

Article

Emotion Work in Tabligh Jama'at Texts

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Abstract: This study examines the emotional dynamics of the written and oral texts of Tabligh Jama'at—respectively, *Faza'il-e-A'maal* (Virtues of Good Deeds) and *bayan* (religious sermon). In them, the study identifies emotion work—the attempt to generate certain emotions. The study discusses how the texts' emotion work relates to Tablighi discursive ideology (framing) and also posits several emotions that the emotion work might generate. From these findings, the study offers the idea that Tablighi emotion work contributes to transforming Muslims' emotional sphere by attaching them emotionally to ultimate religious concerns. By enchanting Muslims' emotional sphere and attaching Muslims to Islamic social actors, values, practices, and Islamic revivalist goals, Tablighi emotion work contributes to the social transformation of individuals and society.

Keywords: Tabligh Jama'at; emotion work; emotions; framing; social transformation

1. Introduction

Emotions are “complex mental phenomena” (Ben-Ze'ev 2009, p. 42) that inspire motivation and agency (Gecas 1991). Emotions are pervasive in our everyday lives (Harris 2015, p. 3). In fact, any behaviour of a social nature or within a social context has some sort of emotion mixed in it (Bericat 2016, p. 496). In turn, sociologists find that emotions are inherently social (Lively and Weed 2016).

These characteristics of emotions make them an important factor to consider for our purposes, which is to gain a better understanding of the Islamic revivalist movement known as Tabligh Jama'at (Convey the message of Islam group). While emotions have been mentioned in studies of Tabligh Jama'at, no study yet has dedicated empirical and analytic attention to the emotional dynamics that play a role in the movement's goals and methods. The present study addresses this lacuna by exploring what sociologist Hirschchild (1979) terms “emotion work”—the attempt to evoke and shape emotions—in Tablighi written text *Faza'il-e-A'maal* (Virtues of Good Deeds) and oral text *bayan* (religious sermon).

The study aims to answer the following questions: (1) What kind of emotion work do Tablighi texts perform? (2) What emotions does Tablighi emotion work attempt to generate? (3) What are the implications of this emotion work for Tabligh Jama'at as an Islamic revivalist movement that aims for the social transformation of society through individual reform? Exploring these questions, the study aims to contribute to the field of Tabligh Jama'at research by lending an analytic eye to its emotional dimension to gain a better understanding of how the movement achieves its goals of individual and social transformation.

In what follows, the study provides information about the Tabligh Jama'at as an Islamic revivalist movement. It then reviews literature on Tabligh Jama'at that speaks to factors that enable it to achieve its transformation goals. That review identifies the movement's emotional dimension as lacking investigation. The study then accounts for what has been observed about the movement's emotional dimension, and in doing so identifies emotion work as a suitable area of inquiry. The subsequent two sections give an overview of the theoretical and methodological approaches the study uses to pursue this area of inquiry. The results section describes the five kinds of emotion work in Tablighi texts



Citation: Sahib, Rizwan. 2022. Emotion Work in Tabligh Jama'at Texts. *Religions* 13: 632. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13070632>

Academic Editor: Jan A. Ali

Received: 30 May 2022

Accepted: 4 July 2022

Published: 7 July 2022

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and offers a discussion around which emotions this emotion work might generate. The discussion section then interprets those findings. The study concludes with suggestions for future work on emotions in Islamic revivalist movements.

2. Tabligh Jama'at as an Islamic Revivalist Movement

Contemporary Islamic revivalism took hold of Muslim communities in certain parts of the world during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Among the several movements and organisations (for example, Jamaat-i-Islami; Muslim Brotherhood; Hizb-ut-Tahrir) that originated in those times is Tabligh Jama'at—which Jan Ali (2012) translates as 'Conveying the Message of Islam Group'. The Tabligh Jama'at was founded in the Delhi region of India by a Deobandi trained scholar named Muhammad Ilyas Kandhlawi (1885–1944). Ilyas attempted the Islamisation of Mewat—an area outside Delhi—in the early 1920s by establishing religious schools called *maktab* or *madrassa* (Marwah 1979, p. 94). However, he soon noticed that the schooling system he had helped set up there was not having the desired effect (Ahmad 1991, p. 512). This situation concerned Ilyas so greatly that in the late 1920s he moved to Basti Nizamuddin in the Mewat region to begin missionary work in the form of *khuruj* (preaching tour). The initial thrust of the preaching activity Ilyas established was so successful that the Tabligh Jama'at conference held in Mewat in 1941 was attended by twenty-five thousand people (Ahmad 1991, p. 512). After Ilyas' death, his son Muhammad Yusuf became the leader of the Tabligh Jama'at. Yusuf expanded on his father's success by sending preaching parties outside India to numerous countries (Gaborieau 2000, pp. 127–30). This expansionary intent resulted in Tabligh Jama'at today being a transnational phenomenon.

The name 'Conveying the Message of Islam' refers to the Tabligh Jama'at preaching to Muslims the importance of Islamic faith and praxis. Ilyas believed that preaching is a duty for a group of Muslims. Muslims must revive *iman* (faith) and Islamic praxis because another prophet would not be coming to Earth (Ali 2012, p. 125). To revive *iman* and Islam in Muslims, Tablighi preaching tours provide participants with much opportunity to learn about the rituals and etiquettes of Islam. Three-day, ten-day, forty-day, and four-month preaching tours are a holistic education environment where one can implement straight away what one learns through oral instruction. Tabligh Jama'at hopes that an individual's transformation into a pious person is sustained on his return home, and that over time, the transformed individuals will encourage his immediate social circle to also become more religious—in this way, society will be gradually transformed.

3. Factors Underpinning Tabligh Jama'at Social Transformation

In terms of what facilitates the individual and social transformation goal of Tabligh Jama'at, the literature on the movement has focused mainly on three factors: political freedom to travel and preach; social networks and organisational resources at the movement's disposal; and the movement's ideology or ideas (for a review of this literature, see Ali and Sahib 2022, pp. 51–53).

While each of these factors are important for a movement's ability to engage in activism, in the past few decades, social movement scholars have researched the emotional dynamics of mobilisation (for a review of this literature, see Van-Ness and Summers-Effler 2019), exploring emotions that lead to participation (Pickard and Bessant 2018; Hu and Wu 2021; Weiss 2021; Asún et al. 2022; Nikolayenko 2022; Petrini and Wettergren 2022), emotions that sustain commitment (Feigenbaum et al. 2013; Ransan-Cooper et al. 2018; Pirkkalainen 2021), and emotions that hinder mobilisation (Summers-Effler 2010; Østbø 2017). These studies support Jasper (1998, p. 407), who observed, early on, that emotions play a role in individuals being drawn to a particular movement, and in their subsequent decision to remain in the movement and to participate in its activities. These implications of emotions in social movements are also observed also by Bericat (2016, p. 504):

Many emotions, such as indignation, moral shock, anger, fear, shame, pride and humiliation, condition and inspire social movements, whether in their origin,

recruitment of members, maintenance of organization or in the struggle to achieve their objectives.

In view of these observations, we may posit that even where other factors exist, a movement may not be able to achieve its goals for social activism and transformation if it cannot arouse in people certain emotions. Without emotions people may not move from the balcony to the barricade, or in the case of Tablighis, from their own homes to other Muslims' front doors. The next section explores why emotions are an important feature of Tabligh Jama'at, and therefore worthy of closer examination.

4. Emotions in the Tabligh Jama'at

Research on the Tabligh Jama'at emphasises emotions as a key element of its outlook and existence. Timol (2022, p. 16) notes the group's "anti-intellectual yet emotionally charged ethos . . ." and that "For large numbers of devotees, participation in TJ clearly is an emotionally satisfying experience" (ibid., p. 15). Pelkmans (2017, pp. 115–19) says of the contents of Tablighi *bayan* and storytelling that they create an "emotive energy". Marcia Hermansen (2008, p. 83) describes the movement's call as not to an abstract set of jurisprudential rules, but "Rather, the appeal is more personal and emotional". Gugler (2013, p. 72) sees the Islamic revivalism of the Tabligh Jama'at as "seemingly anti-intellectual, or rather, emotional". Talib (1997, p. 45) reports that the Tabligh Jama'at's "enduring symbols, moods, and activities" have an intense "emotional reality". Pieri (2019, p. 367) comments that "TJ's goal was to reignite a passion for Islam among lapsed Muslims". His observation is echoed in Pool (2021) who identifies in Tablighis cool (for example, conviction) and uncool (for example, excitement) emotions—or what he calls "passions".

The emotional impetus of the Tabligh Jama'at derives from its key texts the *Faz'a'il-e-A'maal* and *bayan*. Barbara Metcalf (1993, p. 593) notes of *Faza'il-e-A'maal* that its "stories are meant to engage the listener—or reader—not only intellectually, but emotionally . . ." She goes on to describe the stories in the *Faza'il-e-A'maal*'s main pamphlet which is titled *Hayaat-us-Sahabah* (The Lives of the Companions) as "emotional dramas" that the reader has to "respond [to] with feeling" (Metcalf 1993, p. 595). As regards *bayan*, Rashid (2006, p. 366) and Sikand (1999, p. 45) comment on its "forceful" and "emotive style". In his observation of *bayan*, Horstmann (2009, p. 120) says, "During Friday prayers in the *markaz* (prayer hall), during prayers in the local mosque and during missionary tours, preachers virtually cry out their sermons in a very emotional way, raising piety for and fear of God". Talib's (1997, p. 47) description of *bayan* is also important: "The actual presentation is punctuated by the listeners' deep sighs and the narrator's show of emotion". This observation points to the emotional effects that the content of the *bayan* can have on an audience.

Together, these observations are important in that they create a picture of the Islamic revivalism of Tabligh Jama'at as generating and generated by emotions. These emotional dynamics are pointed to more closely in other studies. Talib (1997, p. 47) reports the following statement from a Tablighi in India: "In the work of *da'wa* emotions are shaped and given direction". Jan Ali (2012, p. 178) says, "the selected hadiths in the *Faza'il-e-A'maal* generate a sense of concern and even fear and motivate the participants towards their implementation". Commenting on an invitation a Tablighi gave to a Muslim during *jawla* (preaching round) in which the former spoke about death and the grave, Ali (2012, p. 195) says that it:

... demonstrates that an appeal to emotion is used to arouse religious consciousness. By positing this world as ephemeral and a testing ground which one day everyone will abandon, the Tablighis make a direct emotional appeal to the 'heart'.

These observations: that Tablighis *shape, give direction to, generate, appeal to* emotions show that Tabligh Jama'at's preaching tries to shape the emotions of individuals in a way that accentuates the appeal of participation in its preaching tours.

These observations open up an avenue to examining the emotional dimension of the Tablighi Jama'at through [Hochschild's \(1979\)](#) concept of "emotion work"—which refers to the shaping of people's emotions. While the above findings from the literature are perhaps enough to justify using Hochschild's concept, the study particularly takes a cue from [Horstmann \(2009, p. 113\)](#), who poignantly observes in Tablighi circles "emotional work [which] includes the hagiographic telling of the sufferings and endless pains of the first travellers who are widely regarded as martyrs". The idea he puts forth is that the Tablighi method of conveying its message is emotive, and it seeks an emotional outcome. This is exactly what emotion work, conceptually speaking, seeks to unpack.

As will be seen later, emotion work as a concept and analytic approach is useful not only for conceptualising the emotional dimension of Tablighi Jama'at, but also in gaining a clearer understanding of the movement's transformative potential.

5. Theoretical Background

5.1. Emotion Work

[Arlie Hochschild \(1979, p. 561\)](#) defines emotion work as "the act of trying to change in degree or quality an emotion or feeling". Emotion work is illustrated through phrases such as "I *psyched myself up*", "He *killed their hope*", "She *tried hard* to make me feel grateful". The italicised verbs indicate the *work* involved in producing, respectively, the emotions of determination, hope, and gratitude.

The act of managing emotions may occur in three ways: (1) on oneself by oneself; (2) on others by oneself; (3) on oneself by others ([Hochschild 1979](#)). This study explores the third type of emotion work in the sense of how Tablighi texts attempt to generate emotions in Tablighis and potential recruits.

The term emotion work was originally applied to conceptualising the everyday, ordinary management of emotions by individuals at home and in the workplace. More recently, social movement scholars have examined how activists manage their own and others' emotions in social movement contexts ([Maney et al. 2009](#); [Gould 2015](#); [Hagemann 2015](#); [Jacobsson and Lindblom 2016](#); [Kleres and Wettergren 2017](#); [Santos 2020](#); [Marquez 2021](#); [Siegel 2021](#); [Tuomola and Wahl-Jorgensen 2022](#)). For instance, Hagemann comments:

Emotion work, defined as active practices to regulate emotions, is . . . an important strategy for social movements in order to motivate and legitimize collective action and to induce group cohesion ([Hagemann 2015, p. 13](#))

[Jasper \(1998, p. 405\)](#) indicates the centrality of emotion work to social movements by observing that "It affects and emotional responses that political organizers appeal to, arouse, manipulate, and sustain to recruit and retain members". *Appealing to, arousing, manipulating, and sustaining* all signify emotion work.

5.2. Frame Theory

Emotion work does not occur alone; it coincides with another important mobilising activity: framing. Frame Theory ([Snow et al. 1986](#); [Snow and Benford 1988, 1992](#); [Benford and Snow 2000](#)) has developed our understanding of movements' meaning making activity. Specifically, movements construct or identify a problem and a target of blame for the problem occurring (diagnostic framing); they offer a solution to redress the problem (prognostic framing); and try to persuade people to act through vocabularies of motive that focus on the urgency and severity of the problem, the efficacy of the proposed solutions, and the moral propriety of undertaking action (motivational framing). The ideational constructs that result from these framing tasks are called collective action frames.

As regards framing in Islamic movements, [Quinton Wiktorowicz's \(2004\)](#) exploration of the framing strategies of the Salafi movement is useful for our purposes. He identifies four key strategies—vilification, exaltation, credentialing, decredentialing—that Salafi Muslim activists deploy to legitimise certain Muslim intellectuals as sacred authorities (*ibid.*, pp. 162–64). This study is similar in that it explores the emotional framing strategies

that Tablighi texts use to legitimise *tabligh* and self-reform as the means to avert the Muslim crisis.

5.3. *Tabligh Jama'at Framing*

Ali and Sahib (2022), recognising the lack of conceptualisation of the ideational aspect of the Tabligh Jama'at, draw on Frame Theory to explain the structure of Tablighi ideas and their resonance for Muslims in the modern world. Analysing the *Faza'il-e-A'maal* and several Tablighi bayans that were commonly performed in the Friday night Tablighi gatherings in Sydney, Australia, they identify the following collective action frames: Muslim crisis, *iman* (faith), self-reform, *tabligh* (preaching), Allah, urgency, severity, responsibility, and rewards (Ali and Sahib 2022, pp. 72–82).

To take a few examples of Tablighi framing, diagnostic framing can be seen in Hasan's (1994, p. 24) statement that "The current disease in the body of Muslims has sprung from the extinction of the true spirit of Islam in our hearts". Identifying contemporary Muslims as culpable for the Muslim crisis is a key aspect of the Muslim crisis frame. Another example of framing in a Tablighi text is the following *bayan* statement that exemplifies the *tabligh* frame:

Prophets came and made this effort [*tabligh*]. And they made this effort by visiting people, going to the people, and knocking on every door. And the Prophet Muhammad, he came, and he also did the same effort. Went and visited people, knocked on every door. (Ali and Sahib 2022, p. 75)

The speaker here legitimises *tabligh* by connecting it with the practice of the Prophets. Ali and Sahib's (2022) findings advance our understanding of the meaning making activity of Tablighi texts. The present study draws on these findings in conjunction with a sociology of emotions approach—that is, the concept of emotion work—to better understand the transformative potential of Tablighi textual discourse.

5.4. *Emotions and Framing*

Emotions are important components of framing (Schrock et al. 2004; Eyerman 2005; Snow et al. 2018; Raffaelli et al. 2019; Dzhengiz et al. 2021). Snow et al. (2018, p. 397) point out that "the appeal to or use of emotion appears to be a central feature of motivational framing". They also identify anger and guilt (and fear and disgust) as accompanying "shock framing" (ibid., 2018, p. 483), which is exposure to an emotionally arousing stimulus. Additionally, commenting on the close relationship between framing and emotions, Eyerman (2005, pp. 44–45) says, "Movements are often spurred into existence by cognitively framed emotions, anger, frustration, shame, guilt, which move individuals and groups to protest, to publicly express and display discontent". In their study, Schrock et al. (2004) examine how in a transgender support group emotion work and motivational framing combine to create "emotional resonance" or "emotional harmony" between activists' collective action frames and recruits' emotional lives.

Considering these points, this study holds that emotion work corresponds closely to framing, therefore, in the Results section, the different kinds of emotion work will be discussed in reference to the collective action frames identified in Ali and Sahib (2022).

5.5. *Method*

The main tenets of the history of emotions are that emotional experience and expression change across time and place; societies value, define, and judge certain emotions in different ways; and that emotions have been known by various terms corresponding to different bodily and mental states (Frevert 2016, p. 49).

In the academy, scholars study emotions from a variety of theoretical perspectives, including developmental, sociological, personality, biological, cognitive, and health-related (for essays on each perspective, see Barrett et al. 2016). The concept emotion work arose from the sociological approach to emotions, in particular the idea that people's emotions

are shaped and constrained via emotion management practices (Lively and Weed 2016, pp 69–70).

This study focuses on examining emotion work in Tablighi Jama’at texts. Texts are important sources of emotion work as “We interpret texts, buildings, gardens, rituals, and other human artifacts for the emotions displayed or aroused in audiences” (Jasper 2011, p. 298). The texts that this study analyses to identify emotion work are *Faza’il-e-A’maal* (Virtues of Good Deeds) and *bayan* (religious sermon).

The *bayan* statements mentioned in the Results section are taken from Ali and Sahib (2022). For more detail on the data collection for that study, see Ali and Sahib (2022, pp. 59–63). The method of participant observation Ali and Sahib (2022) used to collect *bayan* data aligns with Van-Ness and Summers-Effler (2019, p. 419), who include participation and observation as methods through which “Social movement scholars can capture emotion”; and with Goodwin et al. (2004, p. 424), who say, “Participant observation is another method that can be used to study the everyday emotional culture of movements”.

In addition to *bayans*, this study examines the contents of the pamphlets that comprise *Faza’il-e-A’maal* (for an overview of these pamphlets and their contents, see Masud 2000, pp. 83–85). These pamphlets were written to create in their reader a desire for piety and preaching. Tablighi founder, Muhammad Ilyas, saw the pamphlets as useful for motivating Muslims for preaching (ibid., p. 80). Therefore—and because their contents are elaborated on in Tablighi *bayan*—the pamphlets are a potentially rich source of emotional framing.

5.6. Results

From my reading of the pamphlets of *Faza’il-e-A’maal* and *bayan*, I identify five kinds of emotion work that correspond to the collective action frames found in Ali and Sahib (2022). I also identify several emotions that this emotion work might generate in individuals. The corresponding relations between Tablighi framing, emotion work, and emotions are illustrated in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Tabligh Jama’at Framing, Emotion Work, and Emotions.

Framing Task	Collective Action Frame	Emotion Work	Emotion Generated
Diagnostic Framing	‘Muslim Crisis’	Reflexivity	Shame; Guilt
Prognostic Framing	‘Tabligh’	Entrustment	Elevation; Pride; Determination
	‘Iman’	Entrustment	Elevation; Pride; Determination
	‘Self-reform’	Transcendence	Interest
Motivational Framing	‘Urgency’	Micro Shock	Concern; Compassion
	‘Severity’	Micro Shock	Concern; Compassion
	‘Allah’	Transcendence	Hope; Optimism; Love
	‘Responsibility’	Entrustment	Elevation; Determination
	‘Rewards’	Compensation	Anticipation; Excitement; Desire

5.6.1. Reflexivity

For the Tabligh Jama’at, not all Muslims are aware of the crisis afflicting Muslims around the world. The movement’s texts attempt to make Muslims aware of their lowly state in material and spiritual terms. They do this through the Muslim crisis frame and emotion work of reflexivity. According to the Muslim crisis frame (Ali and Sahib 2022, pp. 72–73), Muslim lowliness is marked by apathy, lack of faith and religious praxis, and

lack of political, economic, and social power. This assessment is illustrated in the following statement: “Muslims of today [are] sunk in misery and disgrace, a people who possess no real strength or power, honour or dignity . . . completely demoralised, apathetic, shallow and helpless” (Hasan 1994, p. 4).

Through this discursive work the Muslim crisis frame awakens individual Muslims to the plight of Muslims as a whole. In doing this, the frame produces the emotion work reflexivity which may generate self-directed feelings of shame and guilt. Take the following statement from the pamphlet titled *Faza'il-e-Tabligh* (The Virtues of Preaching): “Millions of Muslims have indulged in manifest false-worship, not to speak of neglecting prayers and fasting; yet they are never conscious of their practices . . . ” (Zakariyya 1994a, p. 5). The Muslim hearing this statement may feel ashamed of his neglect of Islam and preoccupation with worldliness, and the words “they are never conscious of their practices” may prompt him to feel culpable for the Muslim crisis having arisen. Such guilt is illustrated in the following Tablighi’s statement: “Today the Muslims are at the receiving end and it means that there is something wrong with us. It is the result of our karma” (Chakrabarti 2017, p. 162).

Reflexivity prods Muslims to compare themselves to the Muslims who came before, namely the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions. By such comparison, Muslims today will see themselves as lowly. This discursive move is evident in a *bayan* where the speaker says:

All the *barakah* [blessing] and the greatness that was seen in the Sahabah [companions of the Prophet Muhammad], why this is not being seen in the lives of the Muslims here? Because we’ve left that duty, we’ve left that responsibility that Allah has given us. (Ali and Sahib 2022, p. 80)

Ihtishaamul Hasan (1994, p. 8) also makes the comparison between Muslims before and Muslims now:

History proves that the early Muslims had been able to reach the highest summit of honour and glory, whereas the present-day Muslims seem to have moved in the opposite direction.

These statements urge Muslims to reflect on how they have let down Islam and Prophet Muhammad and his Companions. The guilt that might arise as a response to this emotion work will make Muslims feel that they are “part of the problem”. Importantly, shame and guilt are moral emotions (Haidt 2003, pp. 859–61). Therefore, reflexivity lends to the Muslim crisis frame a layer of moral seriousness which increases the salience of the Muslim crisis to Muslims today.

5.6.2. Entrustment

Tablighi texts offer emotional relief from shame and guilt in the form of redemptive framing. This framing comes as the idea that the Muslim crisis can be reversed into Muslim flourishing if only Muslims apply themselves to a revival of *iman* through *tabligh*. Through participating in these activities Muslims can go from being part of the problem to being part of the solution.

This framing is captured in the prognostic and motivational framing of the “*iman*”, “*tabligh*”, and “responsibility” frames. *Iman* and *tabligh* frames speak to the most important things in the world in the eyes of Tabligh Jama’at: faith in God and the tactic of *tabligh* to revive it (Ali and Sahib 2022, pp. 74–75). The responsibility frame posits that implementing preaching and reviving *iman* is the duty of all Muslims today (Ali and Sahib 2022, p. 80). A few examples of these frames in *Faza'il-e-A'maal* and *bayan* are the following:

Iman frame:

The way to regain to honour, grandeur, exaltation, glory and virtues by Muslims, lies only in their being strictly faithful. (Hasan 1994, p. 7)

Tabligh frame:

Real sentiments and love for Islam are practically dead in us and our belief in it has dissipated. Obviously, when the very source becomes dry, the channels of virtue, good deeds and fine attributes, which can flow from it, are not to be seen any longer . . . the only means for the building up of this source, and maintaining a constantly proper flow of religious benefits from it, is the act of “Tabligh [i.e., preaching],” which really and truly is the life-blood of Islam. (Hasan 1994, p. 24)

Responsibility frame:

Allah has given us a big responsibility! . . . There is no Prophet to come. This is our responsibility. That’s why the elders say, this is our biggest sin! [that we do not make effort]. We have not taken up this responsibility. . . . The past year 90 million people have gone without *iman*. We are responsible. (Ali and Sahib 2022, p. 80)

We have been given the responsibility of the *ambiya* [Prophets] . . . All the *barakah* [blessing] and the greatness that was seen in the Sahabah [companions of the Prophet Muhammad], why this is not being seen in the lives of the Muslims here? Because we’ve left that duty, we’ve left that responsibility that Allah has given us. (Ali and Sahib 2022, p. 80)

These framings together produce the idea that reviving *iman* or calling to *iman* is something passed down from the eminent Muslim personalities of the past. The emotion work corresponding to these framings is what this study defines as entrustment. Entrustment is the idea that *iman* is a trust, and that Muslims today have a mission to protect that trust through conducting *tabligh*. This sentiment is seen in Aashiq Ilaahi (1994, p. 12), who says in his pamphlet *Six Fundamentals*:

To call the wrong doing and negligent people to Allah, and to instruct them with His commandments, was really the duty of the *Ambiyaa* [i.e., Prophets], which has now been entrusted to the Muslims.

What kinds of emotions may entrustment generate? One emotion that may arise is pride, which is a positive feeling of having achieved something valued or virtuous (De Hooge and Van Osch 2021, p. 2). People become proud when they appraise themselves as being responsible for accomplishing something seen as socially valued (Mascolo and Fischer 1995). For Tablighis, pride may arise as a feeling of pleasure or satisfaction from participating in the socially important deed of preserving *iman*. Pride may come from having *iman*, as *iman* is something that is most pleasing to Allah. Pride may also come from one being a caller to Allah or a worker for Allah, and that one is following in the footsteps of the eminent Muslim personalities of the past. Pride may come from the image of *tabligh* as a mission. For example, Muhammad Zakariyya (1994a, p. 14) says, “The main cause of our [i.e., Muslims] decline is that we do not pay attention to Tabligh nor do we help those who devote themselves to this sacred mission”. Balci (2012, p. 70) alludes to pride which he calls “self-esteem”—as something created by being on a mission: “Being given such responsibilities, like da’wa missions for the stray sheep of the Muslim community to keep on the straight and narrow, increases young people’s self-esteem”.

Tablighis may also experience what psychologists call “group pride”. Group-based pride occurs when one identifies with a social group that has achieved something socially valuable (De Hooge and Van Osch 2021, p. 2). Tablighi texts offer Muslims a collective identity with those eminent Muslim personalities of the past—the Prophets and their disciples and companions. Tablighi texts tell Muslims today that by undertaking *tabligh* they are undertaking the “work” or “occupation” that the Prophets and their disciples and companions undertook. Ihtishaamul Hasan (1994, p. 30) says about *tabligh* that “it was exactly this type of work which every prophet of Allah Ta’ala had to do as his sole occupation”. Thus, being a Tablighi is to inherit the special work of preaching from the Prophets mentioned in the Qur’an. The following statement in one *bayan* illustrates this discursive move: “Allah has given us the work of the prophets” (Ali and Sahib 2022, p. 83).

The main pamphlet of *Faza'il-e-A'maal—Hayaat-us-Sahaabah* (Lives of the Companions)—speaks to the exemplary struggle and hardships the Prophet Muhammad and his Companions endured in cultivating *iman* and Islam, and in preaching. For example, Muhammad Zakariyya (1994b, pp. 15–18) tells the story of Prophet Muhammad's journey to a town outside Mecca called Taif to call its people to Islam. The local chieftains rejected the Prophet upon his invitation to them to convert to Islam. Zakariyya (1994b, p. 16) describes the Prophet in this situation as “a rock of steadfastness and perseverance”. Reading or hearing such stories may encourage Muslims to also do whatever it takes in terms of time, effort, and finances to call people to Islam. This consideration is illustrative of the emotion of elevation. Elevation is a feeling of upliftment and desire to do good upon witnessing another person undertaking a morally beneficial act towards others (Haidt 2003, pp. 863–64). Elevation ties in with the reason Muhammad Zakariyya wrote *Hayaat-us-Sahaabah*, that is, for mothers to read its contents to their children so as to “create in them an Islamic spirit of love and esteem for the Sahaabah, and thereby improve ‘Imaan’” (Zakariyya 1994b, p. 12). Here, I interpret love and esteem as elevation. Muhammad Zakariyya (1994b, p. 13) goes on to say that the stories of the Companions “serve as a beacon of Faith and Practice”. Therefore, if a Muslim wants to be inspired or elevated to practice *iman* and Islam, he/she may turn to *Hayaat-us-Sahaabah*.

Finally, entrustment, in combination with the responsibility and *tabligh* frames, may generate the emotion of determination (also called “challenge”). The psychology literature defines determination as “a positive, energized feeling stemming from the believed ability to overcome actual and potential obstacles to achieve one's goals” (Kirby et al. 2014, p. 383). Indeed, Tablighis are known for their tenacity, resourcefulness, and commitment to preaching, sometimes in very difficult circumstances. Tablighi commitment to preaching aligns with the notion that the action that stems from the emotional state of determination is effort (ibid., p. 384). In Tablighi circles much discussion contains references to the term “effort”. Ali and Sahib (2022, p. 84) document a few instances of this framing. I mention one example here where a speaker elaborating on *tabligh* said:

This is the effort on which Prophet Muhammad made effort, and He made every Sahabah [Companions of Prophet Muhammad] to stand up with this effort. And Sahabah did the effort (Ali and Sahib 2022, p. 84)

By hearing about the sacrifice and effort made by the Muslim personalities found in *Hayaat-us-Sahabah* and mentioned in *bayan*, Muslims today may become determined—i.e., make effort—to overcome obstacles in their day-to-day preaching adventures.

5.6.3. Micro Shock

Fellow feeling is not only the domain of entrustment, but also results from another facet of Tablighi emotion work called micro shock. Jacobsson and Lindblom (2016, pp. 71–72) use the term micro-shock to describe the practice of animal rights activists looking at films and pictures of animal abuse, for example, in fur farms. Watching these stimuli generates anger and outrage, which then spurs individuals towards activism.

In the case of Tabligh Jama'at, micro-shock occurs through shocking ideas of Islam being destroyed or people going to hellfire as punishment for lacking *iman* and Islam. Micro-shock thus corresponds to the motivational frames “urgency” and “severity” (Ali and Sahib 2022, pp. 76–78). Severity and urgency framing are illustrated in the following statements in *Faza'il-e-A'maal* and *bayan*:

Today . . . every particle of Islam is being destroyed one by one before our very eyes. (Hasan 1994, p. 31)

The time is moving fast and so is the pace of deterioration in the religion of Islam. The situation demands a strong, quick, and determined effort by one and all for arresting the rot and stopping further degeneration. (Hasan 1994, p. 20)

If we see a burning fire, we will go to stop the fire. So, what about the millions of people who have already died and are going to *jahannam* [hell]? It is our fault! We have failed to do this work. (Ali and Sahib 2022, p. 83)

The Prophet is not here today. His companions are not here today. So, who is going to worry about the *ummah*? Everyday hundreds of thousands of people pass away. How many of them die without *iman*? (Ali and Sahib 2022, p. 77)

In Tablighi discourse dying without faith is the ultimate ruin of a human being. By forwarding the alarming proposition that everyday hundreds of thousands or millions of people are headed towards this ruin, Tablighi texts perform the emotion work of shocking the audience into giving emotional attention to this situation. When the speaker prefaces the shocking statistic of hundreds of thousands of people passing away without faith with the words, “who is going to worry about the *ummah*?” he is prodding the audience to have other-oriented feelings: to *worry*, to *care*, to *empathise*, and to have *sympathy*. For simplicity, I subsume these feelings into the emotions of concern and compassion.

First, concern refers to the disquietedness one may feel due to worry or anxiety about something (Roughley and Schramme 2018, p. 15). In Tablighi circles, concern is denoted by the commonly heard Urdu or Arabic term “*fikr*”. Tablighis always encourage each other to have *fikr* for *din* (religion) or *fikr* for *akhirah* (afterlife). For example, Jan Ali relates a Tablighi in Sydney saying about the benefits of *khuruj*: “Everyone comes with same *fikr* [concern] with same *niyat* [intention] and with same aim to do the same thing together, that is, to become good God-fearing Muslims” (Ali 2010b, p. 167). Second, compassion is “the feeling that arises in witnessing another’s suffering and that motivates a subsequent desire to help” (Goetz et al. 2010, p. 351). For some Tablighis it may be the imagined suffering of others in the afterlife that creates a tender-heartedness and subsequent desire to save people by conveying the message of Islam to them. The following statement by a Tablighi in England illustrates compassion:

It is not enough to give those in need food or clothes. If a man is starving and you give him food he will be hungry again. If you give him clothes then he will have them until they wear out. But true mercy is to inform them of Allah. True mercy is to teach them *salat* [prayer], because *salat* will last for life! (Pieri 2015, p. 144)

5.6.4. Transcendence

The central frame around which the other Tablighi collective action frames revolve is the Allah frame. Ali and Sahib (2022, pp. 78–80) describe the “Allah frame” as calling Muslims to remember that Allah is almighty and to heed Allah’s promises of aid and rewards for those that work for him. The Allah frame urges Muslims to have trust in Allah when embarking on preaching. The following *bayan* by a Tablighi in Sydney illustrates this framing:

Da’wah [calling people to belief in Allah] has an effect on the heart of the *da’i* [propagator]. This is because he has strong certainty that for whom He is calling He is listening. He is with him. Every single thing in the universe moves with the permission of Allah. Nothing can harm, nothing can benefit except with the permission with Allah. . . . The *da’i* must have certainty that every single thing in this world is going to support me because “I am a caller of Allah”. The ocean will not go against me. . . . Every single thing is supporting me. . . . The power is with Allah. (Ali and Sahib 2022, p. 79)

The emotion work found in this framing is transcendence. Transcendence aims to attach one emotionally to Allah by instructing one to seek Allah’s aid. Muhammad Zakariyya (1994a, p. 23) says in *Faza’il-e-Tabligh*, “Asking from Allah, even if it be the mending of a shoe is in itself part of religion”. The following words from a *bayan* also prompts Tablighis to rely on Allah:

Believe in the power of Allah, and the mountains will move. . . . This thought has to be in your hearts. . . . If you have this thought then the effect is there. We have the way, we have the structure. We do not need anything else. We need to implement. (Ali and Sahib 2022, p. 80)

Emotional framing like this attaches the heart to Allah through the emotions of hope (in Allah's aid) and optimism (in the potential success of preaching efforts). Transcendence tells the Muslim that she need only implement preaching and Allah will take care of the rest. Transcendence may thus counter any negative emotions such as disillusionment and frustration that may arise in preaching activity that does not result in positive responses by potential proselytes.

The focus on Allah's aid and Allah's rewarding one may also generate love for Allah. This idea is supported by Jan Ali's (2010a, p. 110) observation that Tablighis adopt an "Allah-friendly attitude" and that for Tablighis "The attitude of the faithful towards Allah should be inspired by love, gratitude, patience, self-sacrifice, and complete devotion". Love for Allah is encouraged by Tablighi texts. For example, in the pamphlet *Six Fundamentals* contained in *Faza'il-e-A'maal* the author connects *zikr* or remembrance of Allah with love of Allah: "The true believers should remember Allah most often, and by contemplating the wonders of His creation, they should glorify Him, and thereby strengthen their love for Him" (Ilaahi 1994, p. 7).

Transcendence expands the emotional world of the Tablighi by generating in him an interest for the religious life over a worldly or purely material existence. Interest is an emotion that motivates humans to expend effort and brainpower to do things that they are curious about or that fascinate them (Silvia 2008, p. 57). Interest underpins much of human motivation to learn and explore (ibid.). Tablighi texts attempt to generate interest in the religious life by making it seem fascinating. They achieve this by framing the religious life as self-cultivation and self-improvement. This discursive move represents what Ali and Sahib (2022, pp. 75–76) call the "self-reform" frame. The following statements from Tablighi texts illustrate this frame:

[When people have changed their condition] only then can we derive full benefit from the existing religious institutions which, in turn, can serve the community in a befitting manner (Hasan 1994, p. 23)

Say to yourselves that we are going on the path of Allah externally to reform ourselves internally (Ali and Sahib 2022, p. 76)

Self-reform can be interesting in the sense of it being an exploration into the spiritual potential of human life. Ihtishaamul Hasan (1994, pp. 28–30) outlines five practices that Muslims can perform that will contribute to their self-reform: (1) memorising and correctly reciting the Muslim testimony of faith; (2) punctuality in performing the five daily canonical obligatory prayers; (3) daily recitation of the Qur'an; (4) daily time for *dhikr* (remembrance of Allah); (5) and good relations with and attitudes towards all Muslims. These acts provide an interesting way of life that lends meaning to one's day-to-day existence.

This facet of Tablighi teaching should not be underestimated for its potential impact on people's lives. If we consider, with Charles Taylor (2007, p. 307), that in modern secular societies "our actions, goals, achievements . . . have a lack of weight, gravity, thickness, and substance. There is a deeper resonance which they lack, which we feel should be there", pious living offers a lifestyle that has a metaphysical significance and therefore pious living carries a certain gravity. Because of modern society's lack of meaningful pursuits, as observed by Taylor, pious living becomes interesting for its very meaningfulness and consequence for one's afterlife.

5.6.5. Compensation

Aside from a meaningful existence, Tablighi texts posit pious living as beneficial for one because *iman*, Islam, and *tabligh* are rewarded in the afterlife. This idea draws on the

motivational “rewards” frame (Ali and Sahib 2022, p. 81). The following *bayan* statement illustrates this framing:

A person who spends his life building up his faith, even if it is only so much as a mustard seed’s weight, this effort will be rewarded with a space in Paradise which will be bigger than the universe. In this space he will be gifted a mansion which will be so amazing it will dumbfound the owner. (Ali and Sahib 2022, p. 81)

This message entices the audience with the image of a paradisaical mansion that will be so immense that it will dumbfound its recipient.

Such framing is illustrative of the emotion work of compensation. Compensation is the attempt to attach Muslims to pious living and preaching through the emotions of anticipation, excitement, and desire. These emotions are interrelated, as the more an individual feels anticipation and excitement about heavenly rewards, the more she/he would desire to live a life of piety and preaching. Tablighi texts do well to encourage this kind of emotional attachment. Take the following statement from Aashiq Ilaahi (1994, p. 12) in *Six Fundamentals*: “Leaving one’s home and family for the cause of Allah has great rewards for the subject in the next life, just as Rasulullah [Prophet Muhammad] has clearly told us”. The emotion work here is to attach the reader to preaching by creating anticipation, excitement, and desire due to the great returns or rewards that preaching gives its doer.

To sum up this Results section, we point to Tablighi texts as performing five kinds of emotion work: reflexivity, entrustment, micro shock, transcendence, and compensation. This emotion work is intricately connected with Tablighi framing. Together this emotional framing lends to Tablighi message an immense emotional potential as seen in the several emotions mentioned above. The next section discusses the implications of this dynamism for Tablighi Jama’at as a transformative phenomenon in the modern world.

6. Discussion

Tablighis have invested in the social transformation of the modern world through individual reform and self-development (Ali 2012). They aim for transformation because, like all Islamic revivalists, they face the challenge of “an overwhelming modern society whose effect is unambiguously corrosive to totalistic religious belief and practice” (Azmi 2000, p. 236). Because of this feature of the modern world, Tablighis have feelings of indignation, moral outrage, disdain, and contempt towards it. These feelings are seen, for example, in the following Tablighi’s observation that the world is “a house of dishonour” that “poisons its lovers in their trance” and that on the Day of Judgment the world will manifest as “an old hideous woman” (Talib 2000, p. 72). Additionally, another Tablighi describes Western society as a “polluted and dirty environment” which preaching will cleanse (Masud 2000, p. 108).

Social transformation is “qualitative change in the nature and character of human societies” (Groenewald 2000, p. 18). Historians Will and Ariel Durant (Durant and Durant 1968, p. 32) point out that “Society is founded not on the ideals but on the nature of man”. Therefore, transformation of society is intertwined with transformation of individuals that make-up society. For this reason, this study has given close attention to an important facet of human life—the emotions. Considering that individual human beings are the building blocks of a society, and that emotions or feelings are a core element that constitutes the human, social transformation of society pertains—to some degree—to change within the emotional sphere of human life. Additionally, it is here that Tablighi emotion work contributes to social transformation—by enchanting the Muslim’s emotional sphere.

To explain this point, if we take secularisation (a hallmark of the modern world) as “the decline in the proportion of their time, energy, and resources which men devote to super-empirical concerns” (Wilson 1982, p. 149), then Tablighi emotion work defends against this process by generating in Muslims an emotional attachment to ultimate religious concerns such that they might expend energy for pious, spiritual pursuits. This strategy of Tabligh

Jama'at is seen in Ihtishaamul Hasan's (1994, p. 23) statement that "[Muslims must launch a] counter-effort, where we are able to revive the dead spirit of each and every Muslim and rekindle in him the love and attachment for Islam". I offer here a brief explanation of how the emotion work mentioned in the Results section of this study contribute to this process of attachment for Islam.

Transcendence, for example, may generate emotional attachment to Allah in the form of hope and optimism. Thus, a Tablighi writing a letter from the United Kingdom to the second Tabligh Jama'at leader Maulana Muhammad Yusuf, says "... those who believe in Allah have proved by their actions that this environment can be changed" (Masud 2000, p. 108). Here, the individual affirms his attachment to Allah rather than attachment to his own or other material means of changing society. Such is the importance of attachment to Allah in Tabligh Jama'at that Ali (2012, p. 242) says, in the movement "All human emotions are concentrated and directed towards Allah as a matter of priority".

The emotion work of micro shock—the use of impactful language (for example, "eternal punishment") and images (for example, people burning in hellfire) to awaken people to the destruction of Islam and people's future punishment—may attach Muslims to Islam and their fellow humans in the form of concern and compassion. Such emotional framing may cause those for whom Islam and people's future have low salience, to begin to have concern and compassion for Islam and people's faith.

Reflexivity emotion work for its part prods Muslims to reflect on their deficiencies in material power, religious character, and failure to work for Islam. Such reflection may result in shame and guilt, as seen in one Tablighi's reflection while on *khuruj* (preaching tour) in the United States:

Arriving here, we realize how much wrong we have done to the faith of the Prophet, how we have neglected the spreading of this faith. The whole Umma [i.e., Muslim community or nation] is now suffering for it. The whole Umma is humiliated ... We have attracted God's punishment because of our bad deeds ... The situation calls for serious deliberation and weeping. (Masud 2000, p. 117)

The shame and guilt in this statement show that reflexivity has caused him to become attached to existential concerns, namely the state of the Muslim *umma* and religious faith.

These facets of Tablighi emotion work contribute to the Tabligh Jama'at being what Peter Berger (1999, p. 4) calls a religious subculture, which is a means for people to reject modern ideas and values found in the society outside the religious group. Tablighis see the modern world as having corrupted the emotional sphere of human life by replacing love of God and religion with love of *dunya* (worldliness) along with fascination, hope, and pride in temporal things. Therefore, in their preaching, Tablighis attempt to detach Muslims from love of these things. Gilles Kepel (2000, pp. 196–97) reports on the theme of a Tablighi *bayan* he attended in Paris: "A gradual detachment from the connections with this world, by means of prayer, dhikr [i.e., remembrance of God], 'ilm [i.e., knowledge of God], and 'going out' will lead the true believer finally to the peace that the spirit longs for".

Tablighi emotion work is central to this detachment process by directing Muslim attention and emotions to ultimate religious concerns. For example, where once there was desire for a high-salaried job and status amongst peers, now there is desire for Allah's pleasure and status amongst the eminent Muslim personalities of the past.

In view of these points, emotion work to some degree underpins the Tabligh Jama'at being what Bryan Wilson (2010, p. 89) calls "religious community", which is an "ongoing local group" set against society which is "essentially secular". The Tabligh Jama'at aims to defend against secular society by forming local groups in which *iman* and Islam are considered signs of one's flourishing. *Iman* and Islam may be things that modern society deems inconsequential or even detrimental to human flourishing; hence, the contrasting nature of the religious community and secular society, and that the formation of the former becomes a defence against the latter. By re-directing Muslim emotions to ultimate religious concerns, emotion work contributes to the formation of an anti-secular, or at the very least, un-secular, community culture.

Tablighi emotion work and its emotions make Tablighi communities into an emotional haven from the travails of the modern world outside. This idea is illustrated in one Tablighi's comment that spending time with a Tabligh Jama'at results in one having "emotional poise"—that is, "if *akhirat* [i.e., Afterlife] is one's real purpose, then Allah bestows upon such a person an emotional poise that cleanses the heart from worldly worries" (Talib 2000, p. 64). Time spent in a Tablighi community provides what Kinnvall and Svensson (2017) describe as "ontological security" which is an emotional response (i.e., feelings of spirituality, solidarity, and purpose) to the negative feelings of ontological insecurity and existential anxiety produced by a modern world marked by secular global governance, transnationalism, and national security.

The above discussion allows us to opine that Tabligh Jama'at participates in the social transformation of the world by detaching people emotionally from a purely material and secularised way of life and attaching them emotionally to a pious life such that pious living becomes a deeply satisfying and serious affair. Exploring the emotion work performed by Tablighi texts has allowed this study to make this analysis of the Tabligh Jama'at. Emotion work, therefore, is not only a key action of Tablighi texts, but a window into the nature of the Tabligh Jama'at as a transformative phenomenon in the modern world.

7. Conclusions

Tabligh Jama'at's preaching parties and Tablighi communities are characterised by a religious subculture infused with certain emotions engendered by the emotion work performed by its literary and oral texts *Faza'il-e-A'maal* and *bayan*. Tablighi emotion work attempts to re-enchant the individual's emotional sphere by re-orienting his/her aspirations, fascinations, loves, and concerns for purely material, vain matters to religious matters. This re-orientation or detachment/attachment process is achieved by Tablighi texts through five different kinds of emotion work: reflexivity, entrustment, micro-shock, transcendence, and compensation. This emotion work may potentially generate the emotions of shame, guilt, interest, pride, elevation, concern, compassion, anticipation, excitement, desire, hope, optimism, and love for Allah.

Through generating these emotions, Tabligh Jama'at participates in the transformation of people's emotional dimension such that they become emotionally attached to Allah, Islam, Prophet Muhammad and his Companions, *iman* (faith), *tabligh* (preaching), Muslims, and the afterlife. Tablighi emotion work instructs Muslims to feel passionately about these things, and in doing so, increases their attraction and commitment to the Islamic revivalist cause. By attaching Muslim hearts to religious concerns, Tablighi framing and emotion work aims for an emotional awakening in Muslims that reverses or protects against the corruption of human emotional sphere by the secular modern world. By enchanting human emotional life, Tablighi emotion work contributes to the enchantment of society—one person and local Tablighi community at a time.

This study is a preliminary attempt to introduce the sociology of emotions into Tabligh Jama'at research. Several avenues remain open for further research using this approach. For example, we may explore the Tablighi participant side of the movement to see how the emotion work of Tablighi texts is received by participants and potential recruits. Future examination of emotion work in Islamic revivalist movements could designate a space to exploring the personal, cultural, social, and political factors that impact the resonance of a movement's emotion work for Muslims from different backgrounds. Such research avenues open up a place for emotions in our understanding of Islamic revivalism in the modern world.

Funding: The author received no external funding in performing this research.

Institutional Review Board Statement: Not applicable.

Informed Consent Statement: Not applicable.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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