

Troubling Technology: The Deobandī Debate on the Loudspeaker and Ritual Prayer	
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Technology and colonialism	<p>Following the Industrial Revolution, technology became the primary gauge of cultural superiority</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Used by European colonizers to justify their cultural supremacy <p>Some Ḥanafī jurists in South Asia continue to view modern technology as an instrument of Western cultural imperialism</p>
Muftī Muḥammad Shafī'	Issued a fatwā on the loudspeaker and ritual prayer and later revised his legal opinion in a treatise entitled <i>Ālāt-i jadīda kē shar'ī ahkām</i> (The Legal Injunctions of Modern Tools)
South Asian maslak	<p>A person's or a community's intra-Sunni sectarian identity or ideological orientation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deobandī, Barelvī, and Ahl-i Ḥadīth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deobandīs and Barelvīs opposed the abandonment of the madhhab framework by the Ahl-i Ḥadīth - Deobandīs incorporated into their Hanafism influences from Ḥadīth-centered approaches to fiqh
Deobandī jurists and technology	<p>Divided modern technology into “beneficial” and “harmful”</p> <p>Adopted “beneficial” modern technologies, such as those of print and travel</p> <p>Eschewed the use of “harmful” technologies such as photography and film, citing ḥadīths that prohibit the depiction of animate figures</p>
<i>Ālāt-i jadīda</i>	<p>God gives human beings the ability to master and use the created world to their advantage</p> <p>All creatures and man-made devices, all ancient and modern inventions, are God's bounties that reflect the beauty of God's power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The world is both an object of utility and an object of contemplation <p>He eschews those modern tools that alienate humans from God</p> <p>A technological device's primary use or mode of utility determines its legal status</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The gramophone is considered makrūh because it is ordinarily used for musical entertainment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Therefore, it is unsuitable for recording or listening to Qur'an recitation

<p>Example</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sacred status of divine scripture demands not being utilized by devices that are ordinarily used for entertainment purposes - Aḥmad Razā Khān Barēlvī went as far as to designate the recording of the Qur'an by means of a phonograph as ḥarām qaṭ'i (absolutely forbidden) <p>Praises the worldly disinterest of the early Muslims, but also lauds the secular accomplishments of later Muslims</p> <p>Sees inventions by modern Europeans as copies and imitations of Muslim genius</p> <p>The Legislator (al-Shāri') based the commandments pertaining to the 'ibādāt on empirical observations (ẓawāhir) so that everyone – the elite and the masses, the literate and the illiterate, the urbane person and the desert-dweller – might execute the commandments with ease</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Times of prayers can be ascertained from the natural cycle of day and night
<p>Issue of the loudspeaker in prayer</p> <p>Mukabbirūn</p>	<p>In the Ḥanafī School, prayer becomes invalid if the imām listens to and follows the corrections of a non-muqtaḍī</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The muqtaḍī's prayer becomes invalid when the muqtaḍī transitions from one posture to another based on the audible instructions of someone other than the imām - Persons who amplify the instructions of the imām with their own voices - Permitted based on ḥadīth reports <p>صَلَّى بِنَا رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ وَأَبُو بَكْرٍ خَلْفَهُ، فَإِذَا كَبَّرَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ كَبَّرَ أَبُو بَكْرٍ لِيَسْمَعُنَا</p> <p>Is the sound of the loudspeaker really the voice of the imām?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Only the voice of a legal subject (mukallaf) is legally binding - Ḥusayn Aḥmad concluded that the loudspeaker's sound is not to be equated with the imām's voice and is thus impermissible - Ashraf 'Alī left the matter contingent on scientific expertise and issued a cautious fatwā of impermissibility after receiving inconclusive reports from experts on the matter <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notable that a Deobandī scholar was willing to base fatwā on secular – and modern – knowledge - Shabbīr Aḥmad 'Usmānī - while the most cautious (aḥwaṭ) approach is to avoid the use of the loudspeaker, the congregational prayer performed with the device cannot be labeled invalid - Muhammad Shafī' argues that obeying the voice of a mukallaf is different from acting in response to the sound of an inanimate object <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Actions are attributed only to human beings and not to objects or devices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Homicide is attributed to the person who fires the rifle, not to the rifle

<p>Reasons given in <i>Ālāt-i jadīda</i> why loudspeakers should be avoided</p>	<p>Loudspeakers often fail in mosques due to which congregants would not hear the imām's voice anyways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - It is better to appoint some congregants to serve as mukabbirūn <p>Some Muslim communities may not have the resources to install loudspeakers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of the device in some mosques and not others could divide the community along classist and elitist lines <p>Loudspeakers in mosques close to each other may create a bewildering cacophony</p>
<p>Position of Muhammad Shafī'</p>	<p>Use of loudspeaker does not invalidate the imām's or the congregant's prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consulted "experts" who were unanimous in declaring the sound transmitted by a loudspeaker to be an amplification of the human voice - Showed that obedience to someone outside of salāh (ittibā'at al-khārij) is a contested issue for Ḥanafī jurists <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responding to a greeting with a hand gesture does not invalidate the ritual prayer - Responding to the vocal instruction of a latecomer by making space for him or her does not invalidate prayer