adorn their vehicles.

A fourth set of dubious practices include pilgrimages. In Hinduism, there are many sacred places that are worthy of pilgrimages where Hindus go to worship idols and their deceased

family members, as well as to beg for wishes and offer alms. In Islam, the only place that merits such a sacred journey is the *Hajj*, during which one travels to the Holy Ka'aba in Mecca. Nonetheless, many Muslims undertake long journeys to visit Sufi shrines believing that doing so satisfies the requirement to complete a Hajj to Mecca.⁵⁰ At these shrines, Muslims offer eulogies at the graves of dead saints. The author mocks the fact that at some shrines there is a doorway dubbed *Bahishti Darvaza* ("the door to paradise"). Muslims visiting such shrines believe that whosoever passes through this *Bahishti Darvaza* will enter paradise. The author derides this as errant nonsense and quips that there is no such door in Mecca or Madinah. Equally annoying for the author, many Muslims visit these shrines in hopes that the dead saints will fulfill their prayers.⁵¹ Citing *Sahih Muslim*, the author notes that the "Holy Prophet [PBUH] forbade us to erect or make graves (with stones or bricks) or erecting any buildings, over it or sitting on it."⁵² The author encourages his readers to "stop such Muslims from doing this and save them from going to Hell. We must tell [them] that all they are doing is against Islam."⁵³

Problematic Rituals and Customs

Bin Muhammad bewails a "clutch of certain un-Islamic rituals and customs," pertaining to birth, death, marriage as well as a cluster of "social rituals."⁵⁴ The author observes the complex marriage rituals currently practiced by many Muslims despite the various ways in which they clash with Islamic modes matrimony. He excoriates families who fixate upon caste or clan and/or delay the marriage of their daughters and enjoins them to marry them off as soon they are "adult, healthy and marriageable."⁵⁵ He criticizes the elaborate meals served by the families of the bride and groom, which are extremely costly. First, he notes the common "wrong practice of enjoying dinner at the bride's house"⁵⁶ in which hundreds of persons from the groom's side expect a lavish meal from the bride's side. This, he contends, is a Hindu practice that still lingers among Muslims. Instead, the meal that is authorized is called *walima* and comes from the groom's side as a token of appreciation, after the couple has met in isolation.

Similarly, he reproves the practice of dowry, which is another Hindu custom according to which the family of the bride grants lavish sums of money to the groom's family. The author

observes that the families of girls find it financially very difficult to marry them off when one combines the expenses of the meals and the dowry, and consequently “many a girl stale themselves away in wait for formidable dowry but they die maiden.”⁵⁷ According to bin Muhammad, Allah “has enjoyed upon the male to undertake all the bridal expenses.”⁵⁸ He is also to offer *mehr* (the sum the wife is to receive if he divorces her), pay for the *walima* meal, incur all marriage expenses, and arrange a decent home for his new family as well as meals and medical treatment for his bride. In contrast to how Muslims are supposed to marry, Hindus expect that the bride will bring all domestic requirements to the marital households such as bedding, crockery, clothing, etc. In fact, girls’ families will begin assembling these items (*dehej*) from an early age of the girl and they will be stored in a large chest. Indeed, as the author notes, this practice is very common in Pakistan, particularly among Punjabis. The logic of dowry among Hindus, according to the author, is that they receive no inheritance from their families. Instead, family assets are divided among the brother of the family. In Islam, women do have inheritance rights, even though they are not equal to those of her brothers. Nonetheless, women’s inheritance rights are often honored in the breach, which the author denounces as un-Islamic as well. (Due to female inheritance rights, many families arrange marriages between first and/or second cousins to ensure that family wealth remains within the family.)⁵⁹

Curiously, the author does not take up other un-Islamic marriage practices in Pakistan which are highly debated: arranged marriages that are not desired by both parties and opposition to so-called love marriages. The Quran is clear that couples must marry by consent. Nor does the author take up the controversy of what it means to be “a healthy adult” female. In Pakistan, Muslim girls can marry at 16 years of age while boys can marry a 18. Many marriages—though illegal—happen much earlier.⁶⁰ These omissions are puzzling, as many of the practices the author exposes as un-Islamic are very common among Punjabis in particular—dowry, lavish meals thrown by the wife’s family—the primary constituency of LeT.⁶¹

He also notes that both funerals and nuptials bear the imprint of Hindu customs. Whereas Hindu males and females mix freely during these events, Muslims are enjoined to have separate celebrations. Whereas Hindus casually drop into person’s homes without any

invitation or prior warning, Muslims must first seek permission to enter any home but his own residence, including that of his parents. The fear of course is that men and women who are suitable to marry each other may meet each other inappropriately. In Islam, a person cannot engage with someone who is *mahram*, which references a person with whom marriage cannot be contracted. The author is particularly vexed by the common practices of the *devar* (husband's brother) meeting with the wife of said men, because she has easy sexual access to him. The author asserts in Hindi the word *devar* actually means "second husband," which he believes is a further indicator of the "depravity of Hindu culture."⁶²

He posits and then contemns Hindus' inability to countenance the remarriage of a female widow, which condemns them to *sati* (immolation on her husband's funeral pyre), celibacy, or single motherhood. Yet Muslims in Pakistan cling to these norms against widow remarriage even though Islam exhorts its adherents to "marry away widows as early as possible. Islam wishes to see a widow re-settled in society soon after the demise of her husband."⁶³ The reason for making this argument in the context of this Lashkar volume is practical: "A true believer never hesitates from participating in Jihad. He has the assurance that in case of his martyrdom, some of his Mujahid fellows would marry his wife and his family would get instant support. The recent Jihad-e-Kashmir gives us many such examples."⁶⁴ This is ultimately why the author believes it is so important that Muslims be true Muslims and wrest themselves from the weight of their inherited Hindu cultures. If Muslims followed these above-noted Hindu customs, "would a wife easily let her husband go for jihad? She has been living under the awe that after his death, nobody is there to take care of her."⁶⁵ She asks herself why she would even consider sending him off to participate in *jihad*. Instead, the author encourages Muslims to arrange for the marriage of widows, as well as divorcees.

In a similar vein of argument, the author encourages polygamy in lieu of the more typical Pakistani practice of monogamous marriage. He disparages contentment with one marriage by explaining that "This is no manliness. Look, if a person dies, his brother should come forward to marry his *bhabi* (sister in law) who has become a widow. A real uncle can be a kind and caring guardian for his orphan nephews and nieces."⁶⁶ He further cites the prophet's marriage to a widow and his patronization of her children because her deceased

husband had been very helpful to him. The author declares that “The more marriages a Muslim contracts, the more Muslim population would grow.” This is important to Lashkar’s mission because “Muslim manpower would increase manifold. [Thus the] Hindus would never be in a position to combat Muslims.”⁶⁷ The author informs his readers that this explains why non-Muslims are so worried about the swelling populations of Muslims. “They have declared it a more dangerous bomb than the Atom-bomb.”⁶⁸

Christians Among Muslims

Pakistan’s Christian population constitutes about 1.6 percent of Pakistan’s burgeoning population of over 201 million.⁶⁹ More than 80 percent of Pakistan’s Christians are concentrated in the Punjab and Islamabad, with smaller populations in the other provinces and tribal areas. JuD has made fewer public overtures towards Pakistan’s Punjab-based Christian community. However, when it has spoken it has spoken in defense of the community, even though its publications revile Christians elsewhere. For example, in 2013 when a Pakistani Taliban faction, the Jandullah Group, dispatched suicide bombers to attack Christians praying in their church in Peshawar, Hafiz Saeed made Pakistani headlines by accusing India of conducting that suicide attack and generally spreading extremism and terrorism inside Pakistan. While denouncing India, he also declared that the “Whole nation should support Christian community at this time and steps should be taken to stop such incidents.”⁷⁰ JuD’s views of Christians in Pakistan are very similar to its views towards Hindus: the biggest problem is not Christians, *per se*; rather, that Muslims in Pakistan have adopted many of their practices and rituals.

In *Shahrah-e-Bahisht (Highway to Paradise)*, by Maulana Amir Hamza, the author explains to his readers that he attended a church one Christmas day with the explicit purpose of observing their rituals. While he certainly found the mixed gender congregation engaged in boisterous music to be distasteful and even dissolute, he was most annoyed that they released several Christian musical cassettes which feature the voice recordings of prominent Muslim singers, whom he denounces as Sufis, ceremonial maulvis, and artists “who will do anything for money” who are “spreading the Christian message for money.....concerned only with stuffing their stomachs, even if that means” emulating the Christians amongst them.⁷¹

He believes that Christians have a polytheistic philosophy, which likely refers the “Holy Trinity” or God, The Son and the Holy Ghost and other Christian beliefs that equate divine status to Jesus which should, in JuD’s worldview, only be reserved for God. While he has no use for this theosophical point of view, he is discomfited that Muslims in Pakistan also go “overboard in praising the Prophet.” ⁷² In a sense, he is using Christian practice and belief as a mirror with which he demonstrates to Pakistani Muslims their inappropriate practices. He explicitly draws a parallel to Christians’ reference to the God, the Son and the Holy Ghost to those Sufi Muslims who refer to their prophet as God’s light or even God himself. Whereas Christians have made three into one, he opines that Muslims made two into one.

He draws parallels between the ostensibly Muslim hymns to those he heard being sung by Christians in the service he attended. In these Muslim hymns, he notes that the distinction between the prophet and Allah are elided, as the distinctions between Christ and God are in Christian hymns. Given JuD’s firm commitment to *tawheed*, this is an example of *shirk* or attributing attributes of Allah to others, including the prophet. He cites various other hymns presumably sung by mystics, which mimic the Christian ambiguity between Jesus and God by asserting that Muhammad is Allah and Allah is Muhammad.⁷³

He dedicates considerable space to making unsavory comparisons between Muslim and Christian commemorative festivals, especially the parallel between the ways in which Christians celebrate Christmas as the birthday of their messiah and the way in which Pakistani Muslims are celebrating *Eid Milad-ul-Nabi*, to commemorate the birth of their prophet Mohammad. To emphasize the deviance of this, he draws from a popular Hadees that was narrated by Abu Sa’eed al-Khudri. According to him, the Prophet said: “You will certainly follow the ways of those who came before you hand span by hand span, cubit by cubit, to the extent that if they entered the hole of a lizard, you will enter it too.” We said: “O Messenger of Allah, (do you mean) the Jews and the Christians?” He said: “Who else?” [Bukhari and Muslim]” ⁷⁴

To discredit the celebration of *Eid Milad-ul-Nabi*, he first argues that the Christian Bible itself has no credibility because, even if Christians had the text in its original form, it was not revealed as the Quran was. In his estimation, neither the Christian Bible nor Christian

rituals have any credibility and thus it is lamentable that “Muslims emulate the festivities of Christians despite having access to both the Quran and Hadith,” in which every diacritical mark has been preserved.⁷⁵ Moreover, he contends that Islam has no concept of birth commemoration. There is no evidence that either the Prophet or his companions observed birth celebrations. He notes that there is no mention of *Eid Milad-ul-Nabi* in any *hadees* and “for good reason. This festival is celebrated exactly the same way Christians celebrate Christmas with processions, parades, songs, music, sloganeering, dances, drums, and Indian and English music.”⁷⁶

There are considerable parallels between the ways in which Hamza uses Pakistani Christian practices as a foil to reveal to Pakistani Muslims their own degenerate practices and the ways in which bin Mohammad uses Hindu practices among Muslims for the same end. While both authors are clearly contemptuous of their subjects, their real goal is not to foment violence against either minority; rather to motivate Muslims in Pakistan to jettison these polytheistic accretions.

Conclusions and Implications

JuD remains the subject of scholarly and policy analytical inquiry. Most extant scholarship views this organization from the singular point of view of its external utility as a loyal and effective proxy of Pakistan’s military and intelligence agency. This singular focus upon its role in waging so-called jihad in India and, to a lesser extent, in Afghanistan significantly understates the significance of JuD to Pakistan’s deep state. Not only is it a crucial partner in prosecuting its national security interests abroad, it is also a vital partner in managing Pakistan’s internal security arrangements. JuD is the only militant organization in Pakistan that deliberately preaches the message that the only legitimate jihad is the external jihad. It is also the only militant organization that explicitly disavows not only sectarian violence, but also communal violence. This does not mean that JuD is insouciant about deviations from *tawheed* or other shortcomings. However, it believes that within the borders of Pakistan, the only method to deal with wayward Muslims—either ordinary citizens or in leadership—is through *dawah* and preaching the message of the external jihad. With the launch of the MML, JuD will be even more effective in spreading this message. Consequently, JuD will

likely become even more valuable to its masters in the Pakistani army and intelligence community, even if it comes at the cost of being more difficult to control and manage over the longer term.

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- [74](#) Hamza, *Shahrah-e-Bahisht (Highway to Paradise)* p. 86. [↗](#)
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[76](#) Hamza, *Shahrah-e-Bahisht (Highway to Paradise)* p. 120. [↗](#)

[77](#) Hamza, *Shahrah-e-Bahisht (Highway to Paradise)* p. 127. [↗](#)

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