



# Taliban, Intellectual Foundations and Practices

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**ABSTRACT:** Islamic fundamentalism refers to certain tendencies of Islamism in the Islamic world that commit acts of violence and extremism. Taliban in Afghanistan is one of those fundamentalist Muslim groups that two times have come to power in Afghanistan, once in the 1990s (1996-2001) for about five years, and again in the August of 2021 that still are in power in Afghanistan. In the present study, to have a better understanding of the Taliban fundamentalist group in Afghanistan, the intellectual foundations of this extremist Islamic group and other factors affecting the emergence of this group and some of the group's activities have been analyzed. In this article, the intellectual and effective thought perspective of the Taliban Fundamentalist group was introduced as influenced by the Deobandism of the Indian Subcontinent. After Deobandism, the Pashtun governor's tribal culture as well as the phenomenon of Afghan Arabs (al-Qaeda and Wahhabism) have been studied as other factors influencing the Taliban.

**KEYWORDS:** Taliban, Islamic fundamentalism, Afghan Arabs, al-Qaeda, Pashtun Governor's Tribalism..

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“Il mare è pietra, / riposo finale. [...] Il mare è la mia Terra”.  
(Mario Ricca)<sup>1</sup>

## 1. Introduction

*"Fundamentalism is equivalent to the Latin word Fundamentum, which means the foundation or basis of something"* (Oxford English Dictionary, word *fundamentum*). The equivalent of this word in Arabic, *al-Uṣūliyya*, is which means returning to principles and foundations, these principles and foundations can be in the form of one religion, one ideology or one school. Therefore, fundamentalism means emphasizing the foundation, the basis of the foundation, and the principle of a belief.

Religious fundamentalism means returning to the principles that represent the basis of religion. This term is used for closed religious' groups. that their mainstream, from which they have arisen. Due to work compromise or negligence, they are accused of forgetting the fundamental religious principles and they do not accept them, and they consider themselves the true representatives of the religion and want to return and reinterpret religious foundations according to their desired ideology (Zahedani and Hamidi 2012, 75 and 103).

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<sup>1</sup> The *exergo* presents some verses from a friend see Ricca (2012), to whom I wrote an introduction: cf. Astori 2012.



Religious fundamentalism is actually a type of political-social movement with religious origins that in their beliefs try to bring changes in society and eliminate corruption. On the other hand, religious fundamentalism is a global phenomenon that does not belong to a particular religion or place. It is branch can be found in all major religions such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism.

Religious fundamentalists believe in the certainty of the holy texts, but at the same time, they have a selective approach to these texts. They take religion's aspects and characteristics, which is the best basis of their identity.

Criticism of Secularism and Modernism is one of the other main features of religious fundamentalism. They show an extreme reaction to the anti-religious currents common in the modern era. Fundamentalism is the result of modernity that has become a tool against modernity itself.

The thought and actions of religious fundamentalists are based on following their charismatic leader. Also, most religious fundamentalist movements are ideologically strongly influenced by Hazaralisms ideas (Zahedani and Hamidizadeh 2012, 103).

In terms of historical roots, the word fundamentalism was first used in the early 20th century for a Protestant Christian religious sect in the United States of America. This sect, which originated from the Protestant Church in the United States in the late 19th century, separated from the Protestant body and has been growing as an extremist group (Hoshengi and Paketchi 2011, 43). This Christian sect believed in the revelation of the words and phrases of the Christian holy book and emphasized following its rules. They also rejected Western modernism's attitude towards religion. This Christian sect attacked modern values from the point of view that these values intend to destroy the traditional culture. This group, which published a publication called "The Fundamentals", believed in a literal interpretation of the Bible and wanted to implement every single part of the instructions of the Christian religion (Moradi 2006, 49).

Since the seventies of the 20th century, this term has also been used for Muslims. Most of the researchers return the roots and factors of Islamic fundamentalism to the historical conditions of the Western colonial period and consider its formation in response to the critical conditions of the Islamic world in the last three centuries.<sup>2</sup> The relationship of power changed between Europe and the Islamic world with the fall of the Osmani Empire, the response of the political elites, intellectuals and religious leaders in the Islamic world to this change of power relations was in two ways. Westerners emphasized the acceptance of western values and secularism to this new changing of power, religious modernists were in favour of Islamizing western institutional models such as political, legal, and educational institutions.

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<sup>2</sup> "Harair Dekamjian" believes that the fall of the Ottoman Empire in the confrontation with Europe raised the necessity of re-examining Islamic thoughts and ideas. The Islamic society gave a local cultural response to these conditions, which were consists of returning to Islam and Its fundamental principles (Dekamjian 1998, 21).



Over time and as a result of the union of the Western colonial powers with the pro-Western native elites on the side of the west who had adopted the policy of secularization, new governments based on secular nationalism emerged as a replacement for the Osmani Empire throughout the Middle East and North Africa after the First World War.

In reaction to the emergence of these new governments and the spread of Western secular values in Islamic societies under the domination of Western colonialism, Islamic fundamentalism was formed. From the point of view of Islamic fundamentalists of Islamic, secularism is a deviation from the basic principles and rules and returning to religious principles and foundations according to the Islamic society of the first time of the Prophet. And the khalagai of Rashidin is a return to the real principles and rules. The Islamic fundamentalist reaction gradually became the political dominate debate in most Islamic countries in the last three decades of the 20th century (Fath-Abadi 2009, 111-110).

Today, some people call all the Islamic movements of the new era fundamentalist, but in fact, certain tendencies of Islamism can be introduced under the title of Islamic fundamentalism and the aim of Islamic fundamentalism also refers to violent and extreme acts that some Muslim groups do (Tavassoli, Saai and Others 2010, 188). This approach is fed by different historical and social intellectual bases according to the different conditions and atmospheres of Islamic countries. Fundamentalism in Afghanistan is also a cultural, social and historical phenomenon that has rooted in the culture, history and religion of the Afghan society. Fundamentalism in Afghanistan, which officially emerged in the form of the Taliban group at the end of 1994, and in a short period turned itself into an important debate pole inside Afghanistan. Which has a historical background during Jihad and before that has not emerged from the political-social and cultural events of Afghanistan.

To gain a clearer understanding of this extremist and Taliban fundamentalist group, we examine its intellectual foundations, cultural and social contexts, and some functions of this group.

## **2. The intellectual foundations of the Taliban**

The Taliban fundamentalist group in Afghanistan has been intellectually influenced by the following currents of thought.

### **2.1 Deobandism and Talibanism**

The first current of thought influencing the fundamentalist and extremist group of Talibanism is fundamentalist of Deobandism. It is generally believed that the fundamentalist movements in the region of Afghanistan and Pakistan, which emerged in the form of the Taliban, are rooted in the Deobandi School (Panah and Rafiei 2011,



265). Regarding the formation of Deobandism, it should be said that this school emerged in India under British rule as a leading movement to fight for the survival of the Muslim community within the boundaries of colonial governments led by non-Muslims, aiming at unity and reform. The main theoreticians of Deobandism were Muhammad Qasim Nanatvi (1877-1833 AD) and Rashid Ahmad Khanqohi (1829-1905 AD), in the second half of the 19th century AD, in 1867 AD. They founded the first famous "Deoband" school in central India in a town of the same name in the state of Uttar Pradesh, India (Rashid 2003, 185-186).

"Deoband" school gradually turned into a school of thought. People educated in that school or related to that way of thinking are referred to as "Deobandi". The founders of this Madrasa were strict and precise Ḥanafī, and in the principles of education and dogmatic thinking, they followed the theological beliefs and schools of Ash'arī and Matridiyyah. Their school, renewal of speech studies in India has set Muslims as a model of diligence - deleted up-to-date knowledge from their curriculum and removed new knowledge from their teaching materials (Aziz 1988, 83). The Deobandis have a general similarity to Wahhabism in terms of belief, like Wahhabism, they are against other Islamic sects, show great sensitivity and provide a special interpretation of "monotheism and polytheism". The Deobandis were determined to educate a new generation of Islamic scholars who would revive Islamic values based on intellectual education, spiritual experiences, Sharia law and Tariqat, and they intended to teach students in colleges how to interpret Sharī'ah and harmonize the main texts of Sharī'ah with the existing facts. The Deobandis had a limited role for women and were against all types of ranking in Islamic society and rejected Shi'a as well. But the Taliban had extreme views of these ideas, which to this extent, were never approved by the main Deobandis. The Deobandis established schools all over India and Afghan students attended these schools in search of a better understanding of how Islam could overcome colonialism. In 1879, there were 12 Deobandi Madrasah /schools all over India and there were many Afghan students who were described as hot-tempered (Rashid 2003, 186-187).

After the Deobandi school got a political colour, the scholars affiliated with it, with the cooperation of several scholars affiliated with other factions, created the group "Jami 'at Ulema of India" in 1919. After the partition of India and the formation of Pakistan in 1947, Deobandi schools were developed in Pakistan. The Deobandis founded Jami'at Ulema-e- Islam, which was a purely religious movement. In 1962, in the North-West Frontier Province, their leader "Maulana Ghulam Qouth Hazar" turned Jamiat Ulema-e- Islam, into a political party, and as a result, this party quickly divided into several groups. Among them, Maulana Mufti Mahmood was an energetic leader who took over the leadership of the Pashtun wing of Jamiat-ul-Ulema Islam in the North-West Frontier Province (Rashid, 2003, 186). Jamiat-ul-Ulema Islam Pakistan has been divided into two groups, the majority and the minority. The majority faction is led by Maulana Fazlur Rahman and the minority faction is led by Maulana Samiul Haq.



These two leaders both belong to the Pashtun ethnic group, and intellectually, they are staunch supporters of the Qur'an and the Sunnah and the way of the Caliphs and Companions, who believe in the theories of the Salaf scholars and are opposed to Ijtihād and modernity. The relations between these two leaders of "Pashtuns of Deobandi descent" with the Taliban group are very deep and deep-rooted (Arefi, 2001, 261). This party agreed with the issue that Muslims can live in a society with other religions (Nazif Kar, 2003, 132).

The Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam Party of Pakistan has always competed with the Jamaat-e-Islami Party of Pakistan since its establishment. The Jamiat Ulama Islam, which was a branch of the Jamiat Ulama of India, was influenced by Deobandi scholars, and Jamaat Islami, which is another fundamentalist group influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood, is a more modernist reading of Islam. The rivalry between Deobandis (Jamaat-ul-Ulema Islam) and Jamaat-e-Islami had a serious impact on the jihadist parties of Afghanistan. Radicals such as Hizb-e-Islami Hekmatyar, Jamiat-e-Islami Burhanuddin Rabbani, etc. were more influenced by Jamaat-e-Islami, and fundamentalists such as the Islamic Movement of Mawlawi Mohammadi and Hizb-e-Islami Younis Khalis, etc.

The teachings and intellectual foundations of Talibanism are also rooted in the teachings and foundations of Deobandism. Therefore, the origin of this group can be traced through Deobandi religious schools in Pakistan. The fact that eight of the ministers of the Taliban cabinet during the rule of this group were students of the Haqqani school of Maulana Sami-ul-Haq (a branch group of Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam with Deobandi ideas) is good evidence of the influence of Deobandi scholars' ideas on the Taliban (Sajjadi 2009, 314-315).

In a situation where Jamiat Ulema Islam and Jamaat-e-Islami were engaged in competition among the jihadist parties of Afghanistan, during the 1980s, Pakistan's policy towards Afghanistan was led with the help of Jamaat-e-Islami, which was the main rival of Jamiat-ul-Ulema Islam inside Pakistan. The connection of Pakistan Inter-Service Intelligent (ISI) with Jamaat-e-Islami was an important political tool in distributing aid to Mujahideen. Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam, which was now headed by Mufti Mahmud's son of Maulana Fazlur Rahman, was not given any political role and the small groups of pro-Deobandi Afghan Mujahideen were largely ignored.

Jamiat Ulema Islam used this opportunity to establish hundreds of schools along the Pashtun belt in the North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan. A place that provided free education, food, shelter and system education for Pakistani youth as well as Afghan refugees. These schools were organized to educate the new generation of Afghans in the post-Russian era. Although the Deobandis did not receive political support, the military regime of Zia-ul-Haq in Pakistan funded madrassas of any sectarian belief. As a result, in 1971, there were only 900 Madrasa /schools in Pakistan, but at the end of the Zia-ul-Haq era in 1988, there were 8,000 registered religious schools and 2,500 unregistered schools, where more than half a million students were studying.



Most of these schools were located in rural areas and Afghan refugee camps and were run by Mullahs who did not have enough education. They were far from the initial reform agenda in Deobandi schools. Their interpretation of the Sharia was heavily influenced by the "Pashtun Wali" which is the tribal law of the Pashtuns, while financial aid from Saudi Arabia was also paid to these schools and parties that were in favour of the Wahhabi religion (Rashid, 2003, 185-189).

After the Mujahideen captured Kabul in 1992, Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligent (ISI) continued to ignore the growing influence of the Jamiat Ulema Islam on the Pashtuns of the south. Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam was completely isolated politically in Pakistan. They were against the first government of Benazir Bhutto (1990-1988) and the first government of Nawaz Sharif (1992-1990).

In the 1993 elections, Jamiat-ul-Ulema-e-Islam united with the Pakistan People's Party, which had won and was led by Benazir Bhutto, and thus became a part of the ruling coalition. Jamiat-ul-Ulema Islam's access to the corridors of power for the first time allowed them to establish close relations with the army, the Pakistan Inter-Service Intelligent (ISI) and the Ministry of Interior under the supervision of General Nasrullah Babur. Babur was looking for a new group of Pashtuns who could raise the fortunes of Pashtuns in Afghanistan and make Pakistan's trade with Central Asia accessible through southern Afghanistan. Jamiat-ul-Ulema Islam provided this opportunity for him. The leader of Jamiat-ul-Ulema Islam, Maulana Fazlur Rahman, was elected as the head of the foreign affairs committee of the National Assembly. This position enabled him to influence foreign policy for the first time. He used his position to visit Washington and the capitals of European countries to promote the Taliban and persuade Saudi Arabia and Khalij Fars countries to provide financial support to the Taliban (Rashid, 2003, 189-190).

Dozens of extremist groups branched off from the line of thought of Jamiat Ulama Islam. The reason for this was the Deobandi tradition, which without any hierarchy, with the presence of a trained and capable Mullah, or a famous person in the place, started a school and intellectual base. The most important branch group of Jamiat Ulema Islam was led by Maulana Sami-ul-Haq, who was a political and religious leader, a member of the National Assembly and a senator, and his school became the main training centre for the Taliban leadership. In 1999, at least eight of the Taliban cabinet ministers in Kabul graduated from Darul Uloom Haq, Haqqani and dozens of other graduates served as Taliban governors in provinces or as military commanders, judges and bureaucrats. Yunus Khalis and Mohammad Nabi Mohammadi, the leaders of the traditional Mujahideen parties, both studied in Haqqanieh. Haqqania is located in Akure Khatak in the North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan. There is a boarding school for 1,500 students, a high school for 1,000 students and 12 smaller affiliated schools. This place was started in 1947 by Sami Haq's father, Maulana Abdul Haq, who was a student and then a teacher in Deoband.



In February 1999, the school faced a staggering 15,000 applicants for about 400 new places, making it the most popular school in northern Pakistan (Rashid, 2003, 190-191).

The fundamentalist group of the Taliban has a close relationship with the groups that have branched off from the Deobandi school of thought, especially with the groups related to the Jamiat Ulama of Pakistan, and has enjoyed their spiritual, material and even human support. At the same time, this relationship with the "Islamic scholarly community" was and is more than other groups due to cultural, linguistic and racial factors as well as political experience. Maulana Fazlur Rahman and Samiul Haq are both of Pashtun origin and have tremendous influence in Baluchistan and Sarhad provinces, which are the main home of Pashtuns in Pakistan. This relationship caused the Taliban to hand over the management of their military training centres in Afghanistan to Jamiat Ulema Pakistan in 1996. Also, different branches of Jamiat Ulama of Pakistan should undertake the task of recruiting Pakistanis and Arabs who fought alongside the Taliban (Rashid, 1999, 36, 2-3).

## **2.2 Taliban and Afghan-Arabs (Al-Qaeda/Wahhabism)**

Afghan Arabs are Arabs who took part in the war against the former Soviet Union and the puppet communist government of Afghanistan along with the Jihadi parties. The aforementioned Arabs were followers of the fundamentalist group Al-Qaeda and had Wahhabi thinking. After the establishment of the communist government in Afghanistan and the subsequent occupation of Afghanistan by the Soviets, radical and fundamentalist Arabs, who mostly had Salafi and Wahhabi ideas, turned their attention to Afghanistan. On the other hand, the financial resources of the aforementioned Arabs who volunteered to participate in the anti-communist jihad in Afghanistan, caused them to attract the attention of Jihadi parties. As a result, the presence of Arab forces in the Afghan Jihad became bold and widespread.

The most prominent face of the Afghan Arabs was Abdullah Azzam, who was called "Amir Mujahideen Arabs in Afghanistan". Azzam was a Palestinian who, after being expelled from Palestine, went to Jordan and then to Syria. In 1964, he received a bachelor's degree in theology from Damascus University and joined the Muslim Brotherhood Party at the same time. He received his master's degree in principles of jurisprudence in 1969 and his doctorate in principles of jurisprudence from Al-Azhar of Egypt in 1973 and taught in Jordanian universities until 1980. After his relations with the Jordanian ruling body became strained, he went to King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah. In 1980, he went to the Islamic University of Islamabad to get to know the Afghan Jihad closely. Little by little, he left the teaching chair and directly entered the Afghan jihad. He founded the school of "Services of the Mujahideen" to organize the aid of the Arab world to the Afghan Jihad and to introduce the Afghan Jihad to the Arab



world, he founded the "Al-Jihad" magazine. Abdullah Azzam was murdered in 1989 along with his two sons Mohammad and Ibrahim in Peshawar, Pakistan.

After the death of Abdullah Azzam, one of his disciples named Osama bin Laden, a disgruntled Saudi millionaire, took over the task of organizing the Afghan-Arab forces. Osama Bin Laden had met Abdullah Azzam in Mecca several times during Hajj and was influenced by him and respected him as his leader (al-Nablisi 2007, 135; Rashid 2003, 206). Then, during the lifetime of Abdullah Azzam, he came to Pakistan and was strongly influenced by him. Abdullah Azzam gave him the command of the Afghan-Arab military forces. Bin Laden mainly used his wealth and Saudi Arabia's aid to implement Mujahideen projects and promote Wahhabism among Afghans. For this, he created an organization called "Qaida al-Ansar", which later united with "Jamaa al-Jihad" led by Ayman al-Zawahiri and created a new organization called "Qaida al-Jihad" (al-Qaeda). In the new organization, Osama bin Laden was appointed as the leader and Ayman al-Zawahiri as the deputy (Mozhdeh 2003, 47-48). Al-Ansar Base and later Al-Jihad Base established special military bases in the eastern provinces of Afghanistan (Nangarhar and Paktika). But their extreme actions disgusted most of the people of Afghanistan. In addition, the Arab-Afghans, with the support of the extreme Pashtun and pro-Wahhabi Mujahideen, alienated non-Pashtuns and Shiites (Rashid 2003, 272). Therefore, from the very beginning, Al-Qaeda, which is an extremist and fundamentalist group, has been communicating and interacting with Pashtun extremist groups.

Ahmad Shah Masood, one of the commanders of the Islamic Jamiat Party of Afghanistan, also confirms this connection between Al-Qaeda and Pashtun fundamentalist parties. After he was driven from Kabul by the Taliban, in 1997 he criticized the Afghan Arabs and said: "We did not have good relations with the Afghan Arabs during the Jihad years. Sayyaf and Golbedin Hekmatyar had very good relations. When we entered Kabul in 1992, the Afghan Arabs went to war with us alongside Hekmatyar, we request them to leave our homeland (Moradi 2006, 86; Rashid 2003, 272-273).

After the assassination of Abdullah Ezzam and the pressure of the Pakistani government to deport Afghan Arabs, Osama had to leave Afghanistan for Sudan in 1991 along with several Afghan-Arab leaders (al-Nablisi 2007, 142). The meeting of Jihadi commanders belonging to the Khalis, Hekmatyar and Sayyaf parties in Sudan with Osama bin Laden provided the grounds for his return to Afghanistan (Mozhdeh 2003, 66; Sajjadi, 2009, 317-318), and Bin Laden returned to Jalalabad in Afghanistan in May 1996 (al-Nablisi 2007, 144). Until the capture of Kabul and Jalalabad by the Taliban in September 1996, he was under the protection of the Jalalabad Council. In 1997, he moved to Kandahar by establishing a friendly relationship with Mullah Omar and was supported by the Taliban (Rashid 2003, 209).

As the leader of al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden managed to make a place for himself in the ranks of the Taliban by using his material resources. Bin Laden tried to make



himself more popular with their leadership by sending several hundred Arab-Afghan fighters to participate in the 1997 and 1998 Taliban attacks in northern Afghanistan (Rashid 2003, 186-187). These Wahhabi fighters helped the Taliban in the massacre of Shi'a Hazaras in the north. Also, a hundred Arab-Afghans stationed at the "Rishkhor" military base were fighting against Massoud's forces on the Kabul front, and it was felt that Bin Laden's global vision was increasingly overshadowing the thinking of prominent Taliban leaders (Rashid 2003, 218).

Afghan Arabs and al-Qaeda played an effective role in the Taliban's anti-western policies. By destroying the Buddha statue in Bamyán, the Taliban caused widespread public protests. By arresting the internal and external employees of foreign institutions under the pretext of promoting Christianity, they aroused the opinions of the Western governments against them, although the purpose of all these behaviours was to attract the attention of the extreme fundamentalists of the Islamic world, including Al-Qaeda and Bin Laden.

The influence of Osama bin Laden within the Taliban reached a point that caused a split in the ranks of the Taliban. During the previous government of the Taliban, the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Taliban, Ahmad Mutawakkul, who was more or less moderate, demanded the expulsion of Bin Laden from Afghanistan to reduce the international pressure against the Taliban, but Mullah Omar and a wide range of his group seriously supported Osama bin Laden (Sajjadi, 2009, 319).

### **2.3 Religious schools and Emergence of the Taliban**

During Jihad, attention to religious sciences increased among people. The reason for this was the social prestige of religious scholars in society, apart from the closure of public schools and private schools. The religious scholars, who were in the lower social hierarchy in the past, gained tremendous power in the society and the people started Jihad against the communist government with their Fatwa/orders. With the desire of families to send their children to religious schools, jihadist organizations started establishing religious schools in the refugee camps, and Arab countries, especially Saudi Arabia, contributed huge sums of money to these schools. Schools established by jihadi organizations in Pakistan provided the necessary background for Talibanism. Most of the members of the leadership of the Taliban were students of religious studies who had studied in these schools, and in those schools, they got acquainted with the religious ideas of Deobandi, Jamaat-e-Islami and Akhwanism (Sajjadi, 2009, 320-321).

Therefore, it can be said that the Taliban fundamentalist group intellectually goes back to the Salafist school of Deoband, Al-Qaeda, Wahhabism of Saudi Arabia and the extremist and Salafist thinking of the Haqqani school of Pakistan and other Salafist schools of Deoband in northern Pakistan. Violence in the application of Sharia law, bigotry and dogmatism and finally opposition to Shiite thought are the prominent



features of the Deobandi school, al-Qaeda and Saudi Wahhabism, which has also emerged in the visionary group of the Taliban.

### **3. Cultural-social contexts**

The Taliban fundamentalist group is culturally and socially rooted in the traditional Pashtun society and Pashtun culture and customs; Because this kinetic group originated from the Pashtun community of Afghanistan and from the heart of rural people who have strong traditional and tribal ties, with the consideration of tradition and customs in the culture position and thought of Pashtuns, they cannot ignore the influence of Pashtun ethnic and tribal culture. This influence is noticeable in the political thoughts and behaviour of the Taliban leaders pretty well. For example, the model selection of the political system and the ways of legitimizing it can be considered one of the effectiveness of tribal culture. Because the model of the anti-government system in the political thinking of the Taliban, in which one person is placed at the head of the government in an absolute manner and does not give any role to other members of the nation, is very similar to the model of the traditional tribal government system in the rural community of Pashtuns. In the model of the administrative system of the tribe, a person who is the head of the tribe is considered superior to all the people and his will has the aspect of legality. Also, the actions of the tribal leader are immune from any kind of criticism. In the Taliban government system, the relationship between the nation and the emir is similar to the relationship between the members of the tribe and the tribal leader. Because in such a system, the people not only do not have the right to monitor or participate in the government, but it also does not have the right to live freely in the circle of private life. (Arefi 1999, 191-212).

In fact, in terms of the social context, the fundamentalist group, the Taliban, is the result of tribal culture and the birth of the famous custom of Pashtunwali. Therefore, before dealing with the definition of Pashtunwali, it seems necessary to describe the concept of Pashtun.

#### **3.1 Pashtun**

The Pashtuns are one of the major ethnic groups of Afghanistan, who have special racial and cultural characteristics and their language is Pashto. There are various opinions about the racial origin of the Pashtuns. According to a traditional theory among the Pashtuns themselves, which is documented by ethnic Genealogy, the science of genealogy is ancient and mythological history. They consider themselves descendants of Bani Israel, according to ethnic traditions among the Pashtuns in the 17th century it was recorded in a book called (Makhzan Afghani) that the great ancestor of the Pashtuns was a person named Afghana who lived during the reign of Prophet Dawood. During the dispersion of the Jewish, the Afghana kids took refuge in the Ghor



Mountains and settled there. After the advent of Islam, the head of this tribe named Qays accepted Islam and started Jihad to spread the Islam religion. It is also said that Qays went to Medina and was honoured by Khalid bin Waleed for the presence of the Prophet (PBUH) and the Prophet changed his name from Qays to Abdul-Rashid, but scientists reject this theory for historical and linguistic reasons and consider Pashtuns a branch of the Indo-European branch of the Aryan race, which during of history and in the process of formation of nations, some elements, Indian, Tajik Turks and They have also attracted the Arabs and created a nation with a specific language and culture. (Farhang 1371, 23-24). Most historians consider the first habitat of the Pashtuns to be the Suleiman Mountains and its adjacent lands west of the Sand River (Gregorian 1388, 52). Currently, Pashtuns live on both sides of the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan. The Pashtuns of Afghanistan are concentrated in the southeast, east and southwest of Afghanistan, and their two main groups are Durani and Gholjai tribes. Tribal culture and life are common among Pashtuns, and they direct their activities based on a tribal charter called Pashtunwali. And gives strength to their communities.

### 3.2 Pashtunwali

Afghan Pashtuns have a special kind of customs and traditions called Pashtunwali, Pashtunwali is both a set of laws and an ideology in Pashtun tradition (Roa 1990, 28).

Experts have provided different definitions of Pashtunwali; some consider Pashtunwali to be a collection of customary laws that were common among Pashtuns before the establishment of the city government. Others consider Pashtunwali as both an ideology and customary law, which has an executive guarantee and the institutions that implement it (Tajik, Hojjat and Aeinifar 2017, 54, as cited in, Roa 1990, 62/ Mary Lewis 1988, 42). Some have introduced it as an unwritten tradition of the Pashtuns (Tajik, Hojjat and Aeinifar 2017, 54, as cited in, Abutalebi 1376) Pashtunwali rules and regulations cover a wide range of Pashtun behaviour and human relations. The most important principles of this collection are stigma, retaliation or revenge and hospitality (Mary Lewis 1988,42).

### 3.3 Principles of Pashtunwali

Pashtunwali content is made up of principles, the most important of which are as follows.

- *The principle of stigma*: stigma in the word means shame, disgrace, fault, modesty, dignity, and respect (Amed dictionary the word "*Nang*"). Keeping a woman's full Hijab and keeping a strict distance between women and strangers (non-*mahrams*), as well as defending a woman against dishonour is rooted in this principle. But the concept of honour, which is another term from the set of shame, has a wider meaning. Honour, which is the protection of privacy, means privacy in a more limited sense, it refers to the chastity and respect of women and the duty of men to protect them. But in a broader



sense, it means the women of the family and the women of the entire Afghan society are the honour of Pashtun land, which must be protected. Some researchers identify gold, women, and land as Pashtun honour and believe that living in a rural family or Pashtun community, you must be able to protect your honour. If someone cannot defend his honour, he will lose his honour in society and that person will no longer have a place in the Pashtun family, village, or larger communities of Pashtun (Tajik, Hojjat and Aeinifar 2017, 55, as cited in Miakhil 2009, 3).

The principle of stigma is the central point of the Pashtunwali debate because most of the basic principles of Pashtunwali, in connection with this principle find meaning and sense and were created in line with the realization of this principle (Mir Ali and Mohseni 2018, 195).

Keeping fully the women's Hijab, keeping strick distance from strangers (non-mahrams) and also defending women against insulting them has rooted in the principle of stigma in Pashtun culture (Zahedi 2021, 136). Because of the great importance of this concept, Pashtunwali is sometimes called Nangwali.

People with stigma are a source of pride and fame for themselves and their families in the Pashtun ethnic culture, be calling stigma less is considered the worst insulting and belittling, which may lead to very intense emotional reactions (Mir Ali and Mohseni 2018, 196).

Although Islam emphasized the chastity and chastity of Muslim women and the sensitivity of men towards their women, the policy of complete gender isolation and exclusion applied to women in the Taliban regime and the fact that women are completely deprived of their social rights and political participation are mostly originated from the tribal culture rather than from Islamic teachings and rules.

- *The principle of retaliation or revenge:* Another feature of the ethnic culture of the Pashtun community is the principle of retribution or revenge. According to this principle, it is the duty and right of every human being to be the executor of justice and take revenge for the atrocities committed against him (Mir Ali and Mohseni 2018, 197). Tikhanov defined retaliation as "*the law of revenge of blood with blood*", which may continue for centuries (Mir Ali and Mohseni 2018, 197, as cited in Tikhanov, beta, 10). In the first step, the aggressor or oppressor is the subject to revenge, but if the aggressor is not available, revenge may be taken from his relatives and even from his family and descendants. On the one hand, this revenge may be delayed for years, but it is a shame for a Pashtun to forget or forgive it. Although it is against Sharia butoring will never be accepted in the principles of Pashtunism (Elphinstone 2009, 170).

The collapse of Kabul in 1992 in the hands of non-Pashtun ethnic groups and the formation of a government by Tajiks was considered a kind of violation of the Pashtuns' privacy and the tarnishing of Pashtun's shame. Because the Pashtuns, who have always had political sovereignty in Afghanistan throughout history, with the formation of a non-Pashtun government, felt severe humiliation in themselves, this provided the necessary motivations for the formation of the Pashtun revivalist movement. Therefore,



one of the main motives for the formation of the Taliban movement can be considered to restore the dignity of the Pashtuns, which had deteriorated during the Mujahidan government According to (Mir Ali and Mohseni 2018, 197).

The Taliban movement was based on this revenge principle, when they took over control of Mazar-e- sharif, created a very terrible example of violence and revenge of tribal culture, demonstrated, and committed a full-scale genocide of Hazaras.

*-The principle of hospitality:* One of the famous patterns of behaviour among the Pashtun tribes is the principle of hospitality, which is considered one of their national pride. In the ethnic culture, Pashtun throwing guests out of the host house even despite poverty is a kind of humiliation of hospitality. In addition to honouring guests, the custom of hospitality has broader social and political implications. The custom of hospitality is considered one of the ways to gain power in the tribal system, and it is the host proves his political and economic superiority by offering his wealth. the most important implication of hospitality is that the host must ensure the safety of his guest (Elphinstone 2009, 220).

For more than three decades, Afghanistan was a meeting place for religious extremists such as Osama bin Laden, and Ayman al-Zawahiri, one of the leaders of al-Qaeda, and today many of the leaders of al-Qaeda and Daish live in Afghanistan. The principle of hospitality has been influential in the emergence of religious extremists, individuals and groups and Afghanistan has become a safe place for the activities and ideological and military training of these people and extremist groups. The "Afghan Arabs" phenomenon, which was previously examined, was the gathering of extremist fundamentalists from all over the Islamic world and receiving military and religious training in Afghanistan since the Arab volunteers were mainly commuting and travelling among Pashtun groups. They intensified the ethnic and tribal fundamentalism among the Afghan groups, especially in the Pashtun areas (Ahmadi 2005, 52-48).

Therefore, hosting Pashtuns in the form of the principle of hospitality to their Arab customers is one of the factors that played an effective role in the formation of the extreme and violent views and rise of the extremist Taliban group. Based on this principle, the Taliban supported Osama bin Laden and refused to hand over him and their other Arab guests to America.

### **3.4 Pashtunwali and Sharia**

On the other hand, the border between the Pashtun governor and the Sharia has never been clear for the Pashtuns, therefore the punishments of the Taliban were mainly taken from the Pashtun governor and not from the Sharia and were applied to different degrees and levels in the Pashtun-inhabited areas. But it was never common among other ethnic groups, the Taliban were determined to impose Pashtun-Wali sharia laws on all ethnic groups (Rashid 2003, 177). A brief look at the actions of this group during its rule over Afghanistan makes it clear that the action of this group has roots in Pashtun



Vali or Pashtun governorship. For example, the beliefs of the Taliban, whose practical expression is in the form of measuring beards, men imposing limits on the dead - those who had trimmed their beards, imprisoning women, keeping them at home and making it mandatory for women to wear a burqa, banning photography and watching TV, and so on. It appeared that all of them were influenced by the Pashtun rules of the governor. Based on this, the Taliban give Islam the colour of ethnicity and use it to legitimize their actions. Such an understanding of Islam presented by the Taliban confirms the explanation called “the inverted Orientalism of Islam” that has been raised contrary to Orientalist theories, which have an essentialist approach to Islam. Contrary to orientalist theories that have an essentialist approach towards Islam and present Islamism as homogeneous and coherent, according to Orientalists, Islam is just a simple name for many societies and cultures. According to them, Islam is diverse in practice, so it cannot be reduced to its inherent and fixed characteristics. The anti-essentialist and anti-oriental view of Islam can be seen in its most severe form in the work of Hamid Al-Zein. In his studies, he concludes that the multiplicity of Islamic activities and trends and the different uses of Islam in many contexts indicate that there is not a single thing called Islam, but there are Islams (Babi Saeed 2000, 44).

In Orientalist explanations of Muslim societies, Islam is at the centre and plays the core role. While in the narratives of inverted Orientalism, Islam is not at the centre but divided and spread. In Orientalism, we are faced with the reduction of parts to the gap (that is local events are explained by referring to the essence of Islam) but in the opposite, in Orientalism, we are faced with the reduction of the gap to its constituent parts (that is Islam spreads in local phenomena). The vacuum caused by the division of Islam as a general concept is filled by a set of small Islams (it means planning Islamic activities). These small Islams are also easily introduced and recognized by other categories and ethnicity is one of the most important and main of these categories. According to the concept of Islam as an ethnicity, Islamic identity is at the heart of ethnic ties and contradictions, Islam is an ethnic border and sign, a sign for an ethnic identity that has existed so far (Babi Saeed 2000, 45). Based on this, the role of Islam is completely taking place in the second level. In other words, Islam is considered a dictionary whose job is to legitimize and confirm the representations. The explanation presented in the inverted orientalist theory of Islam is very close to the Taliban's perception of Islam. The Taliban also play the same role as Islam that is given in explaining the inverted Orientalism of Islam. For this reason, the fundamentalist discourse of the Taliban does not consider ideological boundaries seriously, what is of primary importance to them is ethnicity, for this reason, they are a Pashtun fundamentalist if ethnic interests require it. He/she can easily deal with a Marxist and unite against another nation or tribe, from the leaders and commanders of the Taliban to the ordinary soldiers of this group. They paid attention to their origins and ethnic and tribal affiliations and although religious and ideological tendencies were considered the most important characteristic of this group, it was the secondary importance. Therefore,



we can see that the Taliban Emirate, *“in the cities of Kabul, Herat, and Mazar-e-Sharif the cities where Pashtuns are in the minority. Taliban government officials such as Mayors, police chiefs and other senior managers have been elected from among the Pashtuns of Kandahar who either do not know Farsi or speak this language with difficulty. In the local councils, there are no prominent indigenous or native members”* (Rashid 2001, 158). In the Pashto culture, to which the Taliban are ethnically indebted to this culture, they value the system value that governs and tribe more than their membership in the country. Peter Marsden describes the connection of the Taliban with Pashtun values and their ethnic traditions, it is like this *“because the Taliban has emerged from the depths of the Pashtun society, its philosophy is very indebted to the Pashtun governor. However, it can be said that the Taliban matured or originated from tradition in which scholars usually ask people to temporarily give up the Pashtun governorship for the sake of Sharia law and fight against the common enemy. However, it is interesting that the Taliban matured in the Pashtun tribal areas and not in the north, where the religious tradition was very different”* (Marsden 2009, 129).

#### **4. The performance of the Taliban against women**

In the performance section of the Taliban, as an example, we will examine the performance of this group against women.

Women and the way women are viewed have a special place in the Taliban's thinking. The years of Taliban rule in the first period of their rule were difficult and unpleasant times for all the people of Afghanistan, but for women more than others, it was accompanied by difficulty and bitterness (Kurna 2013, 62). The Taliban's understanding of women's socio-political rights meant depriving them of any social activities, and accordingly they ordered women not to appear in public.

During their previous rule, the Taliban imposed the strictest regulations on women. Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban, has taken a hostile stance against the severe international pressure regarding the violation of women's rights and declared: *“Women's access to education and training in educational centres means applying the policy of disbelief and promoting immorality and prostitution in Afghanistan”*.

The Taliban will never allow women to study and work in governmental and non-governmental organizations (Esmatullahi 1999, 137). Out of the 33 decrees issued by the Taliban in 1996 in Kabul, 14 are for women and 17 are shared between men and women.

This way of looking at women in the fundamentalist thinking of Talibanism, apart from the extreme religious view of the Taliban, is influenced by the social structure of the tribal and traditional society of the Pashtuns of Afghanistan. In the traditional society of Afghanistan, women are confined to their homes, they take care of children and keep house. Rural women milk cows, bake bread, feed cattle, and work side by side with men.



They also wear hijab at home and rarely leave the house, except with the permission of her husband and relatives. Most of the women do not have birth certificates. Men are not willing to tell the names of their wives and daughters to strangers (Farzan 2003, 46). On the other hand, in the traditional, closed and tribal society, the tribe's solidarity is tied to the issue of women; In such a way that disrespecting the woman of a tribe is considered disrespectful to all members of the tribe.

Relating the dignity and prestige of the tribe to the issue of women has caused the limitation of women in social interactions. In Talabani's thinking, the woman is enclosed in the framework of Deobandi religious teachings and the Pashtun tribal tradition of "Pashtun Wali" and her honourable life is life in the corner of the house and behind the curtain (Sajjadi 2009, 337).

When Mullah Omar was asked in an interview, why did you completely prevent women from working in the areas under your control? He replied that God has created men and women completely different from each other to perform separate and different tasks on earth. We have a proverb that says: *"work inside the house is a woman's duty, and the outside world belongs to warrior men"* (Kazem Abdullah 2005, 443). This way of looking at women is exactly the same tribal view that the Arab tribal community had towards women during the dark period.

Based on this point of view, the Taliban, both in the first period of their rule and in the period of their current rule over Afghanistan, when they opened the important cities of Afghanistan, they tried to impose restrictions on women, by closing girls' schools, they deprived girls of their rights. They were deprived of education. During the previous period of Taliban rule over Afghanistan, when the Taliban captured Herat, they closed all girls' schools in this city. Many boys' schools with female teachers were also closed. They also segregated the few active hospitals, closed the bathrooms and prohibited women from going to the market. As a result, the women of Herati were the first group of Afghan women who protested against the excesses of the Taliban at that time. On October 17, 1996, more than 100 women protested in front of one of the government offices in opposition to the closing of the city's baths. The Taliban religious police beat and arrested the protesting women. After that, their agents entered the houses and warned the men not to send their wives out of the house (Rashid 2003, 179).

After the fall of the former Taliban government in 2001, during the twenty years of the republic (2001-2021), due to the widespread presence of the international community and the support of donors for women's rights, a good platform has been provided for the improvement of women's lives and their political and social activities. and good educational opportunities were provided for girls. Many girls achieved higher education and studied at the world's best universities. The educated class, who were more familiar with technology, worked in important administrative positions and created a good system in Afghanistan.

It can be said that the republic's political system was formed with women's participation and decisive role. During this period, the presence of Afghan women in the



parliament, cabinet, armed forces, press and civil society was not only unprecedented in the history of Afghanistan but also surpassed many countries in the region.

After the Taliban regained power in Afghanistan in August 2021, women were deprived of work and girls were not allowed to go to public universities and schools. The ban on girls going to school continues until seven months have passed since the Taliban took over. The Taliban have imposed restrictions on women's travel and even treatment. Many women's rights activists and women protestors have been arrested (Shahabi 2022)

After the Taliban took over, Afghan women suffered enormous costs in all aspects and many cases irreparable. For example, Zainab Abdullahi was a young girl who died in the shooting of Taliban gunmen in the month of Jādī 1400/January 2022. The protesting girls and women are not hidden from anyone, but the beating and physical and psychological torture of women has been reduced to the extent of names and attractive news headlines, and women were caught by the Taliban, tortured and forced to give false and forced confessions against the struggle. They demand their rights and what a huge amount of insult, pain and shame it imposes on women, and after that what is the state of individual and family life as well as mental and psychological of these women and it is not reflected in the media in any way (Shahabi 2022).

## Conclusion

The Deobandi School of thought is the most important intellectual and ideological origin of the fundamentalist group of Talibanism. Linguistic, cultural and racial factors play a decisive role in this relationship. Culturally and socially, the emergence of the Taliban is rooted in the traditional Pashtun society and Pashtun culture and customs. In fact, the social platform of the Taliban fundamentalist group is Pashtun culture and the functions of this group are also rooted in Pashtun.

Afghan Arabs (fundamentalists with Salafist and Wahhabi ideas) played a significant role in the birth of the Taliban, and the Taliban's anti-Western and anti-Shia policies have been heavily influenced by Afghan Arabs. The performance of this group against women is influenced by the extreme religious views of the Taliban and the social structure of the tribal and traditional society of the Pashtuns of Afghanistan, which is considered the origin of the Taliban group.

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