



Identifiers:

ID: 371-25/DTN

December 30, 2025

Correspondence: Taha Nazir
PhD, Researcher, Worker, and
Journalist. Thomson Reuters -
ID N-5730-2015 | ORCID ID -
orcid.org/0000-0002-5308-6798
| <https://tahanazir.com>

AI Tools: Artificial Intelligence
tools employed for scientific
content development, data
analysis, formulation, synthesis
and conclusions for accuracy,
validity and implications of the
work.

Conflict of interest:

Author accepts all potential conflict
of interest.

Funding:

The authors received no direct
funding.

Ethics approval:

No ethical approval needed for this
work.

Consent for publication:

Author is agreed to publish this
article.

Peer Review: Not peer reviewed

Blog Article

**A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF MAULANA ILYAS
QADRI'S LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO DAWAT-E-
ISLAMI: AN EVIDENCE-BASED EXAMINATION**

Taha Nazir PhD

Research Scientist, Writer, Media Professional and Social
Worker. <https://tahanazir.com/>

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Running title: Qadri's Influence, Dawat-e-Islami Growth

Keywords: Maulana Ilyas Qadri, Dawat-e-Islami Organization,
Sunni Barelvi Movement, Islamic Education Networks,
Religious Revivalism Pakistan

Data Source: Archives, Biographies, Databanks, Encyclopedias,
Libraries, Metadata Registries, Reports, Repositories, arXiv,
Crossref, OpenAI, Wikipedia, World Health Organization,
Zenodo.

Introduction:

Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Attar Qadri, a prominent Sunni
Islamic scholar of the Barelvi tradition, has played a pivotal role
in the global dissemination of Islamic teachings through the
establishment of Dawat-e-Islami. This analysis draws upon
verifiable biographical data, organizational records, financial
disclosures, and scholarly critiques to provide a logical,
objective, and evidence-supported overview. By integrating
historical facts, empirical data from organizational reports, and
peer-reviewed insights into religious movements, this
examination aims to elucidate Qadri's background, the evolution
of Dawat-e-Islami, its operational framework, financial
transparency, and associated controversies. Sources include
Wikipedia entries, official organizational websites, nonprofit
financial filings, and media reports, ensuring a multidisciplinary
approach grounded in sociology of religion and organizational
studies.

Early Life and Educational Background:

Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Attar Qadri was born on July 12,
1950 (corresponding to 26 Ramadan 1369 AH), in Karachi,

Pakistan, into a Kutchi Memon family with ancestral ties to Kutyanah village in Junagadh, Gujarat, India. His father, Haji Abdur Rahman Qadri, was a devout Muslim who served at the Hanafi Memon Mosque in Sri Lanka before migrating to Pakistan post-independence in 1947. The family initially settled in Hyderabad, Sindh, before relocating to Karachi, reflecting the broader migratory patterns of South Asian Muslim communities during partition.

Qadri's Islamic education spanned approximately 22 years under the mentorship of Grand Mufti Muhammad Waqaruddin Qadri at Darul Uloom Amjadia in Karachi. He also studied under Ziauddin Madani, a disciple of Ahmad Raza Khan, the founder of the Barelvi movement. In Sufism, Qadri became a murid (disciple) of Ziauddin Madani and received authorization (ijazah) in the four major Sufi orders—Qadiriyyah, Chishtiyyah, Naqshbandiyyah, and Suhrawardiyyah—from figures such as Fazlur Rahman Malik, Waqaruddin, and Shariful Haq Amjadi. This rigorous training aligns with traditional Islamic scholarly pathways, emphasizing both exoteric (shari'a-based) and esoteric (Sufi) dimensions, as documented in biographical accounts and organizational literature. Empirical studies on South Asian Islamic education highlight such institutions as key in perpetuating revivalist movements, providing a logical foundation for Qadri's later organizational endeavors.

Establishment and Historical Development of Dawat-e-Islami:

Dawat-e-Islami was founded by Maulana Ilyas Qadri in September 1981 in Karachi, Pakistan, as a non-political, revivalist organization rooted in Barelvi Sunni Islam. Emerging in the context of post-Zia-ul-Haq Islamization policies in Pakistan, the organization aimed to propagate Quranic and Sunnah-based teachings globally, countering perceived deviations in Muslim practice. Sociological analyses of Islamic revivalist groups, such as those by scholars like Philippon (2011) in Sunni Sufism in Pakistan, position Dawat-e-Islami as a response to urbanization and sectarian fragmentation, emphasizing mass mobilization through ijtimas (congregations) and madrasas. The organization's growth is evidenced by its expansion to over 195 countries, with an estimated 30 million disciples worldwide. Key milestones include the establishment of madrasas for Quran memorization and the Dars-e-Nizami curriculum, reflecting a structured approach to religious education.

Operational Framework and Institutions

Dawat-e-Islami's operations encompass educational, media, and welfare initiatives, logically structured to foster Islamic adherence. Core institutions include:

Jamia-tul-Madina: A network of seminaries offering Islamic education, including Quran hifz (memorization) programs for children and adults.

Madani Channel: A dedicated Islamic television station broadcasting in multiple languages, with viewership data indicating significant reach (e.g., Qadri's YouTube channel amassed 318 million views by August 2023).

Other Departments: Including Islamic Jurisprudence, Mosque Services, Madani Inamat (self-reformation programs), and Madani Qafila (traveling preaching caravans), which facilitate grassroots propagation.

Quantitative evidence from organizational reports underscores operational scale: For instance, branches in Bangladesh and the UK demonstrate localized adaptations while maintaining central doctrines. This framework aligns with theories of transnational religious networks, as explored in

Levitt's (2007) God Needs No Passport, where such organizations leverage diaspora communities for global influence.

Financial Operations and Transparency:

Financial management at Dawat-e-Islami is overseen by a dedicated Finance Department handling donations, expenditures, and audits. Empirical transparency is evidenced through publicly available reports:

The 2022 Yearly Financial Report details income and expenditures, highlighting a 22% annual growth in market engagement.

U.S. branches (Dawat E Islami Inc. and Dawat E Islami USA Inc.) reported revenues of \$227,000 (2024) and \$2.43 million (2023), respectively, with assets exceeding \$1.33 million and \$4.43 million, per IRS filings.

UK operations disclosed income of £14.5 million for 2021-2022, with own-use assets at £14.02 million in 2022, as per Charity Commission records.

Scottish and Australian branches reported incomes of £128,200 (2024) and ongoing filings through 2025, respectively.

These disclosures, mandated by regulatory bodies like ProPublica and the UK Charity Commission, provide proof of structured accountability, though critics argue for greater independent audits to align with best practices in nonprofit governance.

Criticisms and Controversies:

Despite its contributions, Dawat-e-Islami and Qadri have faced substantiated criticisms, analyzed through the lens of extremism studies and media scrutiny:

Allegations of Extremism: Qadri has been accused of supporting extrajudicial killings of blasphemers and making controversial statements, as noted in Wikipedia and Hudson Institute analyses. A 2011 Hudson Institute report links Bareilvi groups, including Dawat-e-Islami, to rising extremism, citing affiliations with violent incidents.

Terrorism Links: Indian media reports (e.g., India Today, OpIndia) associate the organization with investigations into the 2022 Udaipur murder, though Dawat-e-Islami rejected any terrorism connections in a 2022 statement by Qadri.

Recent Scrutiny: A July 2025 X post highlighted UK Post Office fundraising for Dawat-e-Islami amid concerns over Qadri's statements on boycotting "Jewish goods" and hosting extremist preachers. Financial transparency issues persist in critiques, though no formal charges have been substantiated in audited reports.

These controversies are contextualized within broader studies on sectarianism, such as those by the Pew Research Center, which note how revivalist groups can inadvertently fuel divisions.

Conclusion:

Maulana Ilyas Qadri's trajectory from a Karachi-born scholar to the founder of a transnational Islamic organization exemplifies the dynamics of religious revivalism in contemporary South Asia. Dawat-e-Islami's institutions and operations demonstrate measurable impact on Islamic education and community welfare, supported by financial disclosures indicating sustainable growth. However, evidenced criticisms regarding extremism and transparency underscore the

challenges of scaling religious movements. Future research, potentially drawing on longitudinal data from nonprofit databases, could further quantify its societal effects while addressing ethical concerns. A balanced evaluation, informed by empirical evidence, is crucial for understanding such entities' dual roles in promotion and potential polarization.

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