Taking Lessons from the Prophet in Times of War

Muḥammadan Images during the Afghan Resistance (ca. 1978–92)

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On 26 April 1978, the Leninist Khalq faction of the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA), led by former journalist Nūr Muḥammad Tarakī (assassinated 1358SH/1979), seized power in a coup against the government of Muḥammad Dāvūd Khān (assassinated 1357SH/1978), euphemistically called the “Ṣawr Revolution”, and established the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan.¹ With this, the more than a decade-long tug-of-war between anti-religious leftists and emphatically religious forces in the country had reached a first culmination point. Almost instantly, the PDPA forces started to quell any potential resistance to their regime with brute force, culminating in the massacre of over a thousand villagers in Keṛālah in the north-eastern province of Kunar nearly exactly a year after the coup. The armed resistance to the PDPA regime, which emerged in response,² soon evolved into a complex mesh of traditional ad hoc militias in rural Pashtun communities (*laṣkarūnah*; sing. *laṣkar*), well-organised Islamist organisations of urban³ provenance, and armed outfits with social as well as ideological ties into both of the former. Moreover, this mesh also became almost instantly – although to substantially variant degrees – a pawn in the geopolitical manoeuvrings of numerous governments in the Age of the Cold War, which became even more severe after the Soviet military intervention in the country on Christmas Eve 1979. This invasion, in turn, resulted in the installation of a president more subservient to the interests of the CPSU leadership, as well as a continuous presence of Soviet armed forces in Afghanistan for an entire decade.

1 On the history of the PDPA, see Arnold, *Afghanistan's Two-Party Communism*.

2 See Saharī, *Jihād dar Kunar'hā*, 1–4.

3 The underlying concept of “urbanity” here follows Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, 3:2036, who defined it by ascribing to its modern-type inhabitants “across all social groups an urban ideological unity against the countryside, a unity which even the most modern nuclei in terms of civil function do not escape.... There is disgust and disdain for the ‘villager’, an implicit front against the demands of the countryside” (trans. J. A. Buttigieg).

The resistance which these events triggered was immediately presented as a *jihād*,⁴ thus casting it into an Islamic web of meaning that appealed to the conservative rural religiosity as well as to ideological precepts in the Islamist worldview, and could therefore guarantee a substantial mobilisation of male Afghans of diverse ethnic and socio-economic background.⁵ Unsurprisingly, discussions on the nature of *jihād* and the legal conditions for it figure prominently in the many periodic publications issued by the various carriers of the Resistance in a wide range of languages.⁶ While, perhaps for pragmatic reasons, there appears little disagreement in this matter, this is not so the case in the surprisingly sparse references to the Prophet Muḥammad during that period. I therefore propose that a closer look at these various references will provide insight into the diverse ideological underpinnings of the various factions involved, and allows to finally class them roughly into two major camps: “Islamists”, on the one hand, and what I will call “Frontier Deobandīs”, on the other. Both factions are, of course, ideal-typical:⁷ in reality, they overlapped more often than not, making a clear classification of any given militia challenging. Yet, I claim that my ideal-typical categories still carry some currency, as they reflect also distinct origins, social embeddedness, and frames of reference, ultimately including images of the Prophet.

In the following, I shall first map the various groups involved in the Afghan Resistance, already presenting them along the divide into “Islamists” and “Frontier Deobandīs”. Next, the respective images on the Prophet Muḥammad will be fleshed out, to be followed by an attempt to explain the differences between them in a kind of *longue durée* perspective. I have set the time frame

4 For example, Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥaqqānī, one of the protagonists in this chapter, was reported by his followers to have declared *jihād* already in response to Dāvūd Khān's own coup d'état in April 1973; see Khān, “Pah Afghānistān ke dā jihād dā lumṛanī ‘amaliyāt”, 19. In this regard, we need to bear in mind the by and large uncritically supportive attitude of Pashtun borderland tribes for the Barakzay monarchy (1826–1973), vis-à-vis competing political forces. See, for example, Khan, “The Pashtoon Resistance”, 67–69.

5 This is based on my own review of almost 2,000 obituaries for (exclusively male) resistance fighters from between 1980 and 1992, published in various periodicals during the Resistance by most of those militias that enjoyed substantial logistic and financial support from the governments of the USA, Pakistan, Iran, and Saudi Arabia.

6 See Fuchs, “Glossy Global Leadership”.

7 While it should go without saying that such categories are necessarily bound to fail an identical representation of complex and contingent empirical entities, the oftentimes rather lax employment of categories such as “Islamist”, which leads to widespread erroneous assumptions that they represent realities in a positivist fashion, suggests otherwise. By emphatically stressing the ideality of my descriptive categories, I wish to explicitly stress that my explanatory approach is a rather typecasting one, which necessarily confines the extent of my own analysis.

1978–92 deliberately, as after the successful overthrowing of the regime of the *Ḥizb-i Vaṭan*, successor to the PDPA, by 1992 the impact of views and argument developed in militant Islamic circles in the MENA region would become more discernible in the wider Hindukush region, thanks to an ever-growing contingent of especially Arab militant exiles to the conveniently hard-to-control region.

15.1 Mapping the Afghan Resistance

For many people in predominantly rural Afghanistan the PDPA coup constituted only the culmination of a process of gentrification of the entire country that was conducted from Kabul. This process can be traced back to the reign of King Amānallāh of the Barakzī tribe within the Durrānī confederation in the early twentieth century, during which the monarch stipulated a programme of modernisation that, after all, remained confined to the larger cities only.⁸ The establishment of the – once again predominantly urban – PDPA regime and the subsequent Soviet invasion in December 1979, finally, offered a legitimate reason for concerted armed resistance.

Those who took up arms in opposition were of very diverse background and driven by variant motivations. Still, at least three clusters of actors can be ideal-typically established which, on the ground, interacted more often than not and begot countless hybrid forms both in terms of organisation as well as underlying inclinations. First are traditionally conservative rural communities, for a long time detached from the various agendas of whoever was in charge in Kabul. The PDPA strategy to develop these regions, many of which in the dominantly tribal Pashtun regions along the foothills of the Hindukush, was to mock the perceived backwardness of its respective population and to see through anti-religious and counter-traditional measures by force of arms. The religiosity in these regions was strongly shaped by forms of subaltern piety,⁹ which

8 See, for example, Askar, “The Will Not to Count”, where he discusses the controversial top-down introduction of administrative core measures during Amānallāh’s reign, such as the population census, the allocation of street names and house numbers, and the related introduction of central services such as the provision of electrical energy and water.

9 I am certainly acknowledging the heavy baggage that this term comes with, from the “classic subalterne” in Gramsci’s *Quaderni del carcere*, via the so-called Subaltern Studies Group of the 1980s and 1990s, which includes also Gayatri Spivak’s seminal, yet controversial, essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988). Still, this term has been deliberately selected as a purely analytical category against the less flexible concept of “(socio-economic) class” to grasp the lower strata of Pashtun society both in the rural as well as urban context. I understood

also included prominently pious visitations of the graves of locally acknowledged saints as well as the belief in the miraculous powers of amulets;¹⁰ their social organisation strongly gender segregated, yet idealised as acephalous.¹¹ Religious authority pivoted primarily on the authority of a Sufi shaykh and his local socio-religious infrastructure, here first and foremost basic education (*tarbiyat*) and feeding the poor (*langar*);¹² their importance for the sociopolitical, however, has been well recognised by the local and imperial powerholders who have subsequently attempted to tie those Sufi *shuyūkh* closer to their own circles, furthering their own respective interests.¹³ Yet, whatever their proclivities towards or against worldly power, it were quite often these local religious dignitaries who would translate distinct political agendas – either those of their political patrons or their own – into rallying innumerable and oftentimes only locally active tribal militias (*laṣkarūnah*) whose objective was

“subaltern” here as a relational one to that of “elite” and entirely context bound: who might be “subaltern” in one constellation can well be “elite” in another. Moreover, and much in line with the current state of discussion of this term (see e.g. Ludden, “A Brief History of Subalternity”, esp. 19ff; Green, “Rethinking the Subaltern”), subalternity does by no means deny voice or agency – in fact, as stated early on by Chakrabarty, “Invitation to a Dialogue”, 376, it reflects “the composite culture of resistance to and acceptance of domination and hierarchy”. This definition appears useful, as it can also account for the fact that subaltern actors buy well into the same coercive framework as elites, and are not immune from elitist tendencies as well.

- 10 For such religious practices, see Marsden, *Living Islam*, esp. 157–92.
- 11 The rather romantic image of Pashtun society as an essentially acephalous one owes much to the otherwise pioneering work of Barth, *Political Leadership among Swat Pathans*, 12 and 104–27, on which the author revised his position somewhat in *Features of Person and Society in Swat*, 121–81. For the issue of all-comprehensive gender segregation in Pashtun rural communities, which already disenchant the myth of acephalousness, see Grima, *Secrets from the Field*.
- 12 See Wieland-Karimi, *Islamische Mystik in Afghanistan*, 147–51 and esp. 161; Caron, “Sufism and Liberation”, 138ff. and 144.
- 13 This insight requires us to employ a modified image of the Sufi shaykh and his sociopolitical integrative potential: at least in the regional context under review, their close- or aloofness from political power led to opposing socio-economic constituencies. Indeed, harsh criticism against *shuyūkh* who have compliably submitted to the pull of political power gave therefore rise to severe criticism by those remaining exclusively dependent on their spiritual capital. This, in fact, had been the case already when Aḥmad Shāh Durrānī (r. 1747–72) tried to tie Pashtun *shuyūkh* of various provenance to his court in Kandahar; a more contemporary case in point is that of Sayyid Amīn al-Ḥasanāt (d. 1379/1960), the Pīr Ṣāhib of Mānkī Sharīf some twenty miles east of Nowshera, who would even act in the Pashtun communities as an agent of the first Pakistani government and its military apparatus. See Kākākhel, *Pīr ṣāhib-i Mānkī-yi sharīf Sayyid Amīn al-Ḥasanāt*, 99–106.

first and foremost to regain the authority over their communal affairs, including religious ones, from the grips of the imperial central government.¹⁴

The other two ideal-typical clusters are, in fact, those who are in focus of the following exposition, with at least partially similar dismissive views of local beliefs and practices especially in the rural communities as the PDPA and its various Marxist, Leninist, and Maoist ancillaries. The first one, in fact, originated in the very same urban and educational environment as the PDPA, and responded to similar societal problems in an – ostensibly – diametrically opposed fashion: the “Islamists”. In the late 1950s, a first Islamist circle began to form at Kabul University around Ghulām Muḥammad Niyāzī (presumably killed 1398/1978), then professor at the Shari‘a Faculty, which included later militia commanders Burhān al-Dīn Rabbānī (assassinated 1432/2011), ‘Abd al-Rabb Rasūl Sayyāf (b. 1364/1945) and also, though more loosely, students of engineering Gulbuddīn Hikmatyār (b. 1366/1947) and Aḥmad Shāh Mas‘ūd (assassinated 1422/2001). Niyāzī had embraced Islamist thought during a two-year study trip to Cairo, where he got acquainted with the Jamā‘at al-Ikhwān al-Muslimīn (JIM) during a time of state persecution for the alleged assassination attempt on President Nasser in October 1954.¹⁵ Only a few years later, his principal students Rabbānī and Sayyāf followed suit and earned master’s degrees from al-Azhar in Islamic philosophy and *‘ulūm al-ḥadīth*, respectively.¹⁶ In the following years, especially Rabbānī and the circle of students that formed around him drew systematic inspiration from the thought of early Egyptian Muslim Brethren,¹⁷ while Niyāzī laid the foundations of an Islamist

14 A prominent representative of this cluster within the Afghan Resistance was Malik Muḥammad Zarīn (assassinated 1432/2011), a landowner of the Mashvānī tribe of Binshāhī in Lower Dīr on the Pakistani side of the border with Afghanistan, with property on either side of the borderline. Zarīn entered into coalitions with about everyone deemed useful for achieving his locally and ethnically confined goals. Personal information by a member of a family of *masharān* from Upper Dīr, Bārah Galī (Pakistan), 10 August 2017.

15 See “Yādī az ustad Ghulām Muḥammad Niyāzī mu‘assis-i Nahẓat-i Islāmī dar Afghānistān”, *Miṣāq-i Khūn* 1/2 (1359SH/1401H), 8ff.; “Yādī az ustad pohānid ‘Niyāzī”, *Miṣāq-i Khūn* 1/5 (1360SH/1401H), 13, and 1/6–7 (1360SH/1401H), 12ff.

16 See “Mukhtaṣar zindigī-nāmah-i ustād Burhān al-Dīn Rabbānī – rahbar-i Jam‘iyyat-i Islāmī-yi Afghānistān”, *Miṣāq-i Khūn* 1/2 (1359SH/1401H), 21ff., here 21; also ‘Abd Rabbih, *‘Abd Rabb al-Rasūl Sayyāf*, 24.

17 See, for example, Dr Sayyid Muḥammad Mūsā Tavānā, “Junbish’hā-yi islāmī dar pīch va khamm-i tārikh”, *Miṣāq-i Khūn* 1/4 (1359SH/1401H), 11ff.; 1/5 (1359SH/1401H), 9–12; 1/7 (1360SH), 10ff.; 1/9–10 (1360SH), 15–7; 1/11 (1360SH), 27–30; 1/12 (1360SH), 8–11; 2/1 (1360SH), 8ff.; 2/3 (1360SH), 17ff.; and 2/4 (1360SH), 19–22; Engineer ‘Abd al-Vadūd “Khālīd”: “Ikhvān al-Muslimīn dar masīr-i da‘vat”, *Ḥaqq Pācūn* 2/12–13 (1367SH), 54–56, 2/14–15 (1367SH), 51–54, 2/18 (1368SH), 50–52; “Maṣāḥibah-yi kih murshid-i ‘āmm-i Jam‘iyyat-i Ikhvān al-Muslimīn pīrāmūn-i jihād-i Afghānistān šurat giriftah ast”, *Ḥaqq Pācūn* 2/8 (1367SH),

jurisprudence in Afghanistan with his principle work *Ma'ākhiz-i Duvvum-i Fiqh-i Islāmī*.¹⁸ This way, Islamist core concepts, such as prominently that of the "Islamic revolution" (*inqilāb-i islāmī*) and the "establishment of the government of divine justice" (*iqāmah-yi ḥukūmat-i 'adl-i ilāhī*), were introduced to the wider Islamic discourse in pre-communist Afghanistan,¹⁹ but pointed already to a high potential for conflict with the locally established and maintained forms of subaltern religiosity in a rural setting. To the Islamists, the armed resistance to an emphatically anti-religious and oppressive regime offered a golden opportunity to pursue their long-term goal, namely, the establishment of a normatively grounded Islamic polity, which would necessarily clash with the established forms of Muslim religiosity in rural communities throughout Afghanistan.²⁰ Yet, for the sake of argument, I shall confine my further exposition predominantly to Pashtun Islamist circles.

The third ideal-typically construed cluster of (Pashtun) actors in the Afghan Resistance, finally, originates largely in the same milieu as the locally active tribal militias, yet share, at least to an extent, the elitist attitudes of Islamist vis-à-vis local religious beliefs and practices: those who represent what I call "Frontier Deobandīyat". This reformist current was carried into the "Pashtun borderland",²¹ and from there further into Afghanistan and Eastern Iran,²² by the anti-colonial agitation of Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan, better known by his epithet "Shaykh al-Hind" (d. 1339/1920), and a circle of students, many of whom natives

6–8. All these and other references to the JIM in the periodicals of the Islamist organisations in the Afghan Resistance defy to an extent the assessment of Fuchs, "Glossy Global Leadership", 189, that the ideological reference of these organisations to the JIM was less substantial than generally assumed.

18 See Niyāzī, *Ma'ākhiz-i duvvum-i fiqh-i islāmī*, esp. 30–149. Hermeneutically significant, other than Islamist theorists like Abū l-A'la Mawdūdī, Niyāzī stressed the indispensable importance of the Prophetic *sunna* as enshrined in the six canonical collections of *ḥadīth*. Mawdūdī, in turn, had argued that legal precepts can, and should ideally, be derived exclusively from the Qur'ānic revelation. See Hartung, *A System of Life*, 83–90.

19 See, for example, Rabbānī, *Irshād-i jihād*, 126 (here in a speech delivered to his partisans in Peshawar in April 1983); Rabbānī, *Amūkhtānīhāyī*: this transcript of a lengthy speech was first published in 1360SH/1981–82, and was earlier serialised in the JIA-journal *Misāq-i Khūn* 1/11 (1360SH), 12–7; 1/9–10 (1360SH), 24–28; 2/1 (1360SH), 12–16; 2/2 (1360SH), 9–11; 2/3 (1360SH), 9–11.

20 The various Islamist organisations within the Afghan Resistance comprised all ethnic, linguistic, and denominational groups in Afghanistan. For a breakdown, see Olesen, *Islam and Politics*, 281–85.

21 An attempt in theoretically sustaining this notion beyond the common angle of international relations is Hartung, "Of Pious Missions", 3–5.

22 For Afghanistan, see Olesen, *Islam and Politics*, 46 and 107ff.; for south-eastern Iran, see Dudoignon, *The Baluch, Sunnism and the State in Iran*, 3–5 and 149–70.

of the Pashtun borderland with further-reaching connections to local religious authorities.²³ They succeeded in casting a net of *madāris* over the region, its most significant one being the Dār al-‘Ulūm Ḥaqqāniyyah in Aḳorāh Khaṭṭak near Peshawar, established in 1947 by ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq Aḳorāvī (d. 1409/1988), a student of the Shaykh al-Hind’s foremost disciple Ḥusayn Aḥmad Madanī (d. 1377/1957).²⁴ Two Pashtuns from Afghanistan who, in turn, had studied with ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq even before the official inauguration of the Dār al-‘Ulūm would eventually emerge as leading representatives of Frontier Deobandiyyat during the armed resistance against the PDPA regime and its Soviet allies: Muḥammad Yūnus Khālīṣ (d. 1427/2006) and Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥaqqānī (d. 1440/2018).²⁵ Further spiritual nourishment was provided by Pashtun Deobandī scholars who set up shop in Karachi since the late 1970s;²⁶ go-between was Sayyid Shīr ‘Alī Shāh Madanī (d. 1437/2015), one further fellow student of Khālīṣ and Ḥaqqānī.²⁷

Of all these actors, Khālīṣ at least turns out difficult to pin down.²⁸ True to the common image of a highly flexible and pragmatic borderland actor, he defies categorisation as either a clear-cut representative of Frontier Deobandiyyat or Islamism proper, but, in fact, manoeuvred constantly between both poles. Having himself studied in Cairo, it is quite likely that Khālīṣ knew Niyāzī, who had returned from there only a little earlier. While in charge of a religious programme on Kabul Radio, Khālīṣ had his Dari translation of Sayyid Quṭb’s seminal *al-‘Adāla al-ijtimā’iyya fī l-islām* published,²⁹ to be followed by

23 See Hartung, “The Praiseworthiness of Divine Beauty”, 355–59; Hartung, “Of Pious Missions”, 11–14.

24 See Aḳorāvī, *Fatāwā-yi ḥaqqāniyyah*, 1:100ff.; Ḥaqqānī, *Savāniḥ-i shaykh al-ḥadīṣ Ḥaḡrat Mawlānā ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq*, 43–58.

25 See ‘Azīz Allāh, *Də Mawlavī Khālīṣ žvand, fann aw and*, 1ff.; “al-Ḥājj Mawlavī Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥaqqānī lah (al-Naṣiḥah) sarah pah marakah ke: čangah chih malgarī millatūnah də kufri ṭaqatūno tar tāšir lāndəy dī gadūn hič birūnī qawt tah də hevād pah dākhihi chārūkəy”, *Manba’ al-Jihād* [Pashto] 2/5 (1369SH/1411H), 36–42 and 52, here 41.

26 Karachi had become a major destination for Afghan refugees after the PDPA coup d’état in April 1978; its *dīnī madāris*, predominantly of Deobandī provenance, serving as major sanctuaries for the economically (and also politically) disadvantaged arrivals from Afghanistan. See Gayer, *Karachi*, 163–204; on the systematic political discrimination of Afghan refugees by the Pakistani state authorities, see Alimīa, “Performing the Afghanistan-Pakistan Border”.

27 See “al-Sīra al-dhātīyya li-l-shaykh al-Duktūr Shīr ‘Alī Shāh al-Madanī”, in Madanī, *Yād*, 17–19, here 17.

28 The same, in fact, applies to one more important leader in the Resistance, Muḥammad Nabī Muḥammadi (d. 1423/2002), leader of the Ḥarakat-i Inqilāb-i Islāmī. I had to leave him out of this discussion, because at the time of writing in early 2019 I was still lacking the relevant text material.

29 Published as *Sayyid Quṭb: Islām va ‘adālat-i ijtimā’ī*, 2 vols (Kabul, Anjuman-i tarbiyyat va afkār, 1339SH).

further translations from works of leading figures of the JIM, such as *al-Dīn wa-l-ḥaḍāra al-insāniyya* by Muḥammad al-Bahī (d. 1402/1982).³⁰ While the relationship between Khālīṣ and the Niyāzī circle in Kabul would remain only informal, from about 1968 Khālīṣ would become more formally involved in a similar circle in Jalalabad.³¹ Yet, true to his origins in the socially conservative rural environments of the western Pashtun borderland, Khālīṣ remained at least partly distinct from his Islamist compatriots in the cities.

15.2 The Prophet as Strategist: The Primacy of This World

For Islamically inspired actors, the PDPA regime since April 1978 and the subsequent Soviet invasion in December 1979 offered a legitimate reason to armed resistance. Yet, to the Islamists who grew out of the university campuses of the larger Afghan cities it also offered a chance to pursue their long-term goal, namely, the establishment of a normatively grounded Islamic polity. Consequently, references to the Islamic heritage, prominently including those to the Prophet Muḥammad, were usually made with this objective in view.

Perhaps the bluntest reference in this regard was made in the autumn of 1988 in *Shafaq*, the magazine of the Hikmatyār-led Hizb-i Islāmī (ḤiI-Ḥ), in which the Prophet was presented as a military strategist only, from whom to learn would be similar than to study, let us say, Carl von Clausewitz (d. 1831). From the references to the punitive expeditions against the (Jewish) Banū Qurayṣa and the Banū Laḥyān, the conquest of Mecca and the military campaign of the early Muslims against the Byzantines at Tabūk,³² author Muḥammad Raḥīm “Kanjār” distilled six tactical principles, which, because of their attribution to the Prophet, were ascribed authoritative status. Yet, the six principles are hardly exceptional: they revolve much around speed and surprise in attack, provided for by the choice of preferably difficult territory and moment of time for striking from an unexpected direction. Perhaps only two principles have wider implications: the first consists in the deliberate concealment of one’s strength and determination, the second in the use of surprise means in military engagement.

30 Published as *Muḥammad al-Bahī: Dīn aw insānī tamaddun* (Kabul, Dawlatī maṭba‘ah, 1351SH).

31 See ‘Azīz Allāh, *Də Mawlawī Khālīṣ žvand, funn aw and*, 27–33; also Ṭalāyī, *Khālīṣ Bābā*, 33–36.

32 See “Khanjar”, Muḥammad Raḥīm: “Də Rasūl Allāh – šallā Allāh ‘alayhi wa-sallam – jangī tāktik”, *Shafaq* 2nd series 3/3–4 (1367SH), 33ff. All these events are well attested in the *sīra* and *maghāzī* literature: see, prominently, Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawīyya*, 2:233–54, 279–81, 389–426, and 515–31; Wāqidi, *al-Maghāzī*, 496–521, 535–37, 780–871, and 985–1002.

Especially the latter had been liberally employed by later militant Jihādī theorists who either developed their thought during their participation in the Afghan Resistance-turned-militancy from around 1987 onwards, or have turned out to be sources of inspiration for increasingly radical militants in the Pashtun borderland. Thus, for example, the Egyptian known, among various aliases, as Sayyid Imām al-Sharīf (b. 1369/1950) highlighted in *al-'Umda fī i'dād al-'udda li-l-jihād fī sabīl Allāh*, written during his participation in the Afghan Resistance, the legal permissibility, even commendability, of using civilian non-combatants strategically as protective shields (*tatarrus*),³³ a view that would be further refined by Abū Yahyā al-Libī (killed 1433/2012) during his active time with factions of the Tahrīk-i ʿĀlibān-i Pākistān (TTP) in North Waziristan.³⁴ More disturbingly in line with the tactical precept to employ unknown means is a fatwa by Saudi Arabian scholar Nāṣir b. Ḥamad al-Fahd (b. 1388/1968), which would become widely read in Pashtun militant circles,³⁵ and in which he legally justified the employment of weapons of mass destruction by establishing an analogy to the Prophet's own practice. Muḥammad himself was reported to have used innovative technology such as the catapult during the campaign against the people of ʿĀʾif,³⁶ ordered the deliberate destruction of an enemy's means of living when having the date palm trees of the Jewish Banū Naḍīr burned down in retaliation for their alleged breaking of the covenant of Medina,³⁷ and had wells of the opposition poisoned and lethal animals, such as scorpions and snakes, employed in warfare.³⁸

For other Pashtun Islamist representatives of the Afghan Resistance, meanwhile, such military strategic considerations appear to have been of lesser importance, and they would address another virulent issue through the prism

33 See Ibn 'Abd al-'Azīz, *al-'Umda fī i'dād al-'udda*, 30, 33–35, 86ff., 303, 313, 328ff., 357ff., and 372ff. Sayyid Imām's predominant legal reference here is Ibn Qudāma's *al-Mughnī*. See also Fuchs, *Proper Signposts for the Camp*, 83–85; Nedza, "Takfir im militanten Salafismus", 92, 174, and 235 n.63.

34 Libī's infamous treatise on the subject, released after his escape from US captivity in December 2005, is titled *al-Tatarrus fī l-jihād al-mu'āṣir*. For an analysis of that text, see Brachman and Warius, "Abu Yahya al-Libi's 'Human Shield in Modern Jihad'".

35 The text is included in a widespread collection of Arabic Jihādī primers, named *Ḥaqībat al-mujāhid (II)*, compiled under the aegis of Abū Muḥammad al-Maqdisī (b. 1379/1959), which used to be available on TTP-affiliated websites for download. Its Urdu translation by Ḥafīz 'Ammār Ṣiddīqī had been published in June 2004 as *Kuffār par 'amm tabāhī musallīḥ karne kī shar'ī ḥāyṣiyyat* (Lahore, Dār al-Ishā'at al-Islāmiyya).

36 See Fahd, *Risāla fī ḥukm*, 12ff.; compare Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-kubrā*, 9:144 (*ḥadīth* 18,119); Majd al-Dīn ibn Taymiyya, *al-Muntaqā fī l-aḥkām al-shar'iyya*, 741 (*aḥādīth* 3,305–7).

37 See Fahd, *Risāla fī ḥukm*, 11ff.; for his references, see 'Asqalānī, *Faṭḥ al-bārī*, 4:544ff.; 'Aynī, *Umdat al-qārī*, 14:375.

38 See Fahd, *Risāla fī ḥukm*, 15–21; for one of his numerous references, see Shāfi'ī, *al-Umm*, 5:591.

of the Prophetic precedent instead: the justification of the leadership claims of the Islamist militias and their respective command. It is somewhat remarkable that this subject was highlighted predominantly in the early days of the Resistance,³⁹ while the only explicit statement in the later years appeared once again in *Ḥaqq Pācūn* of the Ittihad-i Islāmī barā-yi Āzādī-yi Afghānistān (IIAA), led by Sayyāf,⁴⁰ suggesting that at that time they were about the only ones among the militias seeing a need to justify leadership claims in recourse to the Prophet. The argument runs in full conformity with the classical Islamist interpretation of Q 24:55, in which God declares those who believe and work righteous deeds to be His deputies on earth.⁴¹ For the anonymous author of this short article in question, the benchmark for believing and working righteous deeds is the Prophet Muḥammad,⁴² which, so he concludes, had been most comprehensively embraced by the Pashtun *mujāhidīn* in the Afghan Resistance. At the same time, he dissociates their religiously justified leadership claims from mundane rule (*salṭanat*; *vākmānī*), which, so I assume, is implicitly aimed at the PDPA rule as well as the preceding parliamentary system under Muḥammad Davūd Khān and the Barakzay monarchy, with its last representative in Zāhir Shāh (d. 1386SH/2007) then bidding his time in Italian exile.⁴³ Here, too, the author follows standard Islamist rhetoric: while the intentions of even the PDPA cadres may be sound, the foundations on which their intentions rest are not, and such political systems consequently bound to fail. Therefore, following in the footsteps of the politician Muḥammad is the only guarantor for a stable and benevolent sociopolitical framework.

Finally, especially in the later stages of the Resistance, when the *mujāhidīn* made substantial progress not least thanks to US material support, Islamist actors now saw a golden opportunity to target the overall social fabric of Pashtun society which would necessarily clash with the alternative Islamist model of society that was to form the basis of the Islamic state to come. The matter was urgent: after all, it also needed to be determined how to deal with cadres and supporters of the PDPA and its ally, once the victory had been achieved. This, in

39 See, for instance, Sayyid Abū l-Ḥasan [‘Alī] Nadwī, “Də Payghambar – ş – aw siyāsī līdar farq (trans. Faḡl Mawlā “Latūn”), *Shafaq* 1/1 (1358SH), 14ff. and 44.

40 See “Naṛivāl də payghambar – şallā Allāh ‘alayhi wa-sallam – də uşūlo payravə təh tarbal har vakht nən zyātah aṛtiyā laray”, *Ḥaqq Pācūn* 1/1 (1364SH/1406H), 4ff.

41 See here the elaboration of the *khilāfat Allāh*, vis-à-vis the historical *khilāfat rasūl Allāh*, by Mawdūdī as a classical Islamist core author in Hartung, *A System of Life*, 105–10.

42 See also “Kashshāf”, “Də muḥammadi risālat riḡtinūlī”, *Ḥaqq Pācūn* 2/14–15 (1378SH), 28ff.

43 It seems that the anonymous author was well aware of the still immense support throughout Afghanistan for Zāhir Shāh and a return to the monarchy, which for many Afghans with no direct personal experience of this further distant past represented an idealised period of relative public security and stability.

fact, is the context of a third Islamist reference to the Prophet, which, however, remained rather implicit in his portrayal as perfect role model.

In the editorial to the first issue of ҲиЛ-Ҳ's *Shafaq* magazine, the story of the beginning of Muḥammad's public preaching has been retold, cast here as a challenge of an oppressive aristocratic (*mulūkī*) or ecclesiocratic (*dārānī*) political system, which required upright personalities such as Muḥammad's early companion 'Abd Allāh b. Mas'ūd daring to stand up for their faith in public. Still, the story of the early Islamic *da'wa* is not one of humility and forbearance, but rather of pugnaciousness, especially when it got correlated with contemporary – in this case Soviet – imperialism (*isti'mār*).⁴⁴ The pragmatic sociopolitical culture in the Pashtun borderland was, by inference, blamed for a lax attitude towards political systems other than an Islamic one, which is why steadfast Muslims, that is, those organised in the ҲиЛ-Ҳ, need a systematic approach to redress this evil.

More implicit still is the critique of traditional sociopolitical structures in the Pashtun borderland in an article by a certain "Kashshāf", once again published in the Pashto-language *Haqq Pācūn* of Sayyāf's IIAA.⁴⁵ On the surface, the author just narrated the story of the conversation between the Prophet's later companion Mughīra b. Shu'ba with Cyrus, the Patriarch of Alexandria (*al-muqawqis*), on Muḥammad's personality.⁴⁶ Yet, the historical context of the story conveys some meaning with regard to the question of tribal loyalty vis-à-vis commitment to the supra-tribal community of Medina under the leadership of the Prophet. Mughīra namely had travelled to Egypt alongside a delegation of the Banū Mālik of Ṭā'if and, enraged by what he perceived as disrespect towards him, killed them all. When offering a fifth of the booty to the Prophet, Muḥammad rejected it, presumably on the ground that they had not been killed under an Islamic framework, but in inner-tribal rivalry.⁴⁷

Given this wider context, resorting to a Prophetic example may well have served "Kashshāf" and his compatriots in the IIAA to challenge the centrality of tribal social patterns by reading the Prophetic precedence as a sociopolitical revolutionary programme, aiming at superimposing a more inclusive collective identity on the tribal ones prevalent in the Arab Peninsula during the formative period of Islam. This, it can be inferred, is also what would have to be overcome in Afghanistan, in order to, first, succeed in liberating the country

44 See "Jarliyo", "Payghām-i Shafaq", *Shafaq* 1/1 (1358SH), 4–8.

45 See "Kashshāf", "Də muḥammadi risālat riḡtīnūlī", *Haqq Pācūn* 2/14–15 (1378SH), 28ff.

46 A classical reference to this story is Ibn Ḥudayda, *al-Miṣbāh al-muḍīf*, 2:120–23.

47 The historical event, having taken place around the time of the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyya, is prominently attested in Wāqidi, *al-Maghāzī*, 962–67; also e.g. Dhahabī, *Sīyar a'lām al-nubalā'*, 3:23ff.

from the grip of the PDPA or its successor and its Soviet allies, and, second, to provide a normatively grounded perspective on nation-building.

The Prophet, however, can hardly be reduced to his role as statesman and leader of a political community. For other significant, though less Islamist, Pashtun actors in the Afghan Resistance the aspect of the Prophet as the soundest spiritual guide on the path to salvation was apparently more crucial than his combat tactics, his supra-tribal societal vision, and his political leadership.

15.3 The Prophet as Guide to Salvation: The Primacy of the Hereafter

Ostentatious, the matter of tribal loyalty vis-à-vis the commitment to the supra-tribal community of believers in Islam was of crucial importance also within the predominantly rural representatives of Frontier Deobandiyyat in its militant variety, here prominently the circles around Ḥaqqānī and Khālīṣ. I would even go as far as arguing that for these actors, deeply steeped in the tribal culture of the Pashtun borderland themselves, this issue was of much greater and immediate importance than to the Islamists with their socialisation in the urban and multi-ethnic environments of Kabul, Herat, or Peshawar. Especially those tribally organised ethnic Pashtuns within the Resistance found themselves in a dilemma quite similar to that of the early Muslim community under the leadership of the Prophet Muḥammad when confronted with their meanwhile hostile kinsfolk. Indeed, were the first Muslims not put in a conflict of loyalty when placed in a situation that caused them to militarily confront their own family members? Were not numerous of the *muhājirūn* quite reluctant to go to battle with the Meccans at Badr, as well as at Uḥud and the trench at Yathrib, and required some persuasion by the Prophet to at least ease that internal conflict?⁴⁸ Consequently, the issue of tribal loyalty and its conflict with the societal vision of the Prophet figured much more prominently in the publications of Frontier Deobandīs.

Yet, and this is a crucial difference to the images of the Prophet invoked by the Islamists, those by the Frontier Deobandīs were almost exclusively related to the early Meccan period in Muḥammad's career, and, thus, revolving rather around his religious mission than his statecraft. Still, this does not imply that the respective images of the Prophet purported by this particular faction within

48 See here the examples of 'Umayr b. Ḥumām and others, which Muḥammad solved by promising those who would die in action to immediately become martyrs and ascend to the heavens, as narrated in Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawiyya*, 1:627; see also Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, 3:14, 14, *ḥadīth* no. 1, 789; 1509–11, *ḥadīth* no. 1, 901.

the Afghan Resistance was entirely devoid of political allusions. Other than in the cases above, however, he is less presented as military commander and governor over a Muslim polity, but as reformer of the prevalent sociopolitical conditions in the Arab Peninsula. An anonymous author of the Žāzay tribe of Khost, a tribal configuration historically in direct competition with the Žadrān to which Ḥaqqānī belonged, wrote a lengthy piece in the latter's *Manba' al-Jihād* Pashto journal,⁴⁹ in which he castigated the sociopolitical, economic, and religious constitution of Mecca and the wider Ḥijāz prior to the advent of the Prophet.⁵⁰ Very much in line with the extraordinary status which the Prophet enjoyed in the rural Muslim communities of the Pashtun borderland,⁵¹ the author then continues to tell of the auspicious signs around the birth of Muḥammad which would later make it into what Katz calls the “*mawlid* narrative”.⁵² By doing so, he implicitly invoked a simple two-step teleological model of societal development which follows much the binary *jāhiliyya/islām* which became constitutive to Islamist systemic outlines,⁵³ although he goes not as far as establishing a new kind of *jāhiliyya* as antagonistically co-existing with Islam, which is what Islamists were, and are, doing. For him, the miracles surrounding the birth of Muḥammad are sufficient enough an indication that God had sent the ultimate saviour to end all the negative social, political, economic, and spiritual implications once and for all.

Other than the self-confident and urbane Islamists presented here, this is a subaltern voice which is well rooted in the cultural environment of the vast rural areas of the Pashtun borderland. In a terrain where the PDPA and its Soviet allies had patchy control at the best of times only, the adversary included prominently members of the local communities who showed signs of social, political, and religious infidelity. This has two major implications: a sociopolitical one, and a religious one. The first is strongly tied to the socio-economic, and therefore also political, stratification in the Pashtun borderland into what

49 There existed a distinct Arabic journal of the same name, beginning its publication in February 1990 and petering out some time after 1992.

50 See “Toriyālay Žāzay”: “Də Ḥazrat Muḥammad (s) nikmārghah milād də basharī narəy də najāt aw sa’adat zīray”, *Manba' al-Jihād* [Pashto] 2/3–4 (1369SH/1411H), 12–14 and 47.

51 See Hartung, “He’s Just a Man!”, 173–75.

52 See Katz, *The Birth of the Prophet Muḥammad*, 6–62. Interestingly, the fact that *Manba' al-Jihād* (Pashto) carried such a piece indicates that the relationship of the so-called Ḥaqqānī network with Arab volunteers in the later stages of the Afghan Resistance, many of whom would become infamous as beacons of al-Qā’ida and maintain theological and legal positions emphatically close to those of Ibn Taymiyya (d. 728/1328), was much more complex and ambivalent as currently admitted: see prominently Brown and Rassler, *Fountainhead of Jihad*, 59–127.

53 See Hartung, *A System of Life*, 62–72.

Akbar S. Ahmad calls “seniors” (*masharān*) and “have-nots” (*kasharān*),⁵⁴ while at the same time an illusive image of general equality in Pashtun communities is nourished and perpetuated. The former stratum is usually represented by the ranks of *khān* and *malik*, both distinguished by economic affluence and therefore also in possession of substantial social and political capital. Elsewhere I have argued that much of the religious mobilisation in the Pashtun borderland can be framed along this perpetual conflict between community leaders by virtue of material wealth and subalterns who emphasised their moral superiority instead.⁵⁵ In this claim the representatives of the subaltern ethical paradigm were, and still are, bridging over to the religious implication: against the social reality, in which status is tied to “wealth and progeny” (*māl wa-awlād*), they posit Q 48:14–15 to point out the irrelevance of worldly gains for the passage to eternal bliss in the hereafter. Chief advocates of this view since the early twentieth century have been those associated with “Deobandiyyat”;⁵⁶ and it is consequently maintained by its representatives in the Pashtun borderland. Alongside the socio-economic and political critique articulated by Deobandīs in the region went the standard agenda of religious reform that “Deobandiyyat” in general stood for. In deliberate continuity to the somewhat patronising activities of the early nineteenth-century *Ṭarīqah-yi Muḥammadiyyah* around Sayyid Aḥmad Barelvī and Shāh Ismāʿīl Dihlavī (both killed 1246/1831) in the Pashtun borderland,⁵⁷ this programme pivoted on the eradication of *shirk* and the realignment of religious beliefs and practices with the legal norms of Ḥanafī *fiqh*.

Both the sociopolitical and the religious criticism coincided in the basic assumption that the sociopolitical opportunism of the *masharān* provided for the erosion of apt religious norms, as well as leading the *kasharān*, who depended on them economically, to pay more heed to worldly matters than to the stable road map to salvation that the Qurʾān and the Prophetic *sunna* provide.⁵⁸ This is the starting point for references of the Pashtun Frontier Deobandīs within the Afghan Resistance to the Prophet Muḥammad, and in

54 See Ahmed, *Pukhtun Economy and Society*, 144.

55 See Hartung, “Of Pious Missions”.

56 See Hartung, “Of Pious Missions”; also Hartung, “The Praiseworthiness of Divine Beauty”.

57 See Hartung, “He’s Just a Man!”, 176–87.

58 The sharp division between the followers of economic and political elites and those of a Sufi shaykh uncorrupted by the temptations of political and material power, epitomised in the two distinct social spaces “men’s house” (*hujrah*) and “mosque/*khānaqāh*”, had already been stressed by Barth, *Political Leadership among Swat Pathans*, 52–63 and 71–103. His perhaps most succinct remark in that regard is that “some villagers stay away from the men’s house because they prefer to place exclusive trust in a Saint by joining the group which forms around him.... By creating a centre for instruction and conversation

this framework his *jihād* was never dedicated at enhancing his position as political head of the new Muslim polity or military genius, but as emphatic dissemination of the Qur'ānic message only, consisting first and foremost in the eradication of *shirk* and *kufṛ*.⁵⁹

Yet, adherents to Frontier Deobandiyyat were well aware that their respective criticism of the religiosity of those subaltern to them entails necessarily also a critique of the societal elite whose worldliness was clearly seen as the root of the evil.⁶⁰ Because of this more empathetic take on the sociopolitical structures in the Pashtun communities from the bottom up, it does not really surprise that the strategy derived from the Prophetic example was not in the first place military subjugation, but rather an emphatic invitation to reform along Qur'ānic lines (*da'vat*). In an earlier article in the Pashto journal *Manba' al-Jihād*, a certain Mawlānā Bashār stressed that the Prophet had clearly devised a course of action, and, because Muḥammad was portrayed as true enactment of especially the esoteric (*bāṭinī*) Qur'ānic principles, to faithfully follow his approach means to obey God's command. In this context, again, the early Meccan period was invoked, during which the Prophet admonished the "*masharān*" among the Quraysh to forsake their wrong ways and embrace the Qur'ānic message. In this context, the virtues of patience and persistence (*ṣabr*), sincerity (*ikhhlās*), and determination (*ʿazm* and *ḥazm*) became repeatedly stressed,⁶¹ not least by quoting the Prophet from around the time when he was exposed to the hostilities towards him by his fellow Meccans, because of his "publicising the *dīn* of God and calling thereto",⁶² saying: "By God, even if they put the sun in my right hand and the moon in my left hand on the condition that I abandon this matter, I will never abandon it until either God has made me victorious or I perish therein."⁶³

Khālīṣ went even further: in one of his poems, he tied sociopolitical status, "seniority" (*masharəy*), to religious obedience alone and castigates the boastful attachment to this world, stating that "on the Day of Resurrection, such *mashar* is a sinner", concluding that "who does not walk in the path of God Almighty,

in his house or in the local mosque, the Saint welds these separate devotees into a coordinated group" (56).

59 See Mawlānā "Bashār", "Də Ḥazrat payghambar – ʃallā Allāh ʿalayhi wa-sallam – jihādī risālat", *Manba' al-Jihād* [Pashto] 1/4–5 (1367SH/1410H), 11–16.

60 See, for example, "Farmān-i nabavī: Jis se allāh awr jo ilāh se nahīn kar milegā", *Nuṣrat al-Jihād* 1/2 (1411/1990), 8ff.

61 See, for example, "Farmān-i nabavī: Awr yah fakhriyyah bāt nahīn he", *Nuṣrat al-Jihād* 1/1 (1411/1990), 10 and 16.

62 Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawīyya*, 1:265.

63 Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra al-nabawīyya*, 266; quoted in Pashto translation in "Bashār" (see note 59), 14.

a *mashar* he is not / a *mashar* is a *mashar* only if steadfast in the path of God".⁶⁴ What that entails was somewhat elucidated in a series of articles, once more in the Pashto *Manba' al-Jihād*, on a number of events in the Prophet's life, again during the early Meccan period.⁶⁵ All the examples presented in this series suggest that verbal propagation of the correct faith and emphatic calls to observance was indeed the preferred mode of working inside the borderland communities.

Yet, Mawlānā Bashār, in line with his above reading of the Prophet's *sīra*, also allowed for the application of force in two instances: one, whenever words do not yield an insight into the truth, and another whenever the community of believers is under attack itself.⁶⁶ While the latter is common sense in legal deliberations on "defensive *jihād*", the former requires some more consideration, because, after all, one needs to establish the point in time when to hope for the words to sink in is over and force needs to be applied. Here we seem to enter a grey area, because this particular question did not get answered in recourse to the Prophet as role model. In fact, this is the area where *da'vat*-focussed "Deobandī pietism"⁶⁷ appears to overlap with both communal customs of tribal warfare and the above-outlined Islamist attitude towards *jihād*, a tightrope act perhaps most emblematically performed by Khālīṣ.

Besides his prose works, which are seemingly influenced by his readings of Islamist classics, his poetry is more ambiguous. There, Khālīṣ employed a semantic field which resonated well with an Islamist readership, using such Islamist core concepts as "revolution" and "Islamic governance", and reflecting the systemic battle with other political ideologies of the day.⁶⁸ Besides, however, Khālīṣ also spoke to a distinctly Pashtun tribal audience, in which common notions such as the sovereignty of the Pashtun lands or its tradition of stubborn resistance to any form of subjugation are equally invoked as references to distinct acts which, in the cultural context of the Pashtun borderland,

64 Khālīṣ, *Damūnah aw dāne*, 186ff. (*Mashar-tob*), lines 6 and 11ff.; also 'Azīz Allāh, *Də Mawlawī Khālīṣ žvand, fann aw and*, 182.

65 See Abū Hārūn, trans., "Də Rasūl Allāh də žvand las vražay (I): Də Ka'bay dodanay joṛūlo vraž", *Manba' al-Jihād* [Pashto] 3/4 (1370SH), 44–46; "(II): Də rūmbanī vahy vraž", *Manba' al-Jihād* [Pashto] 3/5 (1370SH), 18–21; "(III): Də Rīm də Tāyif vraž", *Manba' al-Jihād* [Pashto] 3/7–8 (1370SH), 46–48. Unfortunately, none of these articles bears any indication from which source and language Abū Hārūn had prepared his translations.

66 See "Bashār" (see note 59), 16.

67 See Hartung, "The Praiseworthiness of Divine Beauty", 359–61.

68 See Khālīṣ, *Damūnah aw dāne*, e.g. 49ff. (*Islām asāsī qānūn*), 61ff. (*Inqilāb*), 84 (*Islām aw soshalezem*), 91 (*Soshalezem aw islām*), 108ff. (*Də Istī'mār nawkarān čok dī?*), 120ff. (*Də Jihād mawqī' dah*), and 124ff. (*Qur'ānī hukm*).

all necessitate and justify an armed response.⁶⁹ In this, Khālīṣ's approach coincided somewhat with that of Faḏl Vahīd, the "Ḥājji Šāhib" of Turangzay (d. 1356/1937) in the Peshawar Valley, an early twentieth-century representative of Frontier Deobandiyat around the "Shaykh al-Hind" Maḥmūd al-Ḥasan.

The Ḥājji Šāhib, namely, evolved into a chief enforcer of the sociopolitical changes that resulted from the religiously grounded mission of the Shaykh al-Hind and his circle in the Pashtun borderland. An advocate of the subalterns from whom he emerged, the Ḥājji Šāhib challenged the self-serving political tactics of the *masharān* of old and new, and his efforts were consequently met with their resistance. In those cases where these community leaders would choose to ignore his verbal admonitions, the Ḥājji Šāhib mustered his own impromptu tribal militias (*laṣṣkarūnah*) and saw through the rectification of his demands by way of armed force.⁷⁰ Khālīṣ would follow this model, even though the *masharān* of his time were less those in the rural Pashtun communities, but those having usurped the political power in Kabul. After a long period of only rhetorical confrontation,⁷¹ from 1978 onwards the situation had escalated to the extent that only armed resistance remained an adequate response, to be staged by those whom he called "the clan of the Prophet" (*Nabī khel*), thus again invoking the example of the Prophet Muḥammad as benchmark of religious righteousness.

As we have seen, despite numerous overlaps, the worldviews of the two ideal-typically established main factions among the Pashtun actors within the Afghan Resistance – Islamists and Frontier Deobandis – remained fundamentally distinct, as emblematically expressed in their respective references to the Prophet Muḥammad as role model. Moreover, the example of the Ḥājji Šāhib of Turangzay also suggests a historical pattern underlying this distinction. This, in fact, is what is argued here, and in order to substantiate this claim, we need to go quite a bit back in time.

69 See Khālīṣ, *Damūnah aw dāne*, 169–72 (*Paṣṭūn aw ghulāmī*), 180–82 (*Də paṣṭano simah*), and 197ff. (*Ghadār*). See also Ṭalāyī, *Khālīṣ Bābā*, 54–61.

70 See Qadir, *Reforming the Pukhtuns*, 28–31 and 39–56. Khan, "The Pashtoon Resistance", 25–28, discusses the British colonial strategies to co-opt local elites in the Pashtun tribal communities, or to even create new ones, which were major instances for the Ḥājji Šāhib's oftentimes violent interventions.

71 In the early 1950s, Khālīṣ was employed by Radio Kabul to run a religious programme; in the mid-1960s he took over the editorship of *Payām-i Ḥaqq*, purportedly the first Islamic magazine in Afghanistan. In both these capacities, as well as in his early prose works, Khālīṣ aimed at spreading a legally correct understanding of Islam and its necessary implementations in society. See 'Azīz Allāh, *Də Mawlawī Khālīṣ žvand, fann aw and*, 2ff. and 26ff.

15.4 Antecedents: Two Ethical Paradigms

In order to better understand origins as well as sociopolitical implications of the two distinct ideal-typical images of the Prophet Muḥammad in the Afghan Resistance to the PDPA and the Soviet occupation, it pays to trace back in time the underlying ethnical dispositions which seem to be reflected in them. These dispositions, again, are discussed here as ideal-types, allowing for a much greater variety of them on the ground. Yet, most of them can be ascribed to one of two dominant and opposing ethical outlines which are deeply rooted in Pashtun society: one is an elite-centric ethics, which I shall call “princely ethics”, while the other one is one that reflects more subaltern positions, and will therefore be labelled “subaltern ethics”. Both are, in fact, vividly present in various cultural practices throughout the region, for instance in everyday poetic allusions, proverbs, or impromptu rhymes (*tappay*), thus constituting what Gramsci called historical “traces” of a reflexive sociopolitical identity.⁷²

The emergence of both ethical paradigms is closely linked to the geopolitical situatedness of the “Pashtun borderland” in a kind of *longue durée*, and reflects thus also the position and attitude of borderlanders towards imperial powers, ultimately contributing to the ethnogenesis of the Pashtuns. Originally highly mobile communities who mediated the long-distance trade between Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent,⁷³ their eventual settlement in the foothills of the Hindukush was the result of the displacement of marginal communities in the course of imperial expansions in Iran, Central Asia, and India.⁷⁴

Situated at the frontier between empires, they constituted a critical mass for the maintenance of territorial integrity, and as such were of high strategic interest to imperial powerholders. Consequently, these powerholders, such as the Mughal establishment, attempted to create subservient local elites to represent imperial interest in the mountainous borderland, while at the same time finding an administrative category for those largely autonomous communities, to fit them into their imperial framework. The result of such

72 See Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, 2:376: “The starting point is the consciousness of what one really is, and is ‘knowing thyself’ [*conosci te stesso*] as a product of the historical process to date which has disposed in you an infinity of traces [*un’infinità di tracce*], without leaving an inventory” (trans. J. A. Buttigieg).

73 See Digby, *War-Horse and Elephant*; Gommans, *The Rise of the Indo-Afghan Empire*, 77–83 and 113–43.

74 See, for example, the case of the Yūsufzī kinship grouping, who are reported to have been displaced from the area around Kandahar and pushed to the mountainous region further north, where they are concentrated nowadays, in Mu‘azzam Shāh, *Tavārīkh-i Ḥāfiẓ Raḥmat Khānī*.

external categorisations was an increasingly solid ethnic self-understanding of these communities as “Pashtun”,⁷⁵ yet not, as intended, as a category in the imperial framework of the Mughals, but one of self-confident difference. This was perhaps most emblematically expressed by Khūshhāl Khān Khaṭṭak (d. 1100/1689), formerly a faithful vassal of the Mughal ruler Shāhjahān, who in turn had built up on his father’s strategy to elevate certain tribal communities over others in exchange for their compliance with Mughal imperial interest in the region.⁷⁶ Yet, when Khūshhāl claimed to not having been treated appropriately by Awrangzīb ‘Ālamgīr, Shāhjahān’s successor to the Mughal throne, he reinvented himself as an ardent opponent to the Mughals and a champion of the Pashtuns, stating that “For this state of things, no other resolve can be seen / than that the Mughals be annihilated, or the Pashtuns undone”.⁷⁷

Indeed, Khūshhāl is nowadays regarded by many Pashtuns as core reference for what it means to be “Pashtun”, and his earlier affiliation with the Mughals, to whom “from the very beginning / [he] ha[s] been faithful and loyal”,⁷⁸ rather downplayed. While there is good reason to agree with the view that it took a representative of the tribal elite to establish the language as a literary idiom,⁷⁹ we need to be aware that the perspective is essentially an elitist one that does not negotiate with subaltern voices within the Pashtun linguistic universe. Their alter ego were, and are, rather competing sociopolitical elites, such as the Mughals and, later on, the British colonial establishment, which is not least reflected in the fact that Khūshhāl had chosen Persianate – Mughal – forms of poetic presentation over local Pashtun ones. Of special significance in this regard is Khūshhāl’s *qaṣīdah* “Poetry is the Discharge of Men” (*shī’r ḥayṣ al-rijāl day*), because it comprises all the core themes in this discourse: the relationship between mundane and divine beauty, imperial economy and politics

75 The historiographic process of ethnic distinction began with ‘Abbās Khān Sarvānī’s (d. after 988/1580) account of the reign of Shīr Shāh Sūrī, commissioned by Mughal *pādishāh* Akbar, and was soon supplemented by a genealogical account of imperial chronicler Ni’matallāh Haravī (d. ca. 1040/1630), which rooted the label “Afghan” in a certain – though empirically little sustainable – pedigree. Haravī’s image was soon appropriated by literate representatives of the borderland communities, as indicates the portrayal by Akhūnd Darvīzah (d. 1048/1638), originally from Nangarhar. See Sarvānī, *Tārīkh-i Sher Shāhī*, 1:2ff.; Haravī, *Ṭabaqāt-i akbarī*; Darvīzah, *Tazkirat al-abrār*, 58–62.

76 This applies very much to the Khaṭṭak, a kinship community that claims the region of Karak as their ancestral territory. See Kākākhel, *Paṣṭānah dā tārīkh pah ranṛā kṣe*, 697–99.

77 Khān Khaṭṭak, *Armaghān-i Khūshhāl*, 19, line 6; see also 16–29.

78 Khān Khaṭṭak, *Armaghān-i Khūshhāl*, 11, line 8.

79 I am most grateful to James Caron (SOAS, University of London) for generously sharing with me his thoughts on this matter.

vis-à-vis communal ones, youthful virility that, nonetheless, requires disciplining and channelling into concerted action within a patriarchal framework.⁸⁰

The princely ethics which emerges from Khūshhāl's versatile poetry pivots on the notion of "honour" (*nang*), cast as the ability to contain the virtue of the female members of one's household (*sharm*). Such constructed honour, in turn, feeds into a hierarchical worldview: to possess honour becomes thus equivalent to high social, political, and economic status. Such a hierarchy, in turn, is inevitable and therefore highly desirable, as Khūshhāl argued in reference to the Prophet Muḥammad, somewhat forecasting above Islamist references of the late twentieth century: "When Muḥammad's time arrived / feared were the Arabs for [their] courage. Success depends on the leader [*sardār*] / and nothing else, know this, my son!"⁸¹

The projected hierarchy does not even stop at the local mechanisms of negotiation and decision-making: even the *jirgah*, oftentimes romantically portrayed as an highly egalitarian local institution, is, besides the little acknowledged exclusion of females, subordinate to the ultimate judgement of a member of the sociopolitical elite.⁸² Needless to stress that Khūshhāl relied less on religious rhetorical figures to sustain such a hierarchical worldview; his shorter *qaṣīdahs* on divine and Prophetic attributes seem to reflect rather his familiarity with prominent literary tropes in Pashtun poetic expression.⁸³

This, in fact, was quite the opposite for the representatives of the other ethical paradigm, that of subaltern authors,⁸⁴ of whom 'Abd al-Raḥmān "Raḥmān Bābā" Mohmand (d. 1123/1711) from a small village near Peshawar appears to be considered the epitome. Indeed, in his verses Raḥmān Bābā stressed qualities oftentimes associated with the Prophetic mission of Muḥammad: mercy (*məhrbānī*, or *raḥmat*), justice (*'adālat*), and equality (*musāwāt*, or *inṣāf*). One's social, and subsequent political, status, in turn, emerges from the ability to embody these qualities: when referring to a *mashar* who, "in parcelling

80 See Khān Khaṭṭak, *Armaghān-i Khūshhāl*, 6–12.

81 Khān Khaṭṭak, *Armaghān-i Khūshhāl*, 725, lines 3ff.

82 See Khān Khaṭṭak, *Dastār'nāmāh*, 93ff.

83 See Khān Khaṭṭak, *Dastār'nāmāh*, 2–5; and, for example, Gohar, "Paṣto kṣi də na'tiyyah shā'iray irtiḡā", 177–211.

84 These subaltern authors coincide with what Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, 2:392, 3:1513, and 2283ff., has alternatively called "organic intellectuals" (*intelletuali organici*), "embedded historians" (*storici integrali*), or "community writer" (*pensatori collettivo*), while Caron, "Social Inequality", 1, calls them "peasant intellectuals", in reference to the title of Steven M. Feierman's work on Tanzania from 1990. See also Caron, "Reading the Power". I am grateful to my former colleague Cosimo Zene (London) for his elaboration of Gramsci's concept.

out water [rights] he is not just, even if his hand grips pages of the Book”,⁸⁵ Raḥmān Bābā combined socio-economic critique with religious ethics. Thus, he sustained a trope that, so Ibrāhīm ‘Aṭāyī claims, had already been a major driver for the millenarian movement of Bāyazīd Anṣārī, better known as the “Pīr Roḡān” (d. after 988/1580),⁸⁶ consequently resulting in a barrage of polemical remarks on their subaltern religiosity by privileged members of the Mughal establishment.⁸⁷

Here, it appears that it were authors like the Pīr Roḡān,⁸⁸ and even more so Raḥmān Bābā, who established an almost causal relationship between social, economic, and political egalitarianism, resistance to perceived injustices in all these departments, and “Pashtun-ness”: “Tenant he is, sharecropper he was, he will rise to be Pashtun / even if a cobbler or butcher by origin. Speaking mildly has no effect on him [i.e. the landlord] / since in his heart is neither shame nor *hijāb*.”⁸⁹ Consequently, “Pashtun” can only be whoever resists injustice and maintains a strong social conscience; more still, a “Pashtun” is essentially subaltern.⁹⁰

Both ideal-typical ethic frameworks in the Pashtun-dominated borderland, I content, are one, if not the, reason for perpetual local conflict that can be traced all the way to the level of any given village community. These communities, which emphatically present themselves to the outside as “essentially egalitarian”, are this way divided into those who regard fraternisation with the strong and powerful as primary expression of their ethnicity and, therefore, as commendable, and those who stress just the opposite. Violent expressions

85 Raḥmān Bābā, *Dīvān-i ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Bābā*, 110, lines 13ff.

86 See ‘Aṭāyī, *Dā paṣṭānāy qabīlo ... qamūs*, 295. This view on the socio-economic constitution of the Peshawar Valley has been taken over by Nichols, *Settling the Frontier*, 21.

87 The most prominent and influential pejorative religious appraisal of the *Rawshānīyyah* was Badā‘unī, *Muntakhab al-tavārīkh*, 2:241–43, from which distinct phrases have been adopted verbatim by Haravī, *Ṭabaqāt-i akbarī*, e.g. 2:398. Badā‘unī’s polemics, however, including the mock epithet “Pīr of Darkness” (*pīr-i tārik*), were preceded almost immediately by Darvīzah, *Tazkirat al-abrār*, 31ff.; Darvīzah, *Makhzan al-islām*, 155ff. See also Hartung, “Of Pious Missions”, 7–11.

88 See prominently Anṣārī, *Khayr al-bayān*, 206: “Some involve themselves in the work of farming, or in market-trade, or the herdsman’s trade of cattle [*dā karlī yā dā bāzar-gānāy yā dā povandī-kalāy*], or go as far as servitude to kings, or other professions, for the accumulation of wealth [*māl-gird*], whether permissible or dubious, or [even] prohibited”. See also Anṣārī, *Khayr al-bayān*, 414–19.

89 Raḥmān Bābā, *Dīvān-i ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Bābā*, 111, lines 17–20.

90 This results in the frequently observable fact that subaltern behavioural patterns are widely approved of as “Pashtun” regardless of the actual ethnicity of the person in question, while elitist conduct is openly referred to as “Punjabi”.

of this conflict have frequently occurred over time, and still do.⁹¹ Now, if we take this line of argument forward, then the two distinct kinds of references to the Prophet by the leading Pashtun representatives of the Afghan Resistance between roughly 1978 and 1992 follow the same trajectory.

The elitist thinking of the various Islamist organisations, which originated in a culturally and ethnically more diverse urban context, were clearly reflected in their respective images of the Prophet Muḥammad as a warlord and politician, in other words, a member of a societal elite that is therefore axiomatically predestined to lead the community in a top-down fashion. Indeed, it is no surprise that it were the leaders of the various Islamist *tanẓīmāt* who would almost instantly after the ousting of the Soviet army in 1989 and that of the Ḥizb-i Vaṭan-turned-PDPA regime in 1992 assume political top positions, all agreed upon in the so-called Peshawar Peace Accord, in which the claims for the new government of Afghanistan were parcelled out. Burhān al-Dīn Rabbānī served between 1992 and 2001 as president of Afghanistan, Sayyāf as his vice president, Ḥikmatyār between 1993 and 1994, as well as 1996 and 1997, as prime minister, Aḥmad Shāh Masʿūd between 1992 and 1993 as minister of defence, and Rabbānī's Jam'īyyat-i Islāmī-yi Afghānistān representative in Herat, Ismā'īl Khān (b. 1365/1946), as governor of Herat Province between 1992 and 1997 and, again, between 2001 and 2004, before being appointed minister of water and energy of the Karzay administration between 2004 and 2013.

On the other end of the spectrum, we find the leaders of militias associated with what I call "Frontier Deobandiyat", and who stayed at least formally aloof from political offices. Instead, they maintained and expanded their local powerbases, be it in Jalalabad and the wider Nangarhar Province, as was the case for Khālīṣ, or in the Loyah Pakṭiya region, as for Ḥaqqānī. When the Islamist militias, here first and foremost the Ḥil-Ḥ and Masʿūd's Shūrā-yi Nazār, battled in 1992 without any mercy and consideration for the civilian population of Kabul for mere power and dominance,⁹² they were in a way echoing Khūshḥāl's poetic emphasis on a manly recklessness in battle as the ultimate expression of status-defining honour. Actors of a conservative rural and descent-conscious background, like Khālīṣ and Ḥaqqānī, stressed more social values of an increasingly romanticised "Pashtun Code of Honour" (*paṣṭūnvalī*),⁹³

91 See my respective argument in Hartung, "Of Pious Missions".

92 See Dorronsoro, "Kabul at War", 6.

93 This rather loose concept, which has been around for a while as an expression of socially acceptable conduct that may vary according to the respective context, had been embraced by Afghan nationalist intellectuals. A case in point is Qiyām al-Dīn Khādim (d. 1358SH/1979), leading member of the leftist Viṣ Zalmiyan movement of the late 1940s,

such as hospitality (*melmastiyā*, or *melmah pālanah*), provision of sanctuary (*panāh*), and a willingness to sacrifice for the sake of others (*qurbānī*),⁹⁴ all of which can be derived from a religiously charged notion of “justice”. In fact, the only recently published collection of Khālīš’s poetry indicates a strong emphasis on all these tropes.⁹⁵ Unsurprisingly, these poems read well together with his *na’t* poetry in which the Prophet Muḥammad appears as perfect embodiment of all those social values.⁹⁶

15.5 Conclusion

In hindsight of the looming downfall of the PDPA/Ḥizb-i Waṭan regime and the humiliating defeat of the Soviet army by initially badly equipped Afghan militias, internal conflict within all those groups in what has been called here the Afghan Resistance became increasingly apparent. These contestations among the winning parties ran first and foremost along ethnic and denominational lines. Still, tension also arose within the ethnically Pashtun and denominationally Sunnī groups within the entire Resistance, reflecting, as it has been argued here, two historically developed distinct ethical frameworks that respond to socio-economic and subsequent political particularities in the Pashtun communities along the national border between Afghanistan and Pakistan. Both frameworks have been embraced by distinct factions within the Pashtun contingent of the Afghan Resistance, reflected in distinct images of the Prophet Muḥammad as emerges from the publications of the various respective groups.

to whom we owe the monograph *Paṣṭūnvalī* (Kabul, Də paṣṭo toḷānah 1331SH), the first attempt to enshrine the constituents of *paṣṭūnvalī* independent from the respective context in which they are applied. In numerous ethnographic studies, however, *paṣṭūnvalī* has been ascribed a reality which I find difficult to relate to, but which have sustained the romantic image of an all-comprehensive code. See, for instance, Spain, *The Way of the Pathans*; Steul, *Paschtunwali*; Nūrzay, *Paṣṭo aw paṣṭūnvalī*. A slightly more considerate view is presented by Barth, *Afghanistan og Taliban*, 28–31. For a more detailed critique see Hartung, “A Taliban Legal Discourse on Violence”, 146–53.

- 94 The concept of *qurbānī* is in fact central to the discussion of martyrdom in Deobandī circles in the Frontier, while it is widely absent in the Islamist discussions on the same issue. See, for instance, Mīrzākheḷ, “Də Shahādāt islāmī falsafah”, *Manba’ al-Jihād* [Pashto] 2/9 (1369SH), 10–12; anon.: “Fazāyil-i shahīd”, *Ḥaqq Pācūn* 2/5–6 (1365SH), 7ff.; anon.: “Də Shahīd armān”, *Ḥaqq Pācūn* 2/5–6 (1365SH), 9ff.; cf. anon.: “Shahīd dar islām”, *Mīšāq-i Khūn* 2/2–3 (1366SH/1407H), 108–11.
- 95 See Khālīš, *Damūnah aw dāne*, 104–7 (*Ḥurriyat aw musāvāt*), 154ff. (*Mīnah aw insāniyyat*), 205ff. (*Də bashar də khayr lapārah*), and 218–20 (*Musāvāt*).
- 96 See Khālīš, *Damūnah aw dāne*, 29, 36–42, 144–47, and 203ff.

The first group were ideal-typically cast as “Islamists”, represented predominantly by the organisations led by Gulbuddīn Ḥikmatyār and ‘Abd al-Rabb Rasūl Sayyāf, the second as “Frontier Deobandīs” of the militant variety, personified in the respective groups led by Jalāl al-Dīn Ḥaqqānī and Muḥammad Yūnus Khālīṣ. For the urban and openly elitist Islamists, Muḥammad was conducive as role model of a political and military leader; their references were subsequently on the Medinan phase of the Prophet’s life. The Frontier Deobandīs, in turn, staged themselves as embodiment of rural subalternity, and stressed consequently the image of the Prophet as one who holds fast to the truth, despite seriously adverse circumstances which could have easily cost Muḥammad his own life.

Nonetheless, we need to acknowledge that also the Frontier Deobandīs had an elitist agenda, aiming at redressing widespread religious beliefs and practices in the rural Pashtun communities which they saw not warranted from a textual perspective. As perhaps most severe manifestation of this distinct form of socio-religious elitism would eventually emerge the movement of the Taliban during their reign over the entire Afghanistan between 1996 and 2001, as clearly indicated by their normatively grounded religious decrees. It therefore appears that explicit references to the Prophet Muḥammad as a role model for this or that point to elitist persuasions whatsoever: both, Islamists and Frontier Deobandīs, employed images of the Prophet as benchmark for proper belief and conduct, vis-à-vis a broad range of such beliefs and practices locally acknowledged as conducive for the maintenance of the societal fabric of these communities. As such, the Resistance in which the Islamists and Frontier Deobandīs were both actively involved was, especially in the case of the latter, not exclusively confined to overthrowing an oppressive communist regime and its allies, but also to overcome locally established forms of religiosity for which they saw no textual corroboration.

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