

# SESSION VI

## KEYNOTE ADDRESS

### I. NORMS IN THE MADRASA-SPHERE BETWEEN TRADITION, SCRIPTURE AND THE PUBLIC GOOD

EBRAHIM MOOSA

How norms are debated within and without the madrasa-sphere of South Asian institutions is my focus. In discussing this, I will reflect on the question of tradition, scripture, and the public good. It is important to get a grasp of the madrasa narrative in itself in order to understand one thread of South Asian Muslim traditionalism, namely the Deoband school. One might not always agree with this school, but to remain ignorant of its normative narratives in all their complexity is to intentionally misunderstand this group. In doing so one will fail to grasp the differences and overlaps in discursive horizons between, say, the Deobandis and their contemporary rivals, including modernist, revivalist, and Salafi trends, among others.

Talk about the Deoband school possibly drew the attention of Western policy circles and academia for the first time in the wake of 9/11. In that context, key words like “Taliban,” “al-Qaeda,” and “madrasas” became the terms of the media’s rhetorical diet. Educated members of the public correctly associated the Deobandi movement with the “madrasas” of the South Asia. But the overgeneralization was to treat this network of seminaries with dread since it was yoked to Western security interests in South Asia, especially the Taliban. Yet the Taliban is only one thread that finds legitimacy for its views in the Deobandi school. Internally, the Deobandi school is variegated and diverse and not everyone will identify with a Taliban perspective.

I will look at how the Deoband School debates religious normativity in the public sphere through a sample of issues that illustrates how the public good is advanced within madrasa networks.

Let me say something briefly about the institution called Deoband. In 1867, in the aftermath of the Indian rebellion against the British, a number of rural religious elites decided that they wanted to establish a school. For nearly a century, there had been a school based in Lucknow known as the Farangi Mahall school that served the needs of Muslim India in terms of religious scholarship. But a new idea of the madrasa emerged at the hands of a group of people, two of whom had studied in the British educational system in Delhi College: Muhammad Qasim Nanotvi and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi. They decided that they were going to establish a school in the north Indian town called Deoband.

One purpose for establishing this school was to preserve the Islamic religious tradition and protect it from what they saw as the onslaught of British colonialism and Western culture. They knew the die was cast and that the Mughals were out of the political picture. It’s very interesting to look at the constitution of the school. The idea was that this institution should take money only from the Muslim community, never from any government. The founders wanted this to be a community venture. They also wanted to preserve a version of Islam that was very different from their adversaries, the Ahl al-Hadith (or Salafis) who ignored the canonical tradition or *madhhab* (“doctrine”) approach to the study of Islamic norms and values.

The founders of Deoband tried to understand themselves as continuing the tradition that went back to Ahmad Sirhindi (1564-1642, a key religious figure during the time of the Mughal emperor Akbar). And they were equally charmed by the legacy of the Islamic scholar Shah Waliyul-

lah (1703-1762) of Delhi. Both of these exemplary figures inhabited a rich metaphysical tapestry of Sufism and utilized Sufism to enhance both the inner life of the self and engagement with the public aspect of life.

Now, of course, the Deobandis were not the only players in colonial India nor in what later turned out to be the Indo-Pakistan-Bangladesh nation-state scene. Deobandis disagree with their rivals from the Barelvi school on the particular understanding of the conception of the Prophet Muhammad in his cosmic status. The Deobandis also disagree with al-Hadis, who ignored the intermediate tradition after the Prophet Muhammad and take only the immediate generations after Muhammad to be the authoritative reference point for Islamic teaching. There are also twelve Shiite, Ismaili and Dawudi Bohra denominations on the subcontinent all of whom will not be the subject of this presentation.

I want to focus on the Barelvis because of their particular way of articulating themselves and talking about tradition. The Barelvis are basically populists because they support (or at least tolerate) pilgrimages to shrines and do not vocally object to popular religious festivals.

By contrast, the Deobandis are more austere. Despite this austerity, the Deoband School too has great national and international presence for several reasons. In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, some people belonging to a great Islamic evangelical movement known as the Tabligh movement attached themselves to and identified themselves with the Deobandi tradition. The Tabligh movement has a truly global presence, even if they have no post office box. And the Tabligh remains one of the most extraordinary and understudied religious movements. The Tabligh increased the visibility of the Deobandi. The Barelvis in their

polemical literature treat the Tabligh movement as synonymous with the Deoband school.

Compared to rival traditionalist networks, the Deobandi madrasas proliferated on both a national (in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh) and a global scale. They have been strongly supported by foreign revenues (especially from people settled in the U.K., in Southern Africa, and in the Caribbean) in addition to Indian merchant capital from the big cities of Calcutta, Mumbai, and Chennai.

The key idea that I want to introduce is that, far from being a political movement, or a militant group, or a network of madrasas—even though it manifests itself in the form of a network—the Deoband School sees itself first and foremost as an ethical and moral franchise. As an ethical and moral franchise it advocates a specific *nomos* (what they call a *maslak*) drawing from a variety of traditional blends of Islam. Their *maslak* is their identifying vocabulary. To explain what the Deoband School is requires that one identify the elements of their *maslak*.

Why did the Deoband School become so popular post 9/11? It is because Mullah Omar and some of the religious clerics in the Taliban movement—not everyone in the Taliban movement is a cleric—were affiliated with the Deoband franchise in Pakistan. Mullah Omar studied at a Deobandi madrasa in Pakistan. Hence, the Deoband movement became connected to the Taliban.

I use the term “*nomos*,” made famous by Robert Cover in American juridical and ethical circles, as a useful provisional translation of *maslak*. *Maslak* refers to the normative universe that people inhabit. More important than rules, principles of justice, and formal institutions are the narratives that locate and give meaning to the law. If you read the Deobandi story correctly, the *maslak* is a set of narratives that drives the project. The *maslak* shapes and regulates the normative uni-

verse of adherents to Islamic thought. In Cover's words, "law and narrative are inseparably related. Every prescription is insistent in its demand to be located in discourse, to be supplied with history and destiny, beginning and end, explanation and purpose." I could find no better description for what *maslak* means than Cover's words. In Cover's view, the force of interpretive commitment holds the normative universe together. I draw on Cover's concept, then, to deepen our understanding of the Deobandi movement. I also use the words *maslak*, *nomos*, and *nomos-sphere* interchangeably.

What has intrigued me in my exploration of Deoband's ethical discourse is its sustained commitment to key elements of the *maslak*: this often involves a critique of its adversaries. One of its critiques focuses on the subversive capacity of Westernization and Western culture to undermine age-old Islamic norms and values. Yet on issues related to the implementation of a range of scientific, technological, and economic practices inspired by Western science—like organ transplantation, brain death, women's issues, and Islamic banking the Deobandi attitude is different. One can find surprising rulings issued by the same South Asian ulama that seem to validate Western commercial, economic, and biotechnological practices. In other words, modern Western economic and scientific practices are absorbed and accommodated via an Islamic *nomos-sphere*. That is to say, while there is a rhetoric of resistance to Westernization, in practice there is a logic of accommodation.

But that accommodation happens according to a particular narrative. And we must understand this narrative in order to understand how the Deobandis justified and accommodated modern practices. The pragmatic outcome in the Deobandi's ethical deliberation is striking. What is also evident is an accommodation of changing social norms, albeit at a very different pace.

In order to show how tradition, scripture, and the public good are constructed within the madrasa-sphere, let me introduce you to a key thinker in the Deoband School. I will describe how he imagines and subsequently exfoliates the concept of tradition. Following Ludwig Fleck, I use the term "tradition" here to refer in one sense to a thought style. But tradition is something more: it is also a mode of living.

The Deoband figure is Qari Muhammad Tayyab, who died in 1983. He was a former principal of Dar al-'Ulum Deoband, in India. Outside the thicket of the madrasa-world in the Indo-Pakistan continent, Tayyab's name probably does not mean much. Yet by all accounts he was a paragon of traditional piety and learning of the Indian Hanafi-Deobandi tradition. In post-partition India, he assumed a role of pontifical solemnity during a five-decade stewardship as principal of the famous Deoband seminary.

I draw on two works of Tayyab's. One is *Independent Reasoning and Authority (Ijtihad aur Taqlid)*, which was written sometime in the late 1960s or early 1970s. The second text is *The Religious Orientation and Ethical (Nomothetic) Temperament of the Ulama of Deoband* ('Ulamā'-i Deoband ka Dīnī Rukh aur Maslakī Mizāj). This latter text especially is the lodestone of Deobandi teachings and is highly revealing.

Tayyab argues that all new events, contingencies, and challenges require a systematic taxonomy in order to reach what constitutes the universal. This is clearly a kind of Aristotelian method. Human beings are distinguished by their capacity to think, he argues, which elevates them above all other animals. The notions of "perception" and "understanding" form the centerpiece of Tayyab's hermeneutic. "Understanding" is signified by the Arabic word "*fiqh*," which is also the term used for the norm-making or norm-discovery process

in Muslim juro-moral thought. Tayyab's understanding of *fiqh*, which draws on the medieval figure Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, is literally linked to the heart, to the pectoral region of the body. For Tayyab, both the mind and the affect on the body matter in order to arrive at the notion of interior "understanding." In other words, understanding is not merely discursive. Rather, it is the product of a discursive tradition tied to human subjectivity and the inner needs of the human being. This distinction between "external" (*zahir*) and "internal" (*batin*) notions of understanding is important to the hermeneutic of the Deobandi tradition.

Tayyab also addresses the idea of renovation (*tajdid*) in Islamic thought. In his view, any kind of revisionist engagement with Islamic thought must point in the direction of what he called "prophetic pedagogy," or *minhāj-i nubuwwat*. Just as the Prophet Muhammad inaugurated an entirely new mode of thinking at the inception of Islam, one could only attempt to refashion Islamic thought by adhering to the same prophetic model. The prophetic model presents perfect moderation and balance as cornerstones of Islamic teachings.

Tayyab argues that grasping and mastering this prophetic pedagogy makes it possible to articulate Islamic thought in a whole new format. But to step away from the prophetic model even an inch is to invite doom. He warns that inaugurating new rules of Islamic thought would inevitably fail and result in disfiguring Islamic teachings. In Tayyab's words,

The only thing required today is this: based on an understanding of the prophetic methodology, there is a need to formulate in the idiom and style of the day a new projection and appropriation of Islamic thought. Only through this approach can one truly renovate Islamic thought. However, if we depart

from the prophetic pedagogy in renovation and forsake its tradition-based wisdom, then the result would be to alter Islamic thought and subvert the entire process. Renovation of thought can be summarized in two brief phrases: our questions or topics (*masā'il*) should be ancient, but our arguments [in defense] should be new. Only by pursuing renewal in this manner can we fulfill the responsibility of divine stewardship (*khilāfat-i ilāhī*) and the delegation of prophecy.

Yet this Deobandi *maslak* is not fully comprehensible unless one digs a little deeper into the meaning of the term "prophetic pedagogy." To refine my earlier brief description of a *maslak* one should add that a *maslak* is comprised of several sub-narratives that constitute the overall compelling story or narrative. The key word behind *maslak* or *nomos* is story. First, the *nomos* involves an historical narrative—how Islam originated and how the version received by the Deoband tradition is the most correct one. Second, it involves a pedagogy of the self. The spiritual formation, as well as the pedagogical or ethical formation, of the madrasa student is absolutely crucial to the Deobandi's *nomos*-sphere. The most important point of that pedagogy is the indispensable role of apprenticeship between student and teacher, which resembles the Sufi relationship between master and disciple. For the Deobandis, this apprenticeship (*sohbat*) is absolutely crucial. Without this apprenticeship, you cannot be a Deobandi in the true sense of the word.

Like the Prophet Muhammad whose Companions imparted his teachings and knowledge to their successor generation, similarly every generation must have access to a living person and an actual community who mediates the teachings of Islam. In this lived community the Deobandis want to

create a relationship between student and teacher that is even more profound and more significant than biological relationships. It transcends kinship and creates an intellectual community more sacred than even a biological community. Abu Hanifa's students in the 7th century were known as the Companions of Abu Hanifa, not as individuals known as Abu Yusuf or Muhammad al-Shaybani. Deobandis argue that the relationship to the master is of great value. The relationship between student and teacher goes beyond merely the affective relationship. Apprenticeships in the formation of a scholarly community also generate a set of knowledge kinships. This knowledge-based (epistemic) DNA is viewed as more intimate and sacred than family or biology. Reverence for the teacher supersedes all else.

This reverence is crucial to the transmission of both the tradition's integrity and its correct understanding. Accordingly, Tayyab's writings are absolutely bruising in their criticism of those who commit themselves only to the reading and interpretation of texts. Such an approach, he argues, only offers a reader black lines on a book. You can read all kinds of books, he says, but you will still be lost if you don't have a relationship with a teacher who can perform the book for you. Thus, the teacher is an exemplar that performs the book for the student through his lived experience.

Tayyab's writing here focuses on questions of tone, the very registers in which the student hears what the teacher is saying. His subject is the men's madrasa, although there are also exclusive women's madrasas. Through their experience and connection to the tradition, teachers can actually perform the books in ways that students can hear what they might not have heard on their own.

Tayyab also engages in an extended discussion of how one should grasp the principles (*usūl*), universal axioms (*qawa'id-e kulliyā*), and precepts

or maxims (*dawābit*) that underlie the teachings of Islam. For Tayyab, to be a Deobandi means: to articulate a nomos in which comprehensive interpretive principles are blended with personal intellectual mentorship and apprenticeship under a teacher.

Tayyab lists some 31 axioms or maxims that encapsulates the most important principles he advocated:

1. There is no Islam except in community.
2. There is no monasticism in Islam.
3. People should not be coerced to accept religion.
4. We do not discriminate among any of God's prophets.
5. Do not harm, nor retaliate with harm.
6. All believers are a brotherhood (which I suppose includes women, too).
7. All of humanity is a single brotherhood.
8. Finally, whoever takes a life without justification, it is as if he had killed all of humanity.

There is a kind of checklist by which Tayyab operates. When Tayyab deals with the key issues, one must understand that pivotal to this nomos are two issues: 1. the teacher-student relationship; and 2. universal maxims that you must comprehend and fully embody, as well as implement, in an interpretive framework.

He also designates different zones of inter-human transactions that are known as *mu'āmalāt* (social intercourse) and *mu'āshara* (political and social life). These spheres of life overtly carry the imprint of their times and are mutable (they always alter). In these spheres, Shari'a provides an abundance of general principles (universal axioms) and a paucity of specific applications. In fact, the Shari'a mindset itself, he says, anticipates particular applications designed to serve the specific spheres of inter-human transactions (politics and social

life). They are time-sensitive applications and, therefore, are designed to change according to the vicissitudes of time.

However, a key issue for Tayyab is this: who can inaugurate this change in practice? No one can do this work of engaging with new contingencies unless you are someone who has embodied the tradition. Someone who encapsulates this form of teaching, this kind of pedagogy, and the universal maxims is licensed to effect change. If one chooses any another route—such as the path chosen by revivalist groups like the Jamaat e-Islami, the Muslim Brotherhood, or the Ahl-i Hadis—then surely the result would not be a renovation in Muslim religious thought but rather, in Tayyab's view, it would be a complete abomination of Islamic thought.

What is important, in his view, is the character and capacity of the persons who embark on the project of reformulating Islamic thought. Two qualifications are crucially important: they must possess intellectual excellence and embody a commitment to practice (rather than merely espouse theoretical commitment). The most important initiative, he pointed out, was the selection of persons of action who were visionary in matters of religion and occupied a status of “wisdom and insight” (*faqihāna shā'n*) who fully grasp the primary and secondary aspects while embodying the true spirit of Islam. And they should behold the practical wisdom dispensed by God for which the formulation of this religion came into existence.”

Now, this is a general overview of the Deobandi *maslak*. I want to provide two examples of its application in order to highlight some variation.

The first takes place in South Africa, where Tayyab traveled to in the 1960s. At the time, the South African Muslim community understood the topic of bank interest (*ribā*) to be forbidden. Usually,

such interest is prohibited by teachings in the Qur'an and Shari'a. During Tayyab's trip, a prominent businessman named A.M. Moolla asked for his views on the question of bank interest. Tayyab forwarded this inquiry to the Dār al-Iftā, the office that issued *fatwās* at the Deoband school in India. A year later, the *fatwā* arrived in South Africa. More important than the *fatwā* is the response it got from South African Deobandis.

Here is some background on the subject. The ancient Hanafī authorities (one of the four prevailing Sunni legal traditions) adhered to by the Deoband school permitted interest-bearing transactions between Muslims and non-Muslims in a territory deemed to be an “abode of hostility” or *dār al-harb*. A *dār al-harb* referred to those territories with which Muslims did not have a treaty or arrangement of demarcated territorial sovereignty. By contrast, interest-bearing transactions were prohibited in places where Muslims have established themselves politically, in *dār al-Islam*.

The Deobandi muftis in India who issued the *fatwā* stated the following:

If the position in the Republic of South Africa is similar to that of a *dār al-harb*, that is an abode of hostility according to classical Islamic law, then the classification of that country as a *dār al-harb* and the application of rulings with regard to dealings and interest between Muslims and non-Muslims could also be applicable. According to your statement, Muslims are in a very small minority in the Republic of South Africa [and] non-Muslims are in the overwhelming and ruling majority. This, indeed, is the only basis for classifying it as a *dār al-harb*.

The response of the South African Muslim leadership, and particularly the South African chapter of the Deobandi school, can best be characterized as one of mild outrage and consternation. In a rare move, the mufti of the South African Deoband sector strongly dissented from the ruling issued in India. He was perplexed by how the *fatwā* characterized South Africa in Muslim juridical terms. Muftī Ebrahim Sanjawli, speaking on behalf of his `ulamā group, doubted whether South Africa could be neatly classified as a *dār al-harb*. While some features suggested South Africa resembled an “abode of hostility,” other characteristics suggested that it was an “abode of safety,” a *dār al-amān*. South Africa, in Muftī Sanjawli’s view, was a liminal space, an intermediate territorial jurisdiction in classical Islamic legal terms.

So here we see how a Deobandi speaks back to Deoband: the internal differences become apparent. The South African version of the Deoband school basically argued that the ruling on the prohibition of interest was premised on Qur’anic teachings and, therefore, superseded and overrode any canonical interpretation. Basically, they said that the muftis in Deoband misread the political context of South Africa in declaring it as a *dār al-harb*. Rather, they argued, South Africa’s juridical status in classical Islamic law was one of *dār al-amān*, since Muslims have safety in that country even though they are a minority. The argument, then, was that Qur’anic scriptural *imprimatur* overrode the canonical *imprimatur*.

This conflict illustrates something that has become more visible in Deobandi circles: that the canonical tradition is utilized side-by-side with the scriptural tradition. This is the kind of practice that the Deobandis historically criticized the Ahl-i Hadis for doing, namely, referring to the Qur’an while ignoring the intermediate canonical tradition. This is a new emerging trend among those who overtly commit to the canonical schools. The jus-

tification used to do this is to square the canonical tradition with the scriptural teachings.

South African Deobandis were able to push back and maintain their position of not accepting interest-bearing transactions in a Muslim minority context like South Africa as per the Hanafi canonical tradition.

My second example comes from India. In the summer of 2005, a heated controversy held Muslim India in the spell of confusion. A section of India’s Muslim religious leadership were caught on the horns of a dilemma: they could either yield to the authority of canonical tradition (the teachings of the Hanafi *madhhab*) by honoring a traditional Islamic legal edict related to sexuality or else alter the rule in the light of new realities.

The story involves a woman named Imrana, a mother of five living near the city of Muzaffarnagar in the state of Uttar Pradesh, who claimed that she was raped. She claimed that the rapist was her father-in-law. Little is known about the context, but the details are not relevant to illustrate my point with respect to this case. The woman in question exposed herself to great risk by making the allegation. It had devastating consequences for her personal honor and social standing.

Tragically, it was not the alleged crime that prompted widespread media coverage. Rather, greater outrage was provoked by the decision of a Muslim cleric, a member of the `ulama and a junior muftī, and the influential Deoband seminary. This mufti ruled that Imrana was no longer married to her lawful husband. In the Islamic legal tradition, an offspring son or daughter can never lawfully marry, nor remain married to, someone with whom his or her parents have had sexual intercourse. Under these rules, Imrana’s husband could not remain married to her, because the husband’s father had illicit sexual intercourse with his wife.

Not all Muslim authorities enforce such metallic reasoning: only a sexual encounter within a valid marriage can erect such moral barriers of consanguinity. If the husband's father was validly married to Imrana, only then would the son be prohibited from marrying her.

But the Deoband School pressed its position based on the Hanafi law school. They were not mindful that a rape had happened or that their commitment to the tradition bordered on ideology. Many right-thinking people found it scandalous that a woman's claim to have been raped did not matter to the moral calculus of the Deobandi ruling.

Some other Indian Muslim jurists hinted at dissent on the issue. But they ultimately lost nerve and failed to say explicitly that rape was fundamentally different from adultery for the purposes of voiding a marriage based on consanguinity.

The Ahl-i Hadis (Salafi religious authorities) who are also adversaries of the Deoband school, followed the plain meaning of the imprimaturs of the scriptural authority as derived from the Qur'an and prophetic tradition. They argued that it was okay for Imrana to remain married to her husband, regardless of the tragic events that happened to her.

Instead of reviewing the ethical and moral violation of Imrana in the light of the reality faced by women like her in India, the folks at the Deoband seminary found a scapegoat. They laid the blame for the fiasco at the feet of what they called sensationalist, pro-Western media as blowing the matter out of proportion and distorting the facts. They also upbraided Muslim critics of their ruling, dismissing them as pseudo-reformers, unqualified to venture an opinion in religious matters. Even worse, they lambasted critics for possessing the gall and the temerity to challenge the authority of religious scholars.

The Deoband scholars claimed that Muslim critics who challenged their ruling were driven by malice, ignorance, and the goal of earning cheap publicity. Thankfully, however, some of the Deobandis essentially dissented and said that the question of rape mattered to the application of the rule.

This incident provides a glimpse into an issue at the center of the debate on Muslim ethics today. Male Muslim religious authorities are committed to implementing the canonical tradition of *fiqh* with integrity as an act of piety and religiosity. The question many people ask is this: can there be fidelity to the tradition when it results in what would by any account be a miscarriage of justice and fairness to a victim?

The story in the Imrana case evokes the words of the novelist and moral theorist William Gass and his interest in the work of Tolstoy. We could take Tolstoy's caricatured, but rationalist, figure of Professor Katavasov, of interest to Gass, as a stand-in for the Deobandis. To use Gass's words in the Tolstoyan context, the Deobandis are like men "in love not with particular men or women, not with things, but with principles, ideas, webs of reasoning, and if he rushes to the aid of his neighbor, it is not because he loves his neighbor, but because he loves God's law about it." In many ways, this kind of application of tradition, where you love God's law more than everything else, does indeed create problems in the dynamic of the Deobandi tradition.

Let me sum up. Madrasa traditionalists invoke an ontological and metaphysical otherness. They invoke another order, one that accepts the limits of reason and defers to the wisdom of God. Any retreat to the irrational and the archaic merely reveals the limits of reason and the violence that reason imposes, especially when reason claims to make everything knowable and transparent. While the purposes of Shari`a are knowable, the



purposes and forms of the practices are not always within the ken of reason.

Yet the madrasa tradition is deeply embedded in another kind of discourse of reason, an embodied reasonableness. The primary function of norm-making and norm-derivation stems from a tradition of *fiqh*, of insightful understanding. This could be construed as a pragmatic form of reasonableness. Manazir Ahsan Gilani, a prominent figure of the Deoband school, explained that *fiqh* is discernment in order to appreciate the tradition. So *fiqh*, to some extent, is a rational discipline. However, *fiqh* is not governed by a secular rationality so much as it is one that is restricted and restrained by the limits of heteronomy and a commitment to a theistic order. *Fiqh* creates a particular kind of legality and ethicality that attaches the body to the soul and connects practice to conscience. Sometimes, as in the Imrana case, *fiqh* turns into brutal technical reason. Often such enforcement occurs with a thunderous theological authority, in order to validate the truth. But it can be challenged from the margins of the tradition, as we saw in the case of South Africa or the minority rulings in the case of Imrana. Some of those who contest the mainstream madrasa-sphere would argue that when law and justice come into conflict, the law must give way to a higher reason, to justice, which is its primitive reason.

I am loath to deprive individuals, communities, nations, and societies of their agency, to proclaim that they are victims of exploitative and globalizing forces, although many critics are not so circumspect. Domination and hegemony are, in my view, never total and complete. Individuals, communities, and societies devise overt and covert means of resisting even the most brutal attempts of deprivation. The point I wish to make is that Muslims everywhere make choices on a daily basis about the range of activities. These choices con-

cern not only their modes of income and dress, but also a variety of ethical and moral matters.

Of course, their choices are not always autonomous. Obligations are foisted upon citizens of even the most liberal political orders. In both obvious and non-obvious ways, citizens and individuals are subject to rules, ordinances, conventions, and other demands from a variety of sources (like state, society, and community). The act of paying one's utility bills, obeying traffic laws, showing courtesy to neighbors and strangers, and caring for parents or spouses or pets are all demonstrations that we are not entirely autonomous in our choices. Autonomy is often partial. We respond to a variety of impulses in our most basic decisions, not all of them rational, even though most of the time we strive to reach reasonable and sensible outcomes. In the nomos-sphere of the Deobandis there is a spectrum of positions to articulate Islamic norms in the public sphere: they operate from within a larger narrative (nomos) and can be both resistant to reality and accommodate reality. While the outcomes are important, more significant is to examine how such juro-moral traditions validate their viewpoints.