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Margrit Pernau

Contested Emotions of Masculinity. The Court, the Street, and the Negotiation Table in an Indian Princely State in the 20th Century

Since the 18th century, the colonial rule over India has involved not only territories directly administered by the British, but also princely states, formally ruled by their Indian allies. Extending over one third of the territory of the subcontinent, these 500-odd states ranged in size from estates the size of a district, or even smaller, to Hyderabad, comparable in size to the joint territory of England and Wales. The larger states had a treaty relation with the British, which left the question of their suzerainty undecided. While they were formally independent when they signed the treaties, the reality of power placed even the most powerful states under the paramountcy of the British. However informally this power was played out, in questions that mattered to the colonial government – be it finances, the railway, or internal security – the writ of the British Resident at the princely court ruled. Nevertheless, it was in the British interest not to push their visible influence to an extent where it endangered the system as a whole.

Hyderabad was one of the successor states of the Mughal Empire. In the early 18th century, the Mughal ruler had appointed Asaf Jah, the first Nizam, as the governor of the plateau of the Deccan in southern India; the title of Nizam subsequently became hereditary for the rulers of Hyderabad. In the turbulent years to come, the Asaf Jahi dynasty increasingly ruled their territory without referring back to Delhi. The alliance with the British dated from the last years of the 18th century, and in the 19th century led to a substantive loss both of territory and of sovereign power, to the extent that parts of the state administration were directly controlled by British officers 'lent' to the Nizam.¹

The rise of the national movement in British India from the end of the 19th century onward changed the balance of power within the princely states as well. On the one hand, it made the rulers more dependent on British support to prevent a cross-border infiltration of popular movements, potentially dangerous for their rule. On the other

¹ See Margrit Pernau, *The Passing of Patrimonialism. Politics and Political Culture in Hyderabad 1911–1948*, Delhi 2000. One of the best studies of Hyderabad state has unfortunately never been published: John Roosa, *The Quandry of the Qaum. Indian Nationalism in a Muslim State, Hyderabad 1850–1948*, PhD diss., University of Wisconsin-Madison 1998.

hand, the British also increasingly relied on the princes and tried to integrate them into all-India politics as a counterweight to the Indian National Congress. This came to a head when the constitutional reform in 1935 made further devolution of power dependent on the enactment of an all-India federation, encompassing both the provinces and the princely states. While the British had originally devised the inclusion of the states as a way to provide a stable conservative block, they afterwards used the need for princely consent as a means to prevent the federation and the constitutional advance altogether. For the different parties of the national movement, on the other hand, the possible inclusion of the states in the federation made it imperative to extend their own influence into these regions and, notably, to push for constitutional reforms. This is the political background to the developments traced out in this article.²

In Hyderabad in the 1930s and 1940s, interactions aimed at shaping the political landscape took place in three different spaces: the court, the street, and the negotiation table. The central argument of this article is that these spaces were not just geographical or institutional, but also emotional, marked by specific emotional styles geared towards the performance of a distinct form of masculinity. Social and emotional spaces, in this regard, are co-constitutive.³ Paying close attention to the mediation of emotions and gender, the argument continues, allows us to cast a new gaze on politics: on the formulation of political goals, on the negotiation of alliances, and on the exertion of political power.

It might be tempting to organize the emotional spaces and the masculinities tied to them according to a timeline, turning it into a narrative of modernisation: from feudalism to popular mobilisation. This is not completely wrong, the courtly space existed before political leaders took to the street. The interesting thing that the concept of emotional spaces allows us to do, however, is to look at the fundamental contemporaneity of these spaces, specific to the 1930s and 1940s. The court, the street, and the negotiation table were distinct from each other, they epitomised different styles of masculinity, but they existed within the same timeframe and remained fluid. Men did not link their masculinity to any single emotional space, but constantly moved from one to the other and back. Manly feelings were as central to the court as to the masses gathering on the street. Nevertheless, moving from one space to the other, the specific emotions of manhood differed; these differences extended to the way emotions were experienced, understood, and expressed, as well as to the emotional practices. In terms of the distinctions between different forms of fluidity introduced in the introduction to this collection, this relates to circulation and movement between spaces.

Fluidity, however, was not indistinctly available to everyone – it might even point to a position of privilege. Hegemony, in this context, works not through a specific form of

² See Barbara Ramusack, *The Indian Princes and their States*, Cambridge/London 2004.

³ See Benno Gammerl, *Emotional Styles – Concepts and Challenges*, in: *Rethinking History*, 16, 2 (2012), 161–175.

masculinity,⁴ but through the possibility of appropriating a variety of different styles. The access to the court was restricted by social criteria. Even if ordinary men had been able to overcome the obstacles preventing the performance of an emotional style that required material resources, the court was a closely guarded social space, belonging to which was defined by birth. The negotiation table was not quite as exclusive, but also presupposed a position of influence and a certain training. Thus, if emotions were constitutive of emotional spaces, they were not the only force constituting them. Social and economic factors could block the fluidity between the emotional spaces, or at least restrict them to certain persons only. A noble might access the space of the street, but the leader of a gang of ruffians would be excluded from both the court and the negotiation table.

Moreover, emotions were important to the struggles to establish a hierarchy between the spaces, leading to the hegemony of one form of masculinity and its political potential over another, but this does not mean that social and economic forces receded to the background. While emotions could facilitate the fluid movement between spaces and the translation between forms of masculinity, they also increasingly disrupted communication and ultimately led to a breakdown of the entire political framework.

The article will elaborate these arguments by focusing on a single individual who was a master at negotiating the different spaces and their manly emotions. Bahadur Yar Jang was born in 1905 to a Pathan family of the middling nobility – being Pathan meant that they originally came from the Northwestern region of the subcontinent and identified with a tribal and military tradition. The family had access to the court and a close relationship with Maharaja Kishen Pershad, head of the foremost Hindu noble family of the state. After the early death of his father, Bahadur Yar Jang inherited and reformed the family estate. One of the most impressive Urdu orators in the 20th century and a gifted organiser, he quickly rose to become founder and head of diverse organisations, from an association representing the landowners of the state, to religious and political volunteer organisations for Muslims in Hyderabad and beyond its borders. This made him a leader of note, who was not only courted, but also feared by many. He died in 1944.⁵ After his death, the Muslim party he had founded further radicalised and took over the state in 1947. This was the main reason for the intervention of the Indian army and the annexation of Hyderabad in September 1948.

⁴ See R.W. Connell, *Masculinities*, Berkeley 1995.

⁵ There still is no study of Bahadur Yar Jang in English. For publications in Urdu, see the near contemporary biography by Ghulam Muhammad, *Hayat-e Bahadur Yar Jang [The Life of Bahadur Yar Jang]*, Karachi 1973; and the magisterial three-volume work by Nazir ud Din Ahmad, *Sawanih-e Bahadur Yar Jang [Biography of Bahadur Yar Jang]*, Hyderabad 1986.

1. The Sword and the Rose: A Mughal Court in the 20th Century Deccan

Hyderabad prided itself on being the heir of the Mughal Empire. It was the only place in India in which Persian remained the official language until the end of the 19th century. The language was commonly understood and used by the elite even in the 20th century, allowing direct access to the Indo-Persian literary and moral traditions. This sense of continuity was played out in the everyday *adab*, the ethical comportment with which the nobility and its dependents identified, as well as the common mannerisms, from fashion to rules of greeting.⁶ This has often led to musings on the fly-in-amber quality of the princely states, and Hyderabad in particular.⁷ The orientalist imagination had associated India with qualities of the timeless, situated outside of history and change. This was even more true for the princely states, the 'Indian India', imagined as untainted by colonialism and modernity, but also to be preserved from political changes such as representative government and democracy.

Hyderabad was, of course, no more outside history than the rest of India, and changes there were profound and rapid, especially after the First World War. Claiming a surplus of 'Indianness' for the princely states was a way of delegitimising the national movement (whose leaders' English education, according to the British, estranged them from Indian culture and the masses). However, completely reducing the Mughal heritage to a façade masking changes with a cloak of authenticity would underestimate the importance this heritage held for many. Mughal culture did not provide continuity in a world without change, but worked as a point of reference towards which especially the nobility, but also parts of the administration oriented their lives and behavior. Most importantly, it offered a body of knowledge about emotions and their ethics: about how to be a noble, virtuous, and manly man.

In this respect, two aspects are important. First, the Mughal nobility started out as a military aristocracy, and the first generations of the Hyderabad state reinforced this aspect. The ideal of *jawanmardi* referred to soldierly masculinity, to courage and physical bravery, to the ability to handle and actually delight in hardship, but also to a sustained energy, which could manifest itself as joyous anger during battle.⁸ Outside the battlefield, the nobles trained their bodies and emotions through traditional sports: wrestling and exercises to strengthen the body; the use of different weapons, of swords,

⁶ See Barbara D. Metcalf ed., *Moral Conduct and Authority. The Place of Adab in South Asian Islam*, Berkeley 1984.

⁷ See Robin Jeffrey, Introduction, in: idem. ed., *People, Princes and Paramount Power*, Oxford 1978, 1–16, 3.

⁸ See Emma Flatt, *Young Manliness. Ethical Culture in the Gymnasiums of the Medieval Deccan*, in: Anand Pandian and Daud Ali eds., *Ethical Life in South Asia*, Bloomington 2010, 153–173.

daggers, and bows, but also of clubs and cudgels.⁹ All of these sports were geared towards the heroic individual, affronting his enemy in a one-on-one encounter. The fighting ability and the masculinity they generated were integrated in a complex system of honour, loyalty, and the willingness to sacrifice one's life – for a leader, rather than for a cause.

Military qualities, however, were never enough to constitute virtuous noble masculinity. If portraits of the first Nizams and their nobility showed them with a sword in one hand, they also held a rose in the other. A true noble not only knew how to fight, but was also endowed with a melting heart (*dilgudaz*). He was generous towards his enemies, as well as towards those less favored by fate, and gave away without counting. He was able to appreciate the fine arts, notably poetry, and ideally was a poet himself. He not only wrote about love, but also modelled his own quest for a beloved or for the divine, the ultimate beloved, on the tropes of poetry. These two aspects should never be separated. The predominance of the sword made a man brutish. This claim also helped to distinguish between the nobles and the common soldiers, who might well surpass them in bodily strength or proficiency in the traditional sports. If a man only clung to the rose, on the other hand, he risked being reduced to passivity in love and life, the condition of women and catamites.¹⁰ Both extremes were irreconcilable with true manly emotions.

As for all aspects of life, from the macrocosmos to the bodily humours, balance and harmony (*j'tedal*) were crucial for the emotion-virtues of masculine civility. The literature on morality never explicitly stated that these virtues were of no relevance to women (or, for that matter, to men who did not share a background in respectability of descent and status). But nobody except noble men were thought capable of holding onto both the sword and the rose and of balancing them. These ideals had a long history in the translations of Aristotelian ethics, first into Arabic in the tenth century, then into Persian, and from there, through the Mughals, to the Indian context, where they continued to form part of the Indo-Persian heritage on which the Hyderabad nobility prided itself well into the 20th century.¹¹

The person epitomising these virtues for his contemporaries and Hyderabadis looking back with a nostalgic gaze was Maharaja Kishen Pershad (1864–1940). He stood for what was acclaimed as the culture of Hindu-Muslim tolerance: a Hindu chief minister in a state ruled by a Muslim, married to both Hindu and Muslim ladies, and celebrating the festivals of both communities with equal fervour. The legends woven

⁹ See Rosalind O'Hanlon, Military Sports and the History of the Martial Body in India, in: *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, 50, 4 (2007), 490–523.

¹⁰ See Katherine Butler Brown, If Music Be the Food of Love. Masculinity and Eroticism in the Mughal mehfil, in: Francesca Orsini ed., *Love in South Asia. A Cultural History*, Cambridge 2007, 61–87.

¹¹ See Muzaffar Alam, *The Languages of Political Islam. India 1200–1800*, Chicago 2004; Margrit Pernau, *Emotions and Modernity in Colonial India. From Balance to Fervor*, Delhi 2019, chap. 3.

around his person point to his unfailing courtesy and generosity, to his compassion, and to his devotion to the ruler and to his friends. His autobiography traces his training in Persian, Arabic, English, Sanskrit, and Gurmukhi (the sacred script of the Sikhs). His grandfather and his Arabic teacher introduced him into Sufism and mystical practices; he also became an accomplished poet in different languages early in his life. Following the traditions of his family in the state's administration, his education put an emphasis on mathematics, arithmetic, and accounting, as well as training in revenue and finance administration. This close attention to the qualities of the heart and of the mind did not detract from the bodily skills necessary for a traditional military career: riding, fighting with clubs and arrows. Towards the end of the 19th century, they were imparted less for their assumed utility in any modern combat situation, but rather for the virtues that martial arts were assumed to bring forth in a young man's character.¹²

In Mahbub Ali Pasha, the sixth Nizam, Maharaja Kishen Pershad had found a congenial soul who shared his outlook on life. This changed when Mahbub Ali Pasha met an early death in 1911 and was succeeded by Mir Osman Ali Khan. The young ruler did not share his father's love of the aristocratic lifestyle, but rather saw himself as a stern administrator of his realms and admired the more puritanical forms of Islam.¹³ While this was out of tune with the emotional style that had marked the court earlier, it could still claim noble precedents, notably in the figures of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb and the first Nizam of Hyderabad, both stylised by historians as stern and austere characters, rather than as men with overflowing and melting hearts.¹⁴

The felicitation volume for Mir Osman Ali Khan's silver jubilee, a lavishly illustrated volume in Urdu of more than 600 pages, brings these strands together in an exemplary fashion.¹⁵ The first article, on the *Sirat-e Osman*, the personal qualities of Osman, sets the tone for the volume.¹⁶ It describes the pathway men had to travel from the time they were still under the domination of the unpleasant and forceful passions to their present state of civility (*tahzib*). This evolution was only possible with the help of a man of well-balanced intellect (*salim 'aql*), who has set limits and boundaries for them. The civilising

¹² See Mahdi Nawaz Jang, *Maharaja Kishen Pershad ki zindagi ki halat* [The Story of Maharaja Kishen Pershad's Life], Hyderabad 1950.

¹³ The influence of models of colonial masculinity in this context, worked in a rather indirect way, both because Hyderabad was not under direct British rule and because men from Hyderabad would have seen no reason to identify with the daunts against the Bengalis, see Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity. The "Manly Englishman" and the "Effeminate Bengali" in the Late 19th Century*, Manchester 1995.

¹⁴ That these memories did not correspond to the historical figures has been shown by Katherine Butler-Brown (Schofield), *Hindustani Music in the Time of Aurangzeb*, PhD diss., University of London 2003; and Audrey Trutschke, *Aurangzeb. The Man and the Myth*, Stanford 2017.

¹⁵ For more information on this volume, see Margrit Pernau, *Creation of a Royal Personality. The Yadgar-e Silver Jubilee of Mir Osman Ali Khan, Nizam of Hyderabad, 1936*, in: *Internationales Asien-Forum*, 31, 3–4 (2000), 255–273.

¹⁶ Hosh Bilgrami, *Sirat Osmani*, in: n. e., *Yadgar-e Silver Jubilee [A Souvenir of the Silver Jubilee]*, Hyderabad n. d. [probably 1937], 25–30.

of society with the help of a superior mind, who orders the chaos of the passions into a harmonious universe, however, was not a one-time historical event, but needed to be repeated continuously, as societies had an innate tendency towards decline. Only a man endowed with reason and knowledge and an inclination towards ordering and constructing (*tadbir o ta'mir*) could keep society in a state of harmony and lead his subjects to kindness and virtue (*neki, akhlaq*). The king is the man par excellence, "freed from the bondage of the inordinate passions of the carnal soul",¹⁷ and therefore able to govern others. This text is in keeping with the traditional discourse and vocabulary of noble masculinity, but shifts the emphasis in two respects. First, it no longer foregrounds military virtues and bodily qualities; the king appears less as a general on the battlefield, and more as a holy man, the perfect man (*insan-e kamil*) of Sufism, whose saintly qualities hold up the tent of the world. Second, the manly emotion-virtues of the ruler are no longer shared between him and his nobles, but elevate him above everyone else, nobles and subjects alike.

This was the world Bahadur Yar Jang was born into in 1905. His upbringing and education were that of an ordinary nobleman.¹⁸ Like Maharaja Kishen Pershad, who was a patron of his family, he learned the classical languages as well as English and acquired administrative competencies and military skills – his family had brought forth passionate soldiers for many generations. The main difference between the two was the influence of his maternal grandmother, who stressed the need for a pious lifestyle according to the tenets of reformist Islam. This might also have been the reason why, after his initial years at the Madrasa Aliya, the elite school for the nobility, he did not join his peers at the Nizam College, but went on to Hyderabad's Dar ul 'Ulum (not to be confused with the more prominent Dar ul 'Ulum in Deoband). There, he deepened his religious education and also discovered and developed his oratory skills. This brought him to the attention of Mir Osman Ali Khan, who appointed him as the royal preacher and gave him access to his inner circle from a position of moral authority.

After the early death of his father, Bahadur Yar Jang took over the responsibility for his family and the estate, which, he discovered, was highly indebted. He started not only to reduce the expenses, managing to pay off the debts in less than ten years, but also imposed a more austere Islamic code of behavior.¹⁹ This did not necessarily mean a rupture with the ideal of courtly manliness, especially as this went hand in hand with the changes favored by the Nizam himself. He continued to hone his linguistic and oratory skills, and devoted time to writing poetry and building a garden on his estate. Slowly, he started to add the organisation and leadership of social and political associations to the traditional ways of social interaction. Besides the founding of clubs during his student days, his first venture was an attempt to reform the association of the Islamic group of

¹⁷ Bilgrami, *Sirat Osmani*, see note 16, 30.

¹⁸ See Ahmad, *Sawanih*, see note 5, vol. 1.

¹⁹ See Muhammad, *Hayat*, see note 5, 24–25.

the Mahdawis (*anjuman-e Mahdavia*), to which his family belonged. Shortly afterwards, he took over the leadership of the association of Jagirdars (*majlis-e jagirdaran*), the feudal landowners of Hyderabad, most of whom were as indebted as his own father had been, due to a combination of expensive lifestyle choices and a neglect of their estates. Though he had the support of the government and the higher echelons of the nobility for this venture, he was not able to achieve much, and gave up in frustration after only three years. His activities within both of these associations were still very much premised on his identity as a nobleman among other noblemen and their clients. However, these experiences not only taught him how to navigate the nascent civil society of Hyderabad, they also led to his growing distance from the emotional space of the nobility and its ideals of manliness.²⁰

2. The Soldiers' Burning Love: The Streets and Camps of Medina

We have seen above that a critique of the nobility, bemoaning their loss of virile and military qualities – too much rose, too little sword – could form part of the emotional space of the court itself, which was never homogeneous. The contestation was part of the disparagement that the Naqshbandi Sufis had voiced since the middle of the 18th century. This critique changed its tonality in the second half of the 19th century, when traditional tropes increasingly merged with new ideas about decline and degeneration and the battle for survival among communities and nations.

These discussions of the causes and remedies for the decline constituted a general background for Indian debates in the interwar period, but had a particular impact on the Muslim discourse. What had happened to the community that God has chosen to rule the world and that, for centuries, had brought a glorious civilisation to India and to Hyderabad? How did it happen, a close confidant of Bahadur Yar Jang asked, that “those Jagirdars of Hyderabad, whose forefathers had gained their honour on the battlefield, now were glorified by the kettledrum, hordes of servants and a brotherhood of flatterers? While the ancestors had been like falcons, rejoicing in the air of battle, the descendants like vultures were used to the cages of the palaces. [...] Their hands had relinquished the arch, and now enjoyed the play of pigeons. Those who never tired to polish and sharpen their swords now rested with dance and music”.²¹

If the nobles, their love of luxury and response, and their failed masculinity, were central to the analysis of decline, the remedies Bahadur Yar Jang offered moved beyond the focus on the court. It was the reform of every individual Muslim (*islah-e nafs*), no matter what his social status, that paved the way to the reform of the community and the nation (*islah-e qaum*). Salvation (*najat*) and progress (*taraqqi*) merged: it was only

²⁰ See Ahmad, Sawanih, see note 5, vol. 1, 152–155.

²¹ Muhammad, Hayat, see note 5, 19. (All translations are my own.)

through religious renewal, through a reorientation of the entire community towards the ideals of the commonwealth founded by the Prophet at Medina, that a regeneration was possible.²² The idea of civilisation and regeneration was not new; we have seen it above as one of the tropes legitimising a traditional ruler. What was new was the fact that these reforms no longer required the figure of a spiritual renewer, but became the task of ordinary Muslims.

The first major activity in which Bahadur Yar Jang engaged, was the formation of a Hyderabad chapter of the Tablighi Jama'at, an organisation geared towards the reform and reconversion of Muslims in India, which had been started in 1926 by North Indian religious leaders. In theory, it was aimed at all Muslims that the activists deemed to have become lukewarm in their religious observances, or who had deviated from what they considered the pure forms of the faith and started to accommodate Hindu customs.²³ However, it gained its specific political importance from the fact that it matched the activities of the Hindu reform movement of the Arya Samaj, and likewise directed its mission primarily towards those beyond the pale of the Hindu caste system, many of whom had converted to Islam without being recognised as full-fledged Muslims. Whether these groups would in future identify as Hindus or as Muslims mattered tremendously in a situation in which numbers and votes became increasingly important and led to the deterioration of the relations between the communities and an increase in the number of violent communal clashes.²⁴

For three years, from 1927 to 1930, Bahadur Yar Jang toured the villages and countryside of Hyderabad and addressed crowds of Muslims. In doing so, he ran against the police, who accused him of raising communal passions, leading to clashes with the Arya Samaj, as well as against the established Muslims in the villages, who did not relish his message of Islamic equality and refused to accept the new converts into their ranks. These activities went far beyond what was expected from and acceptable for a nobleman. Traveling on ox carts or by foot, dressing simply, and sleeping in the villages transcended not only the geographical spaces shared by the nobles, but also their emotional space and their styles of male sociability. However, the spaces were not quite as neatly divided as they seemed at first sight. Bahadur Yar Jang could well pretend that he was nothing but an ordinary Muslim. His interlocutors remained very much aware of his status as a nobleman, and he himself did use his position of traditional social authority to back up his message. When villagers refused commensality to the new

²² See Nazir ud Din Ahmad ed., *Mashahir-e Dekan ki naziren* [Glances by Famous Men from the Deccan], n. p. [Hyderabad] 1979, 108.

²³ See Khalid Masud ed., *Travellers in Faith. Studies of the Tablighi Jama'at as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal*, Leiden 2000.

²⁴ See Cassie Adcock, *The Limits of Tolerance. Indian Secularism and the Politics of Religious Freedom*, New York 2013.

Muslims, he returned and threatened them that he, too, would no longer share their meals if they did not show a change of heart and behavior.²⁵

The appeal that reform – self-reform as well as missionary work – was the duty of every true Muslim also struck a chord among some members of the nobility, not least among them Mir Osman Ali Khan, the ruler. He not only continued to support Bahadur Yar Jang, but also invited Khwaja Hasan Nizami, one of the best-known North Indian propagators of *tabligh*, to Hyderabad and granted him a monthly stipend in support of his activities.²⁶ Another supporter was Nawab Nizam Jang (1871–1955), a Cambridge educated Hyderabad noble, political member of the Nizam's Government, Chief Justice, educationist, and poet.²⁷ After an early enthusiasm for all things European, he discovered later in life that “real faith alone could set the heart on fire and dart into the mind a sudden and overwhelming consciousness of reality”.²⁸

In other words, the emotional space of the court could be reconciled with the emotions of religion, facilitating the fluid movement between them, without leading to a merger of these emotional spaces or their styles of masculinity. Not all the nobles were Muslims, and even among the Muslims, not all felt this pull towards puritanical Islam. Even more important: if nobles had the capacity to belong to both spaces at the same time and to glide between them, sharing spaces with their common co-religionists, this did not imply that the emotional space of the court became accessible to the latter. Neither of the emotional styles was hegemonic at this point, but being able to fluidly move between them was possible only for men already in a position of power.

Missionary activity by itself – preaching and praying – was not sufficient for the salvation of the community and for ensuring its bright future. “As long as Muslims do not become soldiers of God, they will not receive his benevolence”,²⁹ Bahadur Yar Jang explained. The Khaksar movement, a volunteer organisation founded by Inayatullah Khan Mashriqi in Lahore in 1931, seemed to offer the solution Bahadur Yar Jang had been looking for.³⁰ Born to a middle class family in 1888, Inayatullah Khan had excelled in school and college, notably in mathematics and the sciences, to the degree that he was awarded a scholarship to Cambridge, where, again, he passed his exams with distinction. After his return, he aimed at bringing together Islam, the sciences – notably evolutionary biology – and activism, geared towards the regeneration of the Muslim

²⁵ See Muhammad, Hayat, see note 5, 59–66.

²⁶ See Roosa, Quandry, see note 1, 366–367.

²⁷ See Zahir Ahmad, *Life's Yesterday. Glimpses of Sir Nizam Jung and His Time*, Bombay 1926.

²⁸ Nizam Jung [Jang], *Hints to the Younger Generation*, Hyderabad 1946, 4.

²⁹ Nazir ud Din Ahmad ed., *Bahadur Yar Jang. Siyasi Taqarir [Bahadur Yar Jang: Political Speeches]*, Karachi 1981, 43.

³⁰ See Markus Daechsel, *Visionary of Another Politics. Inayatullah Khan 'al-Mashriqi' and Pakistan*, in: Ali Usman Qasimi and Megan Eaton Robb eds., *Muslims against the Muslim League*, Cambridge 2017, 190–219, with references to further literature.

community through the cultivation of a form of masculinity premised on soldierly qualities, on energy, and on the exaltation of strong bodies. Aware that this ideology resounded with contemporary German National Socialism, Mashriqi explained that his writings, translated into English and therefrom into German, had been an inspiration for Hitler already in the early 1920s.³¹

In order to bring about this regeneration, the aim of the Khaksars was to imbue Muslims once again with military virtues. Organised like an army, they wore uniforms and met regularly for drills, camps, and mock fights. To underline their humility (the original meaning of the word *khaksar*), they carried not arms, but spades, which could be used for constructive purposes, but whose sharpened blades were also deadly during encounters. The exercises, Mashriqi explained, had been designed “to make the Khaksar bold and fearless, to wear down his fat soul, to strengthen his obstinate and proud self and so to make his self the prize of the world by rendering it obedient”.³²

Islam, in this vision, had become inseparable from military life. It was only by cultivating soldierly virtues that Muslims would be able once again to recover their rightful position as rulers, in India and in the entire world. The Khaksars, in the words of their founder, were “a movement of men, lions, soldiers and belligerents, and never a movement for women, wives, eunuchs and boys”.³³ This program appealed to Bahadur Yar Jang’s sense of the Muslims’ need. He established a branch of the organisation in Hyderabad under his personal leadership and started to hold parades and camps. The masculinity that these exercises were to generate was heavily focused on the body, strengthening it and teaching it to deal with and even rejoice in deprivation. It was also through the body that a new sense of discipline was to be inoculated: uniforms and drills were the means to incorporate individuals into the larger body of the group. *Fana’*, a core concept in Sufism that designates the final stage of the path towards the divine, in which the disciple loses himself in God, now became an experience in which the army, standing in for the community or the nation, took the place of God and absorbed the individual.³⁴ Discipline meant the overcoming of unruly passions. Bahadur Yar Jang exclaimed that he had no patience with the *hangami josh wale*, with those who got excited with the prospect of an uproar.³⁵ But the *fana’* induced through discipline was also an intensely emotional experience: it was *josh*, the passionate fervour, which overwhelmed the individual participant and which became an object of desire in itself.

The example of Nizam Jang quoted above shows that even the traditional nobility was not impervious to the appeal of a masculinity focused on *josh*, on its exaltation of religious fervour and military prowess. This was a masculinity that, moreover, could be

³¹ See Muhammad Aslam Malik, Allama Inayatullah Mashrafi. A Political Biography, Karachi 2000.

³² Mashriqi quoted in: Shan Muhammad, The Khaksar Movement in India, Meerut 1973, 3.

³³ Mashriqi quoted in: Shan Muhammad, The Khaksar Movement, see note 32, 5.

³⁴ See Nazir ud Din Ahmad, Nigarshat-e Bahadur Yar Jang [Beautiful Writings of Bahadur Yar Jang], Hyderabad 1968, 41.

³⁵ See Ahmad, Siyasi, see note 29, 51.

depicted as following the example of the Prophet, “who spent his rest on the back of unsaddled horses”, and of his companions, “who went so hungry that they had to tie stones to their stomachs”.³⁶ Nevertheless, this fluidity should not obliterate the distance between the two emotional spaces. On the one hand, we have the courtly masculinity, which even if it drew on the sword never let go of the rose; the strength of noble men consisted in reining in every excess and in successfully striving towards balance and towards creating a character as a work of art. On the other hand, the Khaksars appealed to a military manhood that had nothing but scorn for the rose and the finer aspects of culture. They ardently desired to feel *josh* and to be overwhelmed by it – a passion whose very intensity seemed to guarantee its authenticity as it submerged the subject and his will. For this goal, Bahadur Yar Jang, in a stark contravention of everything expected from a noble, was not only willing to sacrifice bodily comfort, to wear dusty clothes, to carry the spade, and to walk the streets barefooted, but also to undergo public humiliation and punishment should he transgress the rules and become negligent in his observation of the prayers.³⁷

However, reading between the lines of Bahadur Yar Jang’s speeches conveys the impression that for many of his followers such an intensity of *josh* was difficult to sustain for longer periods. Even those who joined the Khaksars and participated in the training camps needed constant exhortation to overcome their desire for rest (*aram o rahat*), forgetting that rest had led the Muslims to their decline: “a community that seeks rest will end in calamity”. As soon as he would see that they had learnt to “come when you are called, to sit down when you receive the command, to move and walk when ordered”, he would take them with him and march forward, to sacrifice his and their lives and belongings for the rights of the Muslims.³⁸ The emotional space of military and violent manhood provided a stable reference point only for a few, extraordinarily committed individuals – most of whom, so it seems, floated in and out, combining this masculinity with other, probably more settled and quiet ways of living their manliness.

Leading the Khaksar branch of Hyderabad had a number of advantages for Bahadur Yar Jang, besides his proclaimed aim of reawakening the martial spirit and the manly courage (*mardana himmat*) of the Muslims.³⁹ Like the link to the Tablighis, it allowed him to spread his networks beyond Hyderabad and to become renowned as a Muslim leader in British India. In a situation where nationalist politics from across the border was an increasingly important factor in Hyderabad politics, this was an advantage not to be neglected. The Hyderabad government as well as the Nizam (who officially headed the government, but at times also acted as head of its opposition), no less than the Muslim League, sought increasingly to profit from him as a go-between.⁴⁰ How-

³⁶ Ahmad, Siyasi, see note 29, 53.

³⁷ See Muhammad, Hayat, see note 5, 77.

³⁸ Ahmad, Siyasi, see note 29, 51–52.

³⁹ See Ahmad, Siyasi, see note 29, 46, 44.

⁴⁰ See Pernau, Passing, see note 1; Roosa, Quandry, see note 1.

ever, while the leadership of the Tablighi Jama'at had left him a free hand, Mashriqi wanted to rule the Khaksars as a centralised organisation, with himself as the sole leader, and expected strict obedience from his local deputies. Bahadur Yar Jang was not willing to submit to this, not least because Mashriqi had already started at this point to take a number of highly controversial stands. These brought him into conflict not only with the colonial state, but also with the Shia minority, with the representatives of the landowners of the Punjab, who in turn were important potential allies for the Muslim League, and, finally, with Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League himself.⁴¹ This undermined the use of the Khaksars in the anyhow volatile political context of Hyderabad. While Bahadur Jang was never averse to taking up a fight himself, and was quite ready to alienate the state's Hindu majority with his military parades and grandiose speeches about the Muslims' natural right to rule the country, he also needed allies, and this meant that he wanted to decide himself which battles to pick up at which point. The space of the street, which he expertly dominated, needed to be in conversation not only with the court, but increasingly also with those spaces in which politicians who decided about the future distribution of power were meeting.

3. Threats and Compromises: Negotiating the Future

Unlike the court and the street, the negotiating table lacks an explicit discourse on emotions and masculinity. This silence, however, does not imply the absence of these categories. Often, negotiations are conceived as the alternative to violence. They are held to allow an adjustment of mutual interests through talks, and thereby to prevent or end fights and riots. For this reason, negotiators are believed to need two qualities. First, they must be powerful enough to be able to deliver the goods, that is, to convince those who matter (whether others in the political hierarchy or the constituency for whom they were speaking) to adhere to the compromise effected. Second, they need to be able to rein in their own feelings – not in the sense that they must renounce any expression of emotions, but they should at least keep their feelings from hindering the negotiation of the most favorable deal. In the 1930s and 1940s, in Hyderabad as well as in the rest of India, power and discipline were both qualities primarily associated with men.

However, negotiations never took place in a space beyond power relations, on the contrary, they were one of the means to exercise power effectively. This implies that a neat separation of this emotional space from other spaces is neither possible nor even aimed at by the historical subjects. The same leader whose role in the negotiations was premised on the absence or at least the control of emotions, had to be able to mobilize

⁴¹ See Iftikhar H. Malik, *Regionalism or Personality Cult? Allama Mashriqi and the Tehreek-i Khaksar in pre-1947 Punjab*, in: Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh eds., *Region and Partition. Bengal, Punjab and the Partition of the Subcontinent*, Bangalore 1999, 42–94.

his supporters by calling out their emotions and also credibly displaying the intensity of his own, thus constantly juggling with two styles of masculine emotions, separate yet fluidly blending into each other.

As briefly mentioned in the introduction, the Government of India Act of 1935 encompassed two main points. First, it enlarged the power of the elected provincial governments and made them de facto responsible to the legislative assemblies. Second, it promised further constitutional advancement at the centre, once the princely states had agreed to join an all-India federation. The British, however, never pursued the negotiations with the rulers with much energy. The beginning of the Second World War put an end even to these low-key attempts. For the national movement, this linkage meant an extra incentive to seize power in the princely states through democratisation – a princely government answering to an elected assembly would be more likely to agree to a federation and no longer block the road to independence.⁴²

Hyderabad had been able to stall the negotiations on the federation because the British had a strong interest in delaying further advance. With regard to the constitutional reforms in the state, things were more complicated, as the British wanted to keep the national movement out, but also wanted to avoid a situation in which a popular uprising would force them to intervene politically or even militarily on the side of the Nizam. Since the end of the First World War, Hyderabad had implemented a number of administrative reforms, aimed at increasing the state's overall efficiency and, notably, at strengthening the position of the council of ministers and the administration vis-à-vis the ruler.⁴³ By the 1930s, almost all the prominent nobles had been sidelined or reduced to figureheads. Even Maharaja Kishen Pershad, the symbol of old Hyderabad, was replaced in 1937 by Akbar Hydari, an administrator who had risen in the ranks. De facto, this ended the importance of the court as an institution, though individual nobles and, of course, the Nizam himself still played an important role in politics – but they no longer set the rules according to the emotional style which once had its centre at the court.

Unlike what the British hoped, efficiency was no substitute for democratisation. However, if democratisation implied a rule of the majority, the consequences would be nothing short of a political earthquake in Hyderabad. Muslims constituted only 15 percent of the population, but held the majority of state-level administrative jobs (though not in the districts and the villages and also not in trade and commerce), and considered themselves the ruling class. In 1937, Akbar Hydari announced the appointment of a Reform Committee, which was to deliver its report two years later.

In the meantime, the number and violence of riots, which had been on the increase since the beginning of the 1930s, reached a new peak in 1938. The ensuing ban on

⁴² For details on the negotiations concerning the federation see Pernau, *Passing*, see note 1, 191–229; Ramusack, *Indian*, see note 2, 245–274.

⁴³ See Roosa, *Quandry*, see note 1.

religious preaching in 1939 resulted in a large-scale political movement, led by the Hindu Mahasabha and the Arya Samaj. While the Congress quickly withdrew from the agitation, a number of Congress leaders joined the other two organisations, and the passions started to rise on all sides. It was against this background that the final report of the Reform Committee was read. For both Hindus and Muslims, the central, if not the only question was how any devolution of power and strengthening of the elected element affected the position of their own community.⁴⁴ This situation forced Bahadur Yar Jang and the Nizam into negotiating an uneasy coalition. The Nizam needed Bahadur Yar Jang, with his network among Muslim politicians in British India and his capacity to bring Muslims out onto the streets of Hyderabad as a counterweight against the British, the Hindus, and his own government. Bahadur Yar Jang, on his side, could only hope to hold up the impending changes by bolstering the Nizam's powers, at least for the time being. The attraction the Nizam felt towards reformist and potentially radical Islamic teachings and the emotions that went with it, as well as the familiarity of Bahadur Yar Jang with the courtly emotional space provided the means to negotiate this fraught – and dangerous – alliance.

The Association for the Unity among Muslims, *Majlis-e Ittehad-e Musalman*, had already been founded in 1927. The first generation consisted mostly of religious scholars who aimed at representing the different schools and sects in Islam and at overcoming the tensions between them. In 1938, Bahadur Yar Jang took over the association and rebuilt it from scratch. In the years to come, the *Majlis* reiterated the *Khaksars'* hope for a revival of the Muslim community through the cultivation of military virtues and manly fervour. They also adopted a number of their practices, such as military drills and parades, but centered them on the person of Bahadur Yar Jang as their unchallenged and charismatic leader. For him, in turn, the rapidly increasing number of members of the association and its rising visibility in the state's public sphere became a powerful force looming in the background of the negotiation table.⁴⁵

Initially, Bahadur Yar Jang pursued two aims: with regard to the British and, even more important, to the national movement in British India, he expanded what had previously been a peripheral argument, the reinterpretation of the first Nizam's move to

⁴⁴ See Ian Copland, 'Communalism' in Princely India. The Case of Hyderabad, 1930–1940, in: *Modern Asian Studies*, 22, 4 (1988), 783–814; Dirk Kooiman, *Communalism and the Indian Princely States. Travancore, Baroda and Hyderabad in the 1930s*, Delhi 2002. For a good collection of materials see Mamidipudi Venkatarangaiya ed., *The Freedom Struggle in Andhra Pradesh (Andhra)*, Vol. 4 (1932–1947), Hyderabad 1974; Yallampalli Vaikuntham, *People's Movements in the Princely States*, Delhi 2004.

⁴⁵ See Ahmad, Sawanih, see note 5, 2, 68–84. On the history and politics of the *Majlis*, beyond the studies already quoted, see Javeed Alam, *Composite Culture and Communal Consciousness. The Ittehadul Muslims in Hyderabad*, in: Vasudha Dalmia and Heinrich von Stietencron eds., *Representing Hinduism. Construction of Religious Traditions and National Identity*, Delhi 1987, 338–357; M.A. Moid and A. Suneetha, *Rethinking *Majlis'* Politics. Pre-1948 Muslim Concerns in Hyderabad State*, in: *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 55, 1 (2018), 29–42.

the Deccan in the early 18th century as a declaration of independence from the Mughal Empire. The alliance with the British would then have been between two sovereign rulers. If the British now were to abrogate the treaties, the argument ran, the status quo ante would be restored and Hyderabad would become sovereign once again. Regarding the state's internal politics, Bahadur Yar Jang intended to have the report on the constitutional committee amended in a way that the Nizam's powers would not be curtailed in favor of the legislative assembly or the Council of ministers, and that Muslims would keep an absolute majority in every elected body. To this aim, he pursued negotiations with the different powers in Hyderabad and at the all-India level. The increasing radicalism of the Majlis, however pleasing to the Nizam it might have been, did not go down well with the Council of Ministers and, notably, with Akbar Hydari, who at the beginning of 1940 officially forbade all functionaries of the state (administrators as well as nobles) to become members of the Majlis. Probably in consultation with the Nizam, Bahadur Yar Jang thereupon resigned his estates and titles.

In his speeches during this time—directed at the street audience, but indirectly also at his interlocutors around the negotiation table – Bahadur Yar Jang partly drew on the traditional language of noble loyalty and dedication to the ruler, pointing out that his family had been devoted to the rulers for five generations. Even his resignation of his estates, he explained, was a sacrifice demanded by his strong feelings of love and allegiance to the ruler.⁴⁶ But within the same speech, he switched codes and made it clear that his reason for defending the Nizam was that he saw “him, his throne, and his crown as the symbol of our [the Muslims’] political and cultural power”. It was not for the king of Hyderabad “that my heart beat and I am sacrificing my life. I am not Abdul Malik [the slave of the king], but Abdullah [the slave of God]”. Therefore, “the protection of the power of the Asafia [the ruling dynasty] was the protection of the Islamic community and the true profession of faith. To perish on this path is not death, but martyrdom and the image of eternal life”.⁴⁷ Political and religious images and aims merge together in this exaltation of the ultimate sacrifice. The sufferings and defeats he underwent did not diminish, but, on the contrary, exalt his pious virility and manly devotion, though no longer within the emotional space of the court, but of the street and the army.⁴⁸ This was a new form of masculinity, no longer premised on the balance between the rose and the sword, on the cultivation of harmony and polite intercourse, but on military virtue in the service of God and the Muslim community. It is impossible to tell from the sources whether the Nizam, too, had been drawn into the passionate longing for sacrifice and annihilation, or whether he still believed that he could control these forces and convert them into assets in the negotiations he was conducting with the

⁴⁶ See Ahmad, Siyasi, see note 29, 276–267.

⁴⁷ Ahmad, Siyasi, see note 29, 273, 278.

⁴⁸ See Ahmad, Siyasi, see note 29, 494.

British and with his Council of Ministers. For Bahadur Yar Jang, the emotions emerging from the street bolstered his position at the negotiation table, with the Nizam, but also with the Ministers and with the All India Muslim League – although in the end, he needed the negotiations no less than the other players to ratify his gains.

The masculinity Bahadur Yar Jang promoted was potentially disruptive, socially as well as politically. Locating sovereignty no longer in the person of the Nizam but in the Muslim community as a whole held out promises of participation for people who never had access to the court, neither as a physical space nor as an emotional one, and who could never have taken part in any high or medium-level negotiations. It would be interesting to follow in more detail how this influence of the street and its masculinity changed social relations also in other spheres. It would be worth following this up for the space of the family, where the claim of young men to embody the martial valor of Islam might have led to conflicts whenever they did not leave their new claim for power and authority at the doorstep, as well for that of labor relations. Unfortunately, the wealth of material we have on Bahadur Yar Jang and on the political history of Hyderabad is not matched by sources allowing to substantiate these hypotheses.

As mentioned earlier, in propagating this emotional masculinity, Bahadur Yar Jang was in tune with the sensibilities of many of his contemporaries in and beyond Hyderabad, not only from the radical Islamic spectrum, but equally among the Hindus and from the political right to the left.⁴⁹ However, this did not hold true for everyone. The core player of Muslim politics in the 1940s, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, a British-educated lawyer, was an astute negotiator, but less than comfortable in the passionate world of Bahadur Yar Jang and his military masculinity. Nevertheless, from the late 1930s onward, the two struck a successful alliance. From Jinnah's perspective, overlapping interests were all that was needed for the integration of the Majlis into his plans. For Bahadur Yar Jang and his followers, however, an alliance based solely on interests was out of tune – the emotional space of the negotiation table did not carry legitimacy in itself. The relation between the two dissimilar figures, therefore, had to be reinterpreted in the language of passionate friendship. Contemporary articles foregrounded Bahadur Yar Jang's profound devotion and love, visible in the way that "his face, the best mirror of the heart and the soul, began to glow as soon as he saw [Jinnah]".⁵⁰ Like every lover, he was ready to sacrifice his life for the beloved. Jinnah, in turn, knew that he had no purer soldier, no one more trustworthy or devoted, and fainted at the pain of the news of his death, or so the biographies of Bahadur Yar Jang claimed.⁵¹

⁴⁹ See Markus Daechsel, *The Politics of Self-Expression. The Urdu Middle-class Milieu in Midtwentieth Century India and Pakistan*, London 2006; Ali Raza and Franziska Roy, *Paramilitary Organisations in Interwar India, South Asia*, in: *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 38, 4 (2015), 671–689.

⁵⁰ Muhammad, Hayat, see note 5, 123.

⁵¹ See Muhammad, Hayat, see note 5, 123–125.

4. Conclusion

The balance between the three emotional spaces had profoundly shifted by the 1940s. The courtly space, once at the top of the hierarchy, no longer held a legitimation of its own, beyond a nostalgic yearning for a world that was quickly disappearing. But the space for negotiations, too, was dwindling rapidly in the years before the Partition of the subcontinent. If Bahadur Yar Jang had still been able to move between these spaces, which for him and his like were fluid, using the emotional appeal of each of them, after his death in 1944, the paramilitary wing of the Majlis became increasingly prominent. Finally, in 1947, it took over the government, unleashing a reign of terror before the intervention of the Indian Army and the end of the state and its elite in September 1948. The military intervention led to large-scale communal violence against the Muslims and against everyone thought linked to the Majlis; it effectively ended negotiations and left the court a shadow of its former self, thus marking the end of all three spaces and their contested emotional constitution of masculinity.