

From madness to eternity

Psychiatry and Sufi healing in the postmodern
world

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D E C L A R A T I O N

I, Athar Ahmed Yawar, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

Signed:

A B S T R A C T

Problem: Academic study of religious healing has recognised its symbolic aspects, but has tended to frame practice as ritual, knowledge as belief. In contrast, studies of scientific psychiatry recognise that discipline as grounded in intellectual tradition and naturalistic empiricism. This asymmetry can be addressed if: (a) psychiatry is recognised as a form of “religious healing”; (b) religious healing can be shown to have an intellectual tradition which, although not naturalistic, is grounded in experience. Such an analysis may help to reveal why globalisation has meant the worldwide spread not only of modern scientific medicine, but of religious healing. An especially useful form of religious healing to contrast with scientific medicine is Sufi healing as practised by the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, which has become remarkable for its spread in the “West” and its adaptation to vernacular cultures.

Research questions: (1) How is knowledge generated and transmitted in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order? (2) How is healing understood and done in the Order? (3) How does the Order find a role in the modern world, and in the West in particular?

Methods: Anthropological analysis of psychiatry as religious healing; review of previous studies of Sufi healing and the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order; ethnographic participant observation in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, with a special focus on healing. Ethnography was done at many sites, over a period of 11 years.

Findings: (1) Knowledge is generated by means of the individual’s contact with Shaykh Nazim, who, in turn, is said to be in contact with the Prophet. Knowledge is therefore personalised, situational, and ever-changing. Purification of the *nafs* (*psyche*, soul) is held to increase the capacity for knowledge. (2) Discourse in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order centres around healing of the soul, which is held to be a salvific and intellectual exercise. Activities and intellectual disciplines are subsumed into soul-healing. Healing techniques are eclectic and universally applied, ultimately under the perceived direction of Shaykh Nazim. (3) The Order attracts followers through charisma and personal contacts; adapts to local vernaculars; creates alternative social networks; makes everyday activities part of soul-healing; provides low-cost personalised healing; and reflects postmodern concerns and ecumenism.

Implications: Healing that reflects pre-modern, religious models of the intellect, and a medical science that is not merely naturalistic, has encompassed scientific narratives and gained adherents in the postmodern world.

I M P A C T S T A T E M E N T

This thesis is:

- ◆ One of the first, perhaps the first, extended studies of Sufi healing in the West.
- ◆ One of the first, perhaps the first, extended studies to consider Sufi healing in the context of psychiatry.
- ◆ The first study to focus explicitly on healing in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order.

This thesis has:

- ◆ De-exotified Sufi healing, by showing that it can be not only in the West, but of the West; and that it is not only liminal and dramatic, but can be an understated part of everyday life.
- ◆ Located Sufi healing as a tradition operating in the postmodern West.
- ◆ Shed some light on the reasons for the persistence and popularity of religious healing in a postmodern age.
- ◆ Shown how religious healing can arise from ways of knowing based on experience, rather than mere “belief”.
- ◆ Shown a close relationship between religious healing and pre-modern models of the intellect.

This thesis can:

- ◆ Inform psychiatrists on what might be “normal”, and “abnormal”, in a Sufi community or individual.
- ◆ Prompt reflections on the origins and roles of scientific and religious healing of psychological suffering.
- ◆ Give psychiatrists an enhanced understanding of, and ability to co-operate with, emic religious healing.

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NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

The lingua franca in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order is English. However, on fieldwork, many other languages were used in my presence: principally German, Turkish, and Arabic. Research papers and books contained words from these languages and, in addition, French, Spanish, Persian, Urdu, Kazakh, Turkmen, and Gujarati.

The German, French, and Spanish uses of the Latin alphabet are too widely known to discuss here. Modern Turkish is generally written in the Latin alphabet, including some letters not found in English:

Turkish Letter	Pronunciation
C, c	j in jam
Ç, ç	ch in checkmate
Ğ, ğ	Elongates the preceding vowel.
I, ı (i without a tittle)	i in flirt
İ, i (i with a tittle)	ie in piece
Ö, ö	u in purpose
Ş, ş	sh in shine
Û, ü	ew in dew

Persian, Ottoman Turkish, and Urdu are generally written in variants of the Arabic script. Kazakh, Turkmen, and Gujarati are also written in Arabic script, although other alphabets predominate (Latin and Cyrillic for Kazakh and Turkmen; a variant of Devanagari for Gujarati). For all these languages, I have used the transliteration system, for Arabic script, of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam, third edition (EI3)*, with one modification: when pairs of letters are used to signify a single consonant (for instance, sh for ش), the letters are underlined. This was, in fact, the practice in *EI2*.

The letters *b, d, f, g, h, j, k, m, p, r, s, t, v, w, y,* and *z* are pronounced more or less as in English.

Vowels are pronounced as follows:

Transliteration	Pronunciation
A, a	a in man
Ā, ā	a in father
E, e	ai in fair
I, i	i in sit
Ī, ī	ea in tea
O, o	o in short
Ō, ō	o in over
U, u	u in put
Ū, ū	oo in fool

Consonants not already mentioned are transliterated as follows (I have not mentioned phonemes that do not occur in the thesis):

Transliteration	Arabic or Persian Letter	Sound
Ç, ç	چ	Ch in checkmate .
<u>Dh</u> , <u>dh</u>	ذ	th in this (Arabic) z in zoo (Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Urdu) ¹

¹ I have not mentioned pronunciation variations in Kazakh, Turkmen, and Gujarati, since I quote from these languages only very briefly.

D, d	ض	Emphatic d (Arabic) ² z in zoo (Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Urdu)
<u>Gh</u> , <u>gh</u>	غ	Sound made when gargling with an empty throat. Similar to French r .
H, h	ح	Hoarse h coming from the throat (Arabic). h in hello (Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Urdu)
<u>Kh</u> , <u>kh</u>	خ	ch in loch .
L, l	ل	l in love . When used as the definite article in Arabic, pronounced like the subsequent letter, when that letter is d , <u>dh</u> , ḍ , n , r , s , <u>sh</u> , ṣ , t , <u>th</u> , ṭ , z , or z .
N, n	ن	n in noon In Arabic, sometimes elided with the subsequent consonant.
Q, q	ق	k coming from the throat. Often pronounced in contemporary Persian as a <u>gh</u> .
<u>Sh</u> , <u>sh</u>	ش	sh in shine
S, s	ص	Emphatic s , similar to sw in sword (Arabic) s in soup (Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Urdu)
<u>Th</u> , <u>th</u>	ث	th in think (Arabic) s in soup (Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Urdu)
T, t	ط	Emphatic t (Arabic) t in tea (Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Urdu)
Z, z	ظ	Emphatic z , arguably closer to th in this than to z in zoo (Arabic) z in zoo (Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Urdu)
ʔ	ء	Soft glottal stop. Very common in English: for instance, precedes the <i>a</i> in <i>apple</i> .
ʕ	ع	Hard glottal stop, from the middle of the throat (Arabic) Soft glottal stop (Persian, Ottoman Turkish, Urdu).

² “A characteristic feature of the Semitic languages is the so-called emphatic consonants. In Arabic, these are articulated by a process of velarisation: the tip of the tongue is lowered, the root of the tongue is raised towards the soft palate, and in the process the timbre of the neighbouring vowels is shifted.” (Versteegh 2001: 20)

When quoting material, I have changed the author's transliteration to match the system above, for the sake of consistency. Any italics, underlining, bold type, or capitals in quoted text are also found in the original, unless otherwise stated. I have left archaic spellings unchanged, but have changed US spellings to British ones. I have corrected spelling and punctuation errors, as opposed to idiosyncrasies, in my sources. I have not transliterated proper nouns; generally, I have given the names of people and places as they tend to appear in print: so the name of the Algerian Sufi who is buried next to Ibn Arabi is given as Emir Abdel Kader, rather than Amir Abd al-Qadir.

Some specialised terms, such as Sufi, shaykh, zikr, and dergah, are established in the English lexicon, or undergoing that process. They have been transliterated once in the main text, and thereafter left in English. Other terms, such as *fiqh*, have been transliterated throughout. Both sets of terms are transliterated and explained in the Glossary.

The Glossary is based on standard definitions, and on my experience and impressions of Naqshbandi-Haqqani usage.

Most of the transliterations were checked by Dr Asim Zubčević, of the University of Sarajevo; any errors remain entirely mine.

NOTE ON TRANSLATION

Some Naqshbandi-Haqqani prayers had not previously been published in English translation; or existing translations were clearly inaccurate or incomplete. I have therefore, despite knowing very little Arabic, translated the prayers myself, with the assistance of Lane's magisterial *Arabic-English Lexicon* (1863–93/ 1984); as well as the Ottoman Turkish, Persian, and Urdu dictionaries of Redhouse (1890/ 1978), Steingass (1892/ 2008), and Platts (1884/ 2006), and Kassis' Koran

concordance (1983). Dr Zubčević checked some of the translations for obvious mistakes; any errors that remain are mine.

Some monographs on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order have been published in German, but not (yet) translated into English; some interesting and valuable papers on Sufi studies exist only in French or Spanish. Where I have quoted from these papers, the translations are mine.

For quotes from the Koran, I have relied on existing translations, principally Arberry's (1964). For hadiths, I have used the translations provided in the collections I consulted. If I came across obvious solecisms or inaccuracies in these translations, I attempted to amend them. I have not taken a critical approach to the study of Hadith, since this dissertation is an ethnographic study of discourse and practice, not a study of the origins of Hadith.

STRUCTURE OF THE REFERENCES SECTION

For ease of reference, the many books attributed to Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters have been listed before other publications, in a separate section. They are referred to in footnotes by the author's name and an italicised, abbreviated version of the title; as well as the year and, where appropriate, the page number.

A list of selected Naqshbandi-Haqqani magazines, newsletters, and websites follows the main part of the references section.

Introduction: Psychiatry and religious healing

maggie and milly and molly and may
went down to the beach(to play one day)

and maggie discovered a shell that sang
so sweetly she couldn't remember her troubles,and

milly befriended a stranded star
whose rays five languid fingers were;

and molly was chased by a horrible thing
which raced sideways while blowing bubbles:and

may came home with a smooth round stone
as small as a world and as large as alone.

For whatever we lose(like a you or a me)
it's always ourselves we find in the sea

—e e cummings³

Psychological suffering is ubiquitous, as are attempts to understand and ameliorate it. *Psychiatry* can be defined as the efforts of a *iatros*, or healer, to heal the *psyche*. In contemporary usage, *psychiatry* refers almost exclusively to a branch of modern medicine. In its own discourse, psychiatry is scientific, rational, and, increasingly, “evidence-based”. It is regulated and, in general, funded by modern states. Psychiatry is taught as an academic and vocational discipline in universities and hospitals. It has epistemic and legal privilege: a psychiatrist can determine whether or not someone has the capacity for decision-making or for work, or whether a person needs to be

³ Cummings 1994: 682. Originally published in *95 Poems*, 1958.

confined or medicated for his own or the public's safety, and the psychiatrist's judgement is accepted in law; it can only be challenged by other psychiatrists.

Scientific psychiatry is a hybrid discipline, in which suffering or deviance is given a naturalistic explanation and treatment.⁴ Its globalisation reflects the increasing dominance of scientific discourse, and the political and commercial power of the institutions that uphold it. However, a reverse globalisation is also taking place, in which religious healing from various cultures spreads to the "West", where scientific psychiatry was developed, and where most psychiatric research is done.

Medical anthropology is primarily concerned with the personalistic and symbolic efficacy of healing. The healer is understood to manipulate symbols to influence the thinking, emotions, and behaviour of the patient and those around her;⁵ or to engage in a discourse which allows the patient to find meaning in her suffering. To use religious healing is therefore not considered necessarily irrational or unhelpful. However, the ultimate frame of reference is naturalistic. Healing is explained as regression to the mean ("it would have happened anyway"); the use of psychological influence to create a physiological response;⁶ or the activation of a naturalistic mechanism not understood scientifically by the healer. The demons, angels, fairies, ghosts, gods, and energies with whom the healer claims to interact might be a matter of everyday experience, even life or death, in the field, but have a lower ontological status once the anthropologist has returned to the academy. Their existence is symbolic, cultural, even experiential, but not scientific; and, therefore, not fully "real".⁷ Traditional medicine is "ritual", conducted by "healers" who have belief, tradition, and experience, and manipulate symbols; modern medicine is practice, by doctors who draw on knowledge and objective findings, and use technology.

⁴ Berrios and Marková 2012.

⁵ Turner 1967.

⁶ This mechanism has also been used to explain sudden death or illness caused by magic (Lester 1972; Devisch 2003).

⁷ A notable exception is Paul Stoller, who learned Songhay sorcery, and attributed an episode of paralysis to a sorcerous attack by a rival (Stoller and Olkes 1987). Later (2004), he used sorcery, in addition to modern oncology, to treat his lymphoma, although his later narrative is slightly ambivalent on whether the sorcery is helpful for the emic reasons he learnt in Niger.

This is, ultimately, the translation of one belief system into another. Similar manoeuvres occur when the effectiveness of religious healing is assessed scientifically. Emic diagnostic systems and terms are translated into etic ones;⁸ the patient is reduced to his or her diagnosis, for the purposes of assessment and treatment; the outcome is determined in terms of the diagnosis.

Cultural psychiatry aims to make non-Western worldviews understandable to the psychiatrist, and, in doing so, to make diagnosis responsive to the needs and perspectives of the patient. Yet the reification of “culture” can be at the expense of the needs of the individual, who may occupy a marginal or problematic role within that culture. Even if the individual is understood sympathetically, his experience is translated, for the purposes of diagnosis and treatment, into the conceptual and power structures of scientific psychiatry.⁹ A gap exists between medical anthropology, that can consider the symbolic value of healing without validating it naturalistically, and cultural psychiatry, that transforms worlds of emic meaning into diagnosis and treatment.

This gap can be bridged if psychiatry is seen to be a discourse that, behind its naturalistic facade, is fundamentally personalistic: about the same problems of suffering, meaning, and symbol that are addressed by religion. The converse operation, making religious healing naturalistic, loses the worlds of meaning that make religious healing understandable and meaningful. Religious healing can, however, be shown to have a *scientia*, a way of knowing that is rationally demonstrable; or, at least, an epistemology with principles that are rooted in experiences perhaps no less valid than those of modern science.

This dissertation will therefore briefly demonstrate, in Chapter 1, that psychiatry’s beliefs can be located in religious discourse; and, although elucidated by empirical enquiry, are not in themselves empirical. This chapter will also outline a historical background against which to consider the role of psychiatry, and that of religious healing, in modernity. The main body of the dissertation will investigate healing in a religious group, with particular attention to the generation and transmission

⁸ In Geertz’s sarcastic aphorism (1984: 269), “culture is icing, biology [sic], cake”.

⁹ Kirmayer 2012.

of knowledge within that group. The group selected for investigation is the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi order: Sufi healing can be usefully contrasted with scientific psychiatry; and the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order is outstanding in its global distribution and its adaptation to local cultures.

Far from being essentially naturalistic, Sufi healing exists in a world of angels, jinns, souls, and an Almighty God. It rarely, if ever, has state support. Even the Indian state, which supports various healing traditions through the Ministry of AYUSH,¹⁰ banned traditional mental healing at Sufi centres in 2002.¹¹ In common with other forms of healing practised by lower castes and religious minorities, it was seen as inferior, unscientific, and superstitious.¹² Sufi healing is often seen as the medicine of the poor, and as articulating premodern concerns in a modernising world.¹³

Sufi healing has often been researched in Africa and Asia, particularly in South Asia;¹⁴ but it has rarely been studied ethnographically in the “West”. Probably the most prominent Sufi group in the West is the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order. The number of adherents is not known, but the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order is generally recognised to have an exceptionally large and diverse membership,¹⁵ including a high proportion of converts to Islam.¹⁶ It is known for its adaptation to modern discourse and technologies, and its embracing of vernacular cultures. The order makes extensive use of the internet,¹⁷ and participates in “Western” politics;¹⁸ the same dervishes can dwell among spirits and jinns in Malaysia, or evoke Christ and St George in north London.¹⁹

¹⁰ An acronym for Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani (Graeco-Arabic) medicine, Siddha, and Homoeopathy. The Indian state also supports naturopathy.

¹¹ Davar 2015.

¹² Sax and Basu 2015.

¹³ Basu 2015; Saheb 1998; Zarccone and Hobart 2017.

¹⁴ Prominent studies of Sufi healing include those by Joyce Flueckiger (2006), H el ene Basu (1998, 2015), and Katherine Ewing (1984, 1997), all from South Asia; and Vincent Crapanzano’s study (1973) of the Hamadsha order in Morocco. Recent collection of papers by Sax and Basu (2015) and Zarccone and Hobart (2017) concentrate largely on South Asia (for Sufi healing) and Central Asia respectively

¹⁵ Nielsen et al 2006.

¹⁶ B ottcher 2011; Damrel 2006.

¹⁷ Schmidt 2004.

¹⁸ Stjernholm 2011; Dickson 2014.

¹⁹ Farrer 2009.

The Naqshbandi-Haqqani order is a branch of the traditional and historically essentialist Naqshbandi order.²⁰ Its master, Shaykh Nazim al-Haqqani, is in a chain of teachers that is claimed to reach back to the Prophet Muhammad. Many Sufi groups in the West downplay the Islamic influences on their beliefs and practice,²¹ but this is not the case with the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis. The operation of an Islamic Sufi group in the West is revealing not just because “Islam” and modern science represent alternative (though not necessarily mutually exclusive, or monolithic) ways of interpreting the world, but because Islam is often considered in opposition to modernity, or even, in polemical and politicised discourse, in opposition to the “West” itself.

As a traditional Sufi order, the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order might be expected to generate and transmit knowledge, and heal, in ways classically associated with Sufis. As a Sufi order in the modern world, that has been particularly prominent in the West, the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order might be expected to have adapted, in some way, to modern epistemologies and scientific medicine. The research questions are: (1) How is knowledge generated and transmitted in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order? (2) How is healing understood and done in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order? (3) How does the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order find a role in the modern world, and in the West in particular? The only way to answer these questions is by ethnography, since literary and historical study will not describe what is being done and experienced in the present.

Chapters 2 and 3 provide the academic background to these questions. Chapter 2 addresses knowledge and healing among Sufis in general, and Chapter 3 provides an overview of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order. Chapter 2.1 shows how notions of Sufi knowledge have developed, and how Sufi knowledge is used in the modern world: the first part is, by necessity, historical and literary; the second part draws on ethnographic study. Chapter 2.2 briefly discusses the concept of Sufi healing, and provides an overview of recent ethnographic studies of the subject.

²⁰ Gaborieau et al 1990; Weismann 2007.

²¹ Hermansen 2000; Küçük 2008.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of research on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order. Much has been done, much of which is fairly obscure, and little of which concentrates on knowledge or healing. Existing findings on these topics are summarised. A theme of existing research is that, while traditional in the sense that they claim an Islamic identity, the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis might not be doctrinally or ethically typical of Sufis, and certainly not of the Naqshbandi order.²² Chapter 3 therefore outlines the history and characteristics of the Naqshbandi order, to allow later consideration of whether the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis do indeed stand in this tradition.

Chapter 4 discusses the ethnographic methods used, with reference to the strengths and shortcomings of previous studies. Chapter 5 presents findings on knowledge in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order. Chapter 6 presents findings on healing in the order. Since the primary focus of this dissertation is on healing, Chapter 6 is more extensive than Chapter 5.

Chapter 7 is a summary and discussion of the findings of the dissertation, with reference to the research questions. The conclusions of the study are outlined, together with a discussion of its limitations, and likely directions for future research.

²² See, for instance, Buehler 2001; Algar 1990a; Stjernholm 2011.

Chapter 1: Psychiatry's beliefs

Spellbound by Tlön's rigour, humanity has forgotten,
and continues to forget, that it is the rigour of chess
masters, not of angels.

—Jorge Luis Borges: *Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius*.²³

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- 1.1 *The development of the psyche and the iatros.* An outline of psychiatry's core beliefs about the *psyche* and the *iatros*, and a brief account of their historical development.
- 1.2 *Psychiatry as religious healing.* A demonstration that psychiatry can be considered a religious activity; an outline of its approach to salvation.

1.1 *The development of the psyche and the iatros*

Each school of psychiatry must have an understanding of the following:

- A. What is the *psyche*? Mind, soul? Material or non-material? Mortal or immortal?
- B. Who is the *iatros*? A doctor, shaman, holy person?
- C. What can go wrong with the *psyche*?
- D. How should the *iatros* heal the *psyche*?

In scientific psychiatry, the *psyche* is the mind: it is generated by, and within, the brain. Suffering is transformed into illness; which, in turn, becomes disease; which is attributed to anatomical deficit

²³ Borges 2000: 24.

or physiological dysfunction of the brain. Typically, the causes of suffering are sought in neurotransmitters (or their receptors), or in genes. Even when suffering is understood to have been triggered by personal experience or shaped by social circumstance, it is held to manifest in disordered brain chemistry or structure.

The *iatros* is a physician who has specialised in psychiatry; his training and assessment have been overseen by universities and professional bodies, and ultimately by the state. The curriculum and practice are broadly similar worldwide: a psychiatrist who has trained in one country is typically considered suitable to work in another, perhaps after passing an examination designed to ensure he understands local practice.

The diseases recognised by psychiatrists are described in diagnostic manuals. The manuals in wide international use are the World Health Organisation's *International Classification of Diseases* (now in its tenth edition, *ICD-10*), and the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM-5)*. These manuals do not actually describe pathological processes: but each disease is tacitly understood, at least in theory, to be caused by a particular set of such processes.

The treatment prescribed by psychiatrists nearly always consists of a chemical, administered as a pill or injection. Some psychiatrists give psychotherapy. This too is understood to change the functioning of the brain. Freud used the term *die Seele* (the soul) to describe the *psyche*,²⁴ but considered it to be entirely material.²⁵ Freud's description of the mind has been said to reflect a metaphor of fluid mechanics;²⁶ the metaphor of cognitive-behavioural therapy is that of engineering: unpleasant emotions or unhelpful behaviours are depicted as arising from thought processes that can be fixed.

²⁴ Often translated as "mind": Bettelheim 1983.

²⁵ Ellenberger 1970.

²⁶ Illich 1982. Freud developed more than one model of the mind, but, in each model, an ultimately material mind was divided into parts, between which energy flowed.

Suffering is not, of course, experienced as dysfunction of the brain, but as (for instance) thoughts, emotions, or pains. The transformation of suffering, which is experienced by a person, to disease, diagnosed by a doctor, privileges a scientific account over the narrative and perspectives of the sufferer. This process, however potentially disempowering to the patient, makes scientific objectivity central to psychiatry.

However, a brief historical overview of psychiatry's beliefs shows that they have arisen through philosophical and theological debate, rather than being innately rational or empirical.

A. *The psyche as brain*

In its earliest recorded uses, the term *psyche* described a non-material, immortal part or aspect of a human being.²⁷ Homer's Odysseus was told by his mother that, after death, "the *psyche* flutters out [of the body] like a dream and flies away."²⁸ Plato's Socrates faced death cheerfully because he was confident that his *psyche* would find eternal happiness.²⁹ He described the *psyche* as having three parts: an appetitive *epithumetikon*, a moral and rational *logistikon*, and a *thumos* or *thumoides*, that could give energy to either of the other faculties. The *epithumetikon*, *thumos*, and *logistikon* were located in the abdomen, chest, and head respectively.³⁰ In a healthy soul, all parts functioned correctly, directed by the *logistikon*.³¹ Body-healing was an aspect of soul-healing: in *Charmides*, Socrates remarks that Greek physicians fail to cure many diseases because they disregard the fact that "all good and evil, whether in the body or the whole man, originates... in the soul... And therefore if the head and body are to be well, you must begin by curing the soul."³²

²⁷ Gundert 2000.

²⁸ Simon 1978: 55.

²⁹ Robinson 2000.

³⁰ Simon 1978.

³¹ Simon 1978.

³² Robinson 2000: 39.

The physician Galen (died *c* 210) subscribed to the Socratic (or Platonic) model of the tripartite soul.³³ Like the generally naturalistic Hippocratics, who located thought and emotions in various parts of the body,³⁴ Galen described the *psyche* in materialistic, deterministic terms, and described bodily ways to treat the soul's afflictions. However, he also approached the soul personalistically and ethically, and described philosophical and psychological ways to address suffering. In *The diagnosis and treatment of the affections and errors peculiar to each person's soul*, Galen advised readers to elect a "supervisor", a trustworthy friend who would provide critical feedback on the reader's character and behaviour.³⁵

Galen said that he did not know how the *psyche* entered or left the body, or what it consisted of. He posited that it was linked to the body by *pneuma*, a substance that was refined from air.³⁶ His use of *psyche* and *pneuma* contrasted with that of St Paul, who drew on the Hebrew distinction between *nephesh* and *ruach* (which had Arabic cognates in *nafs* and *rūh*) to describe a vital, though immortal, *psyche* and a godly *pneuma*.³⁷ Nonetheless, Galen was perhaps the most influential physician in the development of the humoral system that dominated medieval medicine: in the Islamic world, then, via translations from Arabic to Latin, in western Christendom.³⁸

The physician worked in a world full of souls: Aristotle, whose natural philosophy was influential, described every living thing as having a soul.³⁹ Natural philosophy tended to overlap with natural magic, in which the practitioner sought to influence the souls of things.⁴⁰ Unseen beings such as fairies and demons could influence the mind and body; a sorcerer could attack other human beings

³³ von Staden 2000.

³⁴ Trener and Horden 2017.

³⁵ Thumiger 2017.

³⁶ von Staden 2000.

³⁷ Dunn 1998.

³⁸ Wallis 2010; Porter 1997.

³⁹ van der Eijk 2000.

⁴⁰ Mellyn 2017; Thomas 1971. The Physician's keen interests in "magyk natureel" and astrology are reported by Chaucer's narrator in the Prologue to the *Canterbury Tales*.

with the assistance of such beings.⁴¹ Medical narratives could intersect with religious themes about suffering being induced by sin; or being a trial sent by God. Suffering could ultimately be traced to the Fall of Man, which St Hildegard of Bingen (d 1179), known for her skill in healing, linked directly to melancholy:

What is now black bile in the human body was as radiant as the dawn in [Adam] and he possessed in himself knowledge and the perfection of good deeds. But when Adam transgressed, the radiance of innocence was darkened in him and his eyes, which before this had seen heavenly things, were snuffed out, and bile changed to bitterness in him and black bile into the blackness of impiety, and he was utterly changed into another form. And so his soul contracted sorrow and immediately looked to make excuses by getting angry.⁴²

From the 17th century, natural philosophy became more mechanistic and empirical; the existence of souls in nature came to seem unproven and then superstitious.⁴³ The *psyche* became the mind, which was localised to the brain.⁴⁴ The *pneuma* came to seem anachronistic, as did fairies and demons.⁴⁵ Medical research was increasingly based on physiology, which was held to require vivisection (of animals) and corpse-dissection:⁴⁶ the machine metaphor allowed the dead body to be elided with the living organism. Indeed, once spirits and souls had been banished from medicine, the qualitative difference between life and matter was difficult to specify.⁴⁷

By definition, a materialist science cannot exclude the presence of a non-material soul or spirit. However, the soul and spirit are rarely, if ever, mentioned in psychiatric textbooks. If they exist, they are beyond the expertise of the psychiatrist. In any case, psychiatry explains suffering and

⁴¹ Wallis 2010; Pollington 2000; Porter 1997; Thomas 1971.

⁴² Wallis 2010: 358.

⁴³ Webster 1982; Hanegraaff 2012.

⁴⁴ Healy 1997; Swift, in *A Tale of a Tub* (1704), satirised the absence of evidence for this belief.

⁴⁵ Porter 2004.

⁴⁶ Wootton 2007.

⁴⁷ Vitalism, the belief that life has a special quality or nature that cannot be attributed to matter, was widely held to be obsolete by the outbreak of the First World War. In 1894, Max Rubner had shown that a living dog seemed to obey the law of conservation of energy; in 1903, Wilbur Atwater and Francis Benedict found that human beings also obeyed this law. Atwater and Benedict's findings have subsequently been challenged (Blaxter 1989; Sheldrake 2012). Such experiments could not, of course, show that a non-material soul did not exist, but were seen to indicate that its study was not relevant to physiology.

healing without recourse to such concepts as spirit and soul, so their omission can be viewed as an application of Occam's razor.

However, the limitation of the mind to the brain is not accepted by all philosophers and neuroscientists. The process by which the brain, a ball consisting largely of fat and salty water, can generate the mind is, to say the least, not fully elucidated. The problem is not merely one of physiology but of perspective: the brain is analysed objectively, the mind experienced subjectively. This has, perhaps appropriately, been termed the "hard problem" of neuroscience.⁴⁸

Experiments showing that specific parts of the brain are necessary for certain mental functions do not show that these parts of the brain generate the mind.⁴⁹ Moreover, the mind has sometimes been observed to work when the brain is metabolically dead (in near-death experiences);⁵⁰ or when it is very small and of unconventional structure, in cases of extreme hydrocephalus and other developmental abnormalities.⁵¹ In terminal lucidity, a phenomenon observed since the days of the Hippocratics, people with severe dementia or learning disabilities show normal intelligence just before death.⁵²

Even if a materialist view of the mind is accepted, psychological problems cannot necessarily be localised to the brain alone. If a psychological presentation is found to be caused by an organ other than the brain—as when, for instance, depression is associated with a deficit of adrenocortical or thyroid hormones—it ceases to be a psychiatric matter. Conversely, subjectively physical experiences, such as the loss of use of a limb, can be ascribed (often against the patient's intuition) to dissociation, and come under the aegis of the psychiatrist. When a disorder is found to have an anatomical or physiological cause, even within the brain, it generally ceases to be considered a psychiatric illness. Psychosis that would otherwise be labelled as schizophrenia, but is caused by, for

⁴⁸ Chalmers 2007.

⁴⁹ Penfield 1975.

⁵⁰ Parnia et al 2014.

⁵¹ Lewin 1980; Feuillet et al 2007.

⁵² Nahm et al 2012; Nahm and Greyson 2013.

instance, an autoimmune disorder destroying neurotransmitter receptors in the brain, is a matter for the neurologist.

A minority of illnesses labelled as psychiatric do indeed have identifiable anatomical or physiological causes. These illnesses are generally thought to have poor prognoses, and to benefit from the psychiatrist's expertise at managing behavioural and social problems. Examples include learning disability (for example, Down's syndrome), dementia caused by genetic disorder (Huntington's chorea) or stroke, and the emotional and cognitive syndromes caused by brain injury.

B. The identity of the iatros

Since the *psyche* is thought to be generated by a bodily organ, the *iatros* is a physician. Other professionals with an interest in mental illness work, generally in teams led by doctors, to address diagnoses and administer treatments defined by physiological psychiatry; or practice "alternative" medicine, outside the state-sanctioned medical system.

But the conversion of suffering into illness is a philosophical, not an empirical position. Much suffering has, and continues to be, addressed by other means, including the religious and philosophical; Socrates described himself as a *iatros tes psyches*—a healer of souls—and his work as "what my God commands".⁵³

C. Diagnosis of mental illness

The Hippocratics described the syndromes of *mania*, *melancholia*, and *phrenitis*: concepts that could be traced in Cornelius Celsus' *De Medicina*, which presented the first Latin psychiatric taxonomy.⁵⁴ Celsus (died *c* AD 50) described *tria genera insaniae*: *furor*, which was acute and marked by fever; *mania*, which lasted longer; and *maestitudo*, which corresponded to what was than

⁵³ McNeill 1977; Szasz 1988: 28.

⁵⁴ Thumiger 2017.

understood as a melancholic profile.⁵⁵ Celsus' classification persisted, through the Graeco-Arabic tradition, to re-enter Latin medicine as *frenesis*, *mania*, and *melancholia*.⁵⁶ Only in the 17th century did this classification meet sustained challenge, spurred by the development of physiological, rather than humoral, medicine.

The psychiatric taxonomies that flourished from the Enlightenment onwards were generally short-lived; regional or personally idiosyncratic; apt to evolve; and of various epistemic bases.⁵⁷ As late as 1852, Augustin Morel described a syndrome, *démence précoce*, rooted in the concept of *dégénération*, in which ill health, originally caused by the Fall of Man, worsened down the generations.⁵⁸ This disorder was listed, as *dementia praecox*, in the fourth (1893) edition of *Psychiatrie*, by the influential German psychiatrist Emil Kraepelin.⁵⁹ Its criteria continued to evolve; in 1911, Eugen Bleuler argued, eventually decisively, that the disorder should be named *schizophrenia*, because it was not a true dementia.⁶⁰ It was now deemed to be pathological (although autopsies by the renowned Alois Alzheimer revealed nothing of note) and partly hereditary.⁶¹

Original sin had been partly replaced by genetics; although, whereas original sin was universal, madness seemed to run only in certain families. In the eugenic climate of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, psychiatric patients were often described as lower on the evolutionary scale than “normal” people: a claim seemingly reinforced by the disturbed behaviour of patients in squalid, degrading institutions.⁶² Psychiatric patients were sterilised (a practice that first gained legal

⁵⁵ Thumiger 2017.

⁵⁶ Trener and Horden 2017.

⁵⁷ Berrios and Marková 2017; Berrios and Porter 1995.

⁵⁸ Boyle 2002; Hoenig 1995.

⁵⁹ Hoenig 1995.

⁶⁰ Boyle 2002; Hoenig 1995.

⁶¹ Read 2013.

⁶² Whitaker 2010; Burleigh 1994.

sanction in Indiana, in 1907)⁶³ and exterminated—most notably during World War Two in Germany, Austria, Poland, and France.⁶⁴

Original sin was transmuted into animalistic essence. Freud developed a tripartite model of the mind in which an animalistic *Es*, a moral *Über-Ich*, and an intermediate *Ich*⁶⁵ closely corresponded to Socrates' *epithumetikon*, *logistikon*, and *thumos*.⁶⁶ However, whereas Socrates' *logistikon* was driven by a love of Truth, the *Über-Ich* was ultimately driven, despite its moral appearance, by the animal instincts of sexuality and aggression.⁶⁷ Psychological suffering was inevitable because of the clash between instincts and civilised norms, but could be minimised by self-knowledge and appropriate sexual development.⁶⁸ Freud's model, which was compatible with, and influenced by, Darwinian biology,⁶⁹ was strongly influential in anthropology and literature, but less so in clinical psychiatry, where, outside the USA and Argentina, a Kraepelinian model tended to dominate, in which mental illnesses were discrete diseases attributable to specific, if as yet undetermined, pathologies.⁷⁰

From a Kraepelinian perspective, mental diseases ought to be readily identifiable, through the application of diagnostic criteria based (eventually) on pathology. After World War Two, in an effort to harmonise psychiatric practice, the American Psychiatric Association produced a *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM)* based on Kraepelinian principles. It could not describe pathological processes, about which no consensus existed, but could briefly describe psychological process. The second edition, *DSM-II*, was published in 1968; the World Health Organisation added

⁶³ Whitaker 2010.

⁶⁴ Read and Masson 2013.

⁶⁵ *Über-Ich*, *Ich*, and *Es* are usually translated into English as superego, ego, and id, although *Ich* and *Es* are the German words for *I* and *it*. Bruno Bettelheim (1983), a Freudian, argued that the standard translation is unhelpful and leads to unnecessary mystification.

⁶⁶ This model was described in *The Ego and the Id* (1923), superseding Freud's earlier models of the mind (Ellenberger 1970).

⁶⁷ Ellenberger 1970.

⁶⁸ Freud 1973; Ellenberger 1970.

⁶⁹ Ellenberger 1970.

⁷⁰ Scull 2015.

similar diagnostic criteria to the ninth edition of the *International Classification of Diseases (ICD-9)*.

However, standardised criteria did not necessarily harmonise, or make infallible, diagnostic processes. Robert Kendell and colleagues (1971) noted that “American and British psychiatrists often detect quite different symptoms [sic] in [the same] patients whom they [therefore] diagnose differently. [One patient in the study] was rated by 67% of the American audience as having delusions, by 63% as having passivity feelings, and by 58% as showing thought disorder. The corresponding percentages for British raters were 12%, 8%, and 5%.” More concerning still was a widely publicised study by David Rosenhan (1973):

Eight sane people gained secret admission to 12 different hospitals [in the USA]... The pseudopatient arrived at the admissions office complaining that he had been hearing voices. Asked what the voices said, he replied that they were often unclear, but as far as he could tell they said “empty”, “hollow”, and “thud”... Beyond alleging the symptoms and falsifying name, vocation, and employment, no further alterations of person, history, or circumstances were made... Immediately upon admission to the psychiatric ward, the pseudopatient ceased simulating *any* symptoms of abnormality... The pseudopatient spoke to patients and staff as he might ordinarily... He spent his time writing down his observations about the ward, its patients, and the staff. Initially these notes were written “secretly”, but as it soon became clear that no-one much cared, they were subsequently written on standard tablets of paper in such public places as the dayroom...

It was quite common for the patients to “detect” the pseudopatients’ sanity. During the first three hospitalisations, when accurate counts were kept, 35 of a total of 118 patients on the admissions ward voiced their suspicions, some vigorously. “You’re not crazy. You’re a journalist, or a professor [referring to the continual note-taking]. You’re checking up on the hospital.”...

Despite their public “show” of sanity, the pseudopatients were never detected [by staff]... At no time during any hospitalisation had any question been raised about any pseudopatient’s simulation. Nor are there any indications in the hospital records that the pseudopatient’s status was suspect... If the pseudopatient was to be discharged, he must naturally be “in remission”; but he was not sane, nor, in the institution’s view, had he ever been sane... Length of hospitalisation varied from 7 to 52 days.

DSM-III (1980) was intended to increase the reliability of diagnosis: brief descriptions of psychological process were replaced by much augmented checklists of diagnostic features. Arguably, Kendell's group and Rosenhan had shown that problems arose from doctors detecting features that did not exist, rather than misinterpreting the ones they found. Nonetheless, the editor of *DSM-III* conducted a study that seemed to show that its use improved diagnostic reliability;⁷¹ although the study had basic methodological problems, and the data were selectively published, and never made available to other investigators for reanalysis.⁷² No efforts were made to establish diagnostic validity: criteria were chaotically and arbitrarily assembled,⁷³ without any scientific studies being cited.⁷⁴ Nonetheless, diagnostic categories shaped clinical research and practice, which, in turn, reified the categories. *DSM* became an international standard text; its rival, *ICD*, was revised to closely emulate it.⁷⁵

The fifth edition of *DSM* (2013) was compiled on the same principles as *DSM-III*. It is, however, much expanded, leading psychiatric nosologists to express concerns about “diagnostic inflation” and the medicalisation of normality.⁷⁶ Diagnostic reliability may be worse than that measured for *DSM-II* in 1974,⁷⁷ despite the use of explicit criteria. Even with *DSM-III*, which was much slimmer than *DSM-5*, diagnostic criteria overlapped, and diagnosis depended not merely on the use of checklists

⁷¹ Diagnostic reliability is not measured in the absolute sense, since there are no absolute measures of diagnostic accuracy. The statistic **K** (kappa), which measures diagnostic agreement rather than reliability, is used as a substitute. $K = (p_o - p_e) / (1 - p_e)$, where p_o = observed proportion of agreement, and p_e = proportion expected by chance. A **K**-value of 0 indicates that diagnosis is no better than random selection; the highest possible **K**-value is 1 (Spitzer and Fleiss 1974). In 1974, Spitzer and Fleiss reviewed studies of reliability, and found mean **K**-values of 0.57 for schizophrenia and 0.41 for “affective disorder”. The 1979 field trials for *DSM-III* found **K**-values of 0.82 for “schizophrenic disorders” and 0.59 for “affective disorders” (Spitzer et al 1979).

⁷² Whitaker and Cosgrove 2015.

⁷³ Spiegel 2005; Davies J 2013.

⁷⁴ Angell 2011.

⁷⁵ As documented by Mezzich et al (1994), the editors of *ICD-10* (1992–93) worked closely with the editors of *DSM-IV* (1994).

⁷⁶ Frances and Nardo 2013.

⁷⁷ **K**-values in field trials were 0.46 for schizophrenia and 0.28 for “major depressive disorder” (Regier et al 2013).

but on a tacit recognition of what kind of disorder the patient had;⁷⁸ perhaps increased reliance on checklists, rather than supposed psychological process, has led to a diminishing of these shared narratives and a lack of uniformity of diagnosis. Such a hypothesis is consistent with the low diagnostic reliability found when lay interviewers used *DSM-III*.⁷⁹

Validation of diagnoses remains problematic, because no consensus, and very little reliable evidence, exists on the pathology of the main psychotic and neurotic disorders. This may, of course, reflect the fact that the definitions of disorder are probably not “carving nature at the joint”.⁸⁰ Or it could be that these disorders are not manifestations of underlying pathology. Psychiatric research overwhelmingly reflects a promissory materialism, in which the anatomical and physiological correlates have not been found, but will be.

Conceptually, disorders remain located in the individual, and heredity in the genes; although genetic studies of most psychiatric disorders remain speculative, preliminary,⁸¹ and difficult to replicate.⁸² In contrast, well established links exist between (for instance) depression and entrapment, isolation, poverty, adverse events, humiliation, and childhood adversity.⁸³ With the notable exception of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), diagnostic manuals rarely acknowledge that madness can be inflicted on people;⁸⁴ or that it can arise, as systems-therapists note, from “the in-between of people... the one who is psychotic makes the bad condition visible”.⁸⁵

⁷⁸ Young 1995.

⁷⁹ Anthony et al 1985.

⁸⁰ Young 1995: 121.

⁸¹ According to the “central dogma [sic] of molecular biology” (Crick 1970), a gene is a strand of DNA that codes for a protein. Genetic association studies that highlight a link between a gene and a syndrome rarely lead to plausible demonstrations of how the related protein dysfunction could cause the syndrome.

⁸² Nikolaos Patsopoulos and colleagues (2007) analysed 432 published claims of genetic associations with disease. 37 of these claims were appropriately substantiated, and one was corroborated by other research.

⁸³ Brown et al 1995; Muntaner et al 2004; Harris 2001; James 2016.

⁸⁴ PTSD is a somewhat ironic exception, because it was developed to explain the distress experienced by soldiers who had committed atrocities (Haley 1974).

⁸⁵ Finnish psychologist Tupio Salo, a specialist in psychosis (quoted in Whitaker 2015: 341).

Contemporary psychiatric diagnoses are always disorders: bad things to be fixed. However, illness can also be framed as tragedy: a process of loss, arising from personal flaws, leading ultimately to self-knowledge. Shakespeare's King Lear becomes mad, so that he might be sane.⁸⁶ A clinical example was provided by the monk Gaspar Ofhuys, describing the madness of the painter Hugo van der Goes (d 1482):

This brother *conversus* was highly exalted in our order and enjoyed greater fame than if he had remained a layman, and since he was a human being like other human beings, his heart was lifted up by the honours shown to him... For this reason, the Lord, not wishing him to perish [spiritually], mercifully sent him this humiliating infirmity, by which he was greatly humiliated indeed. The brother himself realised this, and as soon as he had convalesced, he humbled himself greatly, voluntarily leaving our refectory and humbly taking his meals with the lay-folk.⁸⁷

Plato's Socrates had argued out that madness was "the source of the chiefest blessings granted to men": "divine madness" inspired lovers, poets, and prophets.⁸⁸ Erasmus (d 1536) showed Folly standing, in place of Pride, at the head of the seven deadly sins; and also as the instrument of salvation: for selflessness, faith, and love were far from everyday wisdom.⁸⁹ In Shakespeare's *Lear*, the Fool embodies insight and sympathy: a King's Fool was licensed to express otherwise forbidden truths.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ Yawar 2017.

⁸⁷ Wallis 2010: 354.

⁸⁸ Jaynes 2000: 405; Simon 1978. "Even the word for prophetic, *mantike*, and the word for psychotically mad, *manike*, were for the young Plato the same word, the letter *t* being for him 'only a modern and tasteless insertion.'" (Jaynes 2000: 406)

⁸⁹ Erasmus 1993.

⁹⁰ The most celebrated King's Fool in English history was probably Archie Armstrong, a former sheep stealer who served James I and Charles I. Armstrong was strongly opposed to William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, who wanted to standardise the Church in Britain. At Whitehall, Armstrong gave the grace, "Great praise be to God, and little laud to the devil." When the English Book of Common Prayer was introduced to Scotland, violent revolt broke out; meeting Laud, Armstrong asked, "Who's Fool now?" (T H Jamieson, in Armstrong 1872: xiv)

D. Nature of healing

Over the last millennium, treatment of the ailing *psyche* has been shaped by two contrasting narratives (or myths): the Fall of Man, and material progress as applied to humanity.

In Genesis (and in the Koran), the prelapsarian Adam named all living things.⁹¹ Theologians generally understood this to mean Adam understood, and could command, the rest of creation. The Fall had led to a diminution of man's intellect.⁹² St Augustine argued that *scientia*, true and certain knowledge, could be granted through God's grace: "the senses of the soul are as it were the eyes of the mind; but all the certainties of the sciences are like those things which are brought to light by the sun... while God is Himself the Illuminator".⁹³ An intellect purified of sin could receive God's light.⁹⁴ This, in effect, made epistemology a spiritual discipline. A similar position was taken by Hugh of St Victor (d 1141) in his *Didascalicon*, which was used as a liberal-arts textbook well into the 17th century.⁹⁵ For Hugh, "truth of speculation and of thought and holy and pure chastity of action" could be gained only by philosophy, the love and pursuit of divine Wisdom.⁹⁶ Philosophy was intended to restore the soul to purity. Religious discipline was therefore a method of healing the *psyche*, and restoring the intellect. *Scientia*, the lower part of philosophy, was the knowledge required to attend to the infirmities arising from the Fall of Man.⁹⁷

An aspect of religious discipline was the healing of others. Medieval hospitals in Catholic Europe were full of religious symbolism: beds were arranged so that patients could see the altar where mass was being celebrated; the consecrated host was carried around the beds in procession; painted altarpieces depicted redemptive suffering.⁹⁸ Many hospitals, admittedly, were reluctant to admit mad

⁹¹ Genesis, Chapter 2; Koran 2: 31–33.

⁹² Harrison 2007.

⁹³ Harrison 2007: 39.

⁹⁴ Harrison 2007.

⁹⁵ Taylor 1961; Ilich 1993.

⁹⁶ Taylor 1961: 48.

⁹⁷ Taylor 1961.

⁹⁸ Wallis 2010.

people;⁹⁹ but some religious institutions, such as London's priory of St Mary of Bethlehem (later the Bethlehem Hospital) did house and care for people "deprived of reason".¹⁰⁰ Mentally ill people often sought healing at shrines. St Thomas à Becket, in Canterbury, was among many with a reputation for healing mad people;¹⁰¹ more renowned still was the shrine of St Dymphna at Geel in Flanders, where a hospice built for pilgrims proved too small, leading to the development of a "family community", that still exists today, in which pilgrims are cared for by villagers.¹⁰²

Physicians practised learned medicine in hospitals, but were not at the symbolic apex of healing. In the community, healing for psychological problems might be sought from religious people; or from the empirical healer, herbalist, or cunning man or woman, all of whom were generally more affordable than the physician.¹⁰³ The physician was distinguished from the merely empirical healer by his use of Aristotelian *scientia*, rationally demonstrable knowledge;¹⁰⁴ which, like learned medicine as a whole, came to western medieval Christendom largely through translations from Arabic, from the 11th century onwards.¹⁰⁵

Much early modern thought in science and medicine was based around a willingness to abandon Aristotelian frameworks, with the aim of introducing other schools of thought (hermetic, cabbalistic, magical) into natural philosophy, and an increased emphasis on empiricism. The drive for novelty was often combined with millenarianism that at times bordered on the messianic.¹⁰⁶ Typical of this development was Paracelsus (d 1541), the "Luther of medicine",¹⁰⁷ who argued that Galenic and Aristotelian medicine was religiously awry, largely ineffective, and inappropriate to people who were not from the Mediterranean. He sought to recapture the medicine of Solomon

⁹⁹ Trener and Horden 2017.

¹⁰⁰ Porter 1997.

¹⁰¹ Scull 2015.

¹⁰² Porter 1997.

¹⁰³ Mellyn 2017.

¹⁰⁴ Mellyn 2017; Wallis 2010.

¹⁰⁵ Harrison 2007.

¹⁰⁶ Harrison 2007; Hanegraaff 2012; Webster 1975.

¹⁰⁷ Webster 1982.

and, indeed, of Hippocrates, with the aim of preparing a medicine fit for the Golden Age preceding the parousia. He emphasised magic and empiricism, rather than *scientia*.¹⁰⁸ In contrast to the Graeco-Arabic emphasis on humoral disorder, he depicted disease as caused by unwelcome influences entering the body. He also pioneered the widespread use of supposedly medicinal minerals, in addition to herbs.¹⁰⁹

Although he did not specifically endorse Paracelsus, Francis Bacon emphasised the importance of medicinal minerals, and argued for a suspension of judgement on medical theory, in favour of the accumulation of knowledge by systematic empiricism. Bacon argued that the Fall of Man consisted of a loss of innocence, to be repaired by religion and faith, and a loss of dominion, to be reversed by arts and sciences; in particular, the application of empiricism to medicine and technology. Bacon anticipated that his approach would bring about a golden age.¹¹⁰

Bacon therefore bridged the narratives of the Fall and material progress. However, his work helped to create a rhythm of time which was no longer cyclical, being based around the Fall and eventual redemption, but linear, based around easily experienced material progress. The progressive use of empiricism helped to make the appeal to classical religious or philosophical authority, so characteristic of medieval and early modern thought, seem less appropriate to natural philosophy; and to create a disjunction between scientific and religious thought. The tension between humanistic, hermeneutic perspectives that valued ancient authority, and an empirical natural philosophy that looked forward, was indirectly addressed by Enlightenment philosophers who speculated that man was not fallen but evolved:¹¹¹ a perspective given theoretical structure by

¹⁰⁸ Not all observers were as convinced as Paracelsus of the value of his empiricism; John Donne commented that Paracelsus must have been working for the devil, since he poisoned so many people (Healy 1997).

¹⁰⁹ Webster 2008; Mellyn 2017; Healy 1997.

¹¹⁰ Harrison 2007; Olson 1982; Webster 1975.

¹¹¹ Bowler (2003) notes that James Burnett, Lord Monboddo, argued in 1774 that living apes might represent the earliest form of humanity. Erasmus Darwin, Charles' grandfather, conjectured that all life forms had originated from "one and the same living filament" (1794: 507).

Charles Darwin, who described a mechanistic¹¹² evolutionary process leading up to, and continuing through, the development of mankind.¹¹³

Bacon's faith in empiricism led to a paradox, of the restoration of Adamic knowledge by men with fallen intellects. Bacon argued that this problem could be overcome by empirical discipline and quantity of work. Locke, in contrast, argued that empiricism could give "judgement and opinion, not knowledge and certainty": he suspected that "natural philosophy is not capable of being made a science," and doubted that Adam ever had possessed the remarkable intellectual abilities attributed to him.¹¹⁴ The divine knowledge envisaged by Augustine or Hugh was not intellectually attainable; a view supported by Kant, who argued that knowledge was shaped by the characteristics of the mind: a thing in itself (a *ding an sich*) could never be known; God, similarly, could be believed in, but not known.¹¹⁵ *Science* came to mean the application of experimental method, although Newton's application of mathematics to empiricism gave science at least a veneer of innate rationality.¹¹⁶

Although the concept of rationality had changed, the madman remained irrational. He could be viewed personalistically, as a suffering patient; naturalistically, as a body or mind that needed to be controlled and improved; or socially, as a disruptive element in need of reform. Personalistic

¹¹² Although Darwin's model was naturalistic, animals (including humans) seemed to exercise their will. Darwin's theory could therefore only be understood as mechanistic if free will was an illusion generated by chemistry.

¹¹³ Darwin 1985, 2004. Darwin's model of evolution fell partly out of favour in the late 19th century, not least because it did not fit the laws of heredity as then understood. In the interwar years, scientists including Roland Fisher and J B S Haldane revived Darwin's theory by developing the Modern Synthesis of Darwinian evolution and Mendelian genetics (Edwards 2013; Lewontin 2009). Contemporary neo-Darwinists generally use the first and second editions of *The Origin of Species*, in which Darwin had not yet altered his argument to meet contemporary criticisms (John Burrow, in Darwin 1985).

¹¹⁴ Harrison 2007: 223.

¹¹⁵ Kant 2004.

¹¹⁶ Harrison 2007. A gap still exists between theoretical law and phenomenological analysis of nature (Cartwright 1983).

elements, present in medieval medicine,¹¹⁷ remained in psychiatry, as exemplified by the humane elements of 19th-century “moral treatment”,¹¹⁸ and R D Laing’s concept of madness as an innately understandable part of a journey to self-knowledge.¹¹⁹ However, modernity has brought an increased emphasis on the naturalistic dimension, as madness has been medicalised; saints, herbalists, and cunning people have been seen as less effective or available; and souls and spirits have been removed from the medical body. Psychiatry has also come to the fore as a social-regulation mechanism. Foucault (1971) argued that confinement began in the early modern period; in fact, patients had been kept in chains in some late medieval hospitals,¹²⁰ and confinement only became widespread in the 19th and 20th centuries, as families affected by agricultural enclosure and the industrial revolution found it difficult to care for loved ones.¹²¹ But modernity certainly saw increased intimacy between medicine, the state,¹²² and the corporation. Medical research, being materialist by definition, required financial support; medicine as a profession benefited from state support; medicine in turn became a way to generate corporate profits and political power over the individual. Psychiatrists in the antebellum USA described *drapetomania*, the obsessive desire of a slave to escape;¹²³ colonial psychiatrists described Algerians as “dominated, like the inferior vertebrates, by the diencephalon”.¹²⁴ Even as physical confinement dwindled, in the second half of the 20th century, state-controlled computer records and compulsory community treatment created a potentially ubiquitous virtual asylum.

On the whole, modern physicians have been more willing to intervene radically, in cases of madness, than their medieval counterparts: which may, in part, reflect the willingness to take a less

¹¹⁷ The first exclusively mental hospital in Western Europe, established in Moorish Granada in 1365, treated patients with music and perfume (Jones 1983). Admittedly, many late-medieval facilities for mentally ill people were rudimentary and unpleasant (Trener and Horden 2017).

¹¹⁸ Bockoven 1963; Whitaker 2010.

¹¹⁹ Laing 1967; Mullan 2017.

¹²⁰ Trener and Horden 2017.

¹²¹ Scull 2015, 2017.

¹²² Trener and Horden 2017.

¹²³ Whitaker 2010; Littlewood and Lipsedge 1997.

¹²⁴ Littlewood and Lipsedge 1997: 63.

personalistic approach to illness; or the difference between the Fall of Man, which was universal, and reform, which is applied by some people to others. Potentially unpleasant interventions are justified on the grounds that, overall, suffering is reduced; or as a means of control over potentially violent people. The Enlightenment saw the development of machines intended to break the patient's will;¹²⁵ the principal asylum-based treatments in the USA, at the height of confinement in the mid-20th century, were Metrazol (pentylentetrazol), electroconvulsive therapy without muscle relaxant or anaesthetic, insulin coma, and the prefrontal lobotomy.¹²⁶ The drugs of today are less dramatic, but can still have severe side-effects and cause considerable harm to well-being.¹²⁷

In recent decades, evidence for effectiveness has been obtained primarily from randomised controlled trials, which compare the outcomes of interventions to each other, or to placebo. However, nearly all patients prescribed an effective drug will not benefit from any specific effect. The “number needed to treat” (NNT) is the number of patients who have to undergo an

¹²⁵ Scull 2015.

¹²⁶ Robert Whitaker collected accounts of patients' experiences and doctors' reports, including the following: (1) *Metrazol*. “The New York State Psychiatric Institute found that 43 percent of state hospital patients treated with Metrazol had suffered spinal fractures. Other complications included fractures of the humerus, femur, pelvis, scapula, and clavicle... dislocations of the shoulder and jaw, and broken teeth... Patients would cry, plead that they ‘didn't want to die’, and beg [doctors] ‘in the name of humanity’ to stop the injections... ‘Doctor,’ one woman pitifully asked, ‘is there no cure for this treatment?’” (Whitaker 2010: 93–94) (2) *Electroshock*. “Some patients ‘make senseless attempts to escape, trying to go through windows and disregarding injuries’. They ‘tremble’, ‘sweat profusely’, and make ‘impassioned verbal pleas for help’... Electroshock, patients told their doctors, was like ‘having a bomb fall on you’, ‘being in a fire and getting all burned up’... In California, asylum physicians regularly prescribed electroshock for those who were ‘fighting’, ‘restless’, ‘noisy’, ‘quarrelsome’, ‘stubborn’, and ‘obstinate’—the treatment made such patients ‘quieter’ and ‘not so aggressive’... An attendant confessed: ‘Holding them down and giving them the treatment, it reminded me of killing hogs, throwing them down in the pen and cutting their throats.’” (Whitaker 2010: 103–06) (3) *Insulin coma*. “The injection of insulin reduces the patient to a helpless baby... The patient in his present condition bestows the love which he once had for his mother, upon the physician. This is nothing else but a mother transference.” (Whitaker 2010: 88) (4) *Lobotomy (from Freeman and Watts' classic manual, 1950)*. “We vividly recall a Negress of gigantic proportions who for years was confined to a strong room at St Elizabeth's Hospital. When it came time [sic] to transfer her to the Medical Surgical building for operation five attendants were required to restrain her while the nurse gave her the hypodermic. The operation was successful in that there were no further outbreaks... from the day after operation (and we demonstrated this repeatedly to the timorous ward personnel) we could playfully grab Oretha by the throat, twist her arms, tickle her in the ribs and slap her behind without eliciting anything more than a wide grin or a hoarse chuckle.” (Whitaker 2010: 122)

¹²⁷ Whitaker 2010, 2015; Young et al 2015; Correll et al 2015; Moncrieff 2008, 2013.

intervention, for one patient to benefit more than from placebo; for nearly all medical treatments, the NNT is in double or triple figures:¹²⁸ even though clinical trials are generally designed, interpreted, and reported by drug companies.

The body of clinical evidence contains curious gaps, often around important questions: such as the effectiveness of antipsychotics in drug-naive patients undergoing first episodes of psychosis,¹²⁹ or over periods longer than a year (long-term cohort studies indicate that any positive effects might reverse after 2 to 3 years).¹³⁰ Life expectancy has decreased, in recent decades, for people in highly developed countries with severe mental illnesses,¹³¹ and the mechanisms behind this trend are poorly understood.

Even when potentially informative trials are done, bias can be considerable. 97% of head-to-head drug trials show that the sponsor's drug is more effective;¹³² trials that show negative results tend to go unpublished. Several researchers have pointed out that antidepressants in general might well be deemed as ineffective if publication bias were eliminated.¹³³

1.2 Psychiatry as religious healing

Psychiatry is not the only scientific discipline whose core assumptions are difficult to explain on empirical grounds alone. The core assumptions of experimental science itself could be enumerated as follows:

1. The universe can be treated as though it consists of matter.
2. This matter can be isolated, controlled, measured, and manipulated, often iteratively, to yield meaningful and useful results.

¹²⁸ Gótzsche 2013; the website *thennt.com*, curated by physicians, collates NNTs.

¹²⁹ Bola et al 2011.

¹³⁰ Harrow et al 2014; Wunderink et al 2013.

¹³¹ Saha et al 2007; McGrath et al 2008; Laursen et al 2014; Laursen 2011.

¹³² Goldacre and Heneghan 2015.

¹³³ Prominent studies include those by Turner et al (2008) and Kirsch (2009).

3. Repeated experiment will increase mankind's useful knowledge, and should increase humanity's welfare.

These beliefs may or may not be correct: but they are statements of ontology, epistemology, and value, rather than empiricism. Science's privileged status as a real (rather than metaphorical) and rational way of interpreting the world is partly a function of cultural habitus. Edward Evans-Pritchard (1937: 319–20, 338) demonstrated that pervasive belief systems can seem rational, as well as merely internally empirical, because they frame discourse about the phenomena they explain:

Let the reader consider any argument that would utterly demolish all Zande claims for the power of the oracle. If it were translated into Zande modes of thought it would serve to support their entire structure of belief... They reason excellently in the idiom of their beliefs, but they cannot reason outside, or against, their beliefs because they have no other idiom in which to express their thoughts.

Indeed, potentially challenging discourse can reify, rather than undermine, a belief system; especially as institutions are developed that reflect prevailing beliefs.¹³⁴ Richard Lewontin (1997) pointed out that the investigatory and conceptual apparatus of modern science are designed to create material explanations, “no matter how counter-intuitive, no matter how mystifying to the uninitiated”.

If modern science is rooted in theology, or philosophy, or myth, rather than in pure empiricism, this does not necessarily make it less useful or interesting. Sjaak van der Geest (2005: 139) has argued that, although naturalistic, modern science provides the unified worldview characteristic of religion:

The etymology may be wrong, but “religion” is often derived from the Latin verb *ligare* (to bind). *Re-ligare* could then be translated as to “bind again”, to bring together in second instance. In religion, one could say, a

¹³⁴ Kirmayer et al 2012.

fragmented world is united to form one ordered whole... The taming of diversity and contradiction into one cognitive system takes place in “true” religions but also in scientific thinking, including biomedical science.

Modern science also meets the criteria proposed by Clifford Geertz (1966), in what is probably contemporary anthropology’s most influential definition of religion:

A religion is: (1) A system of symbols which acts to (2) establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations in men by (3) formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and (4) clothing those conceptions with such an aura of factuality that (5) the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic.¹³⁵

Geertz’s definition is far from complete. It could be said to represent a late-modern concept of religion as cognitive network, rather than spiritual journey or lived imperative. If, however, this view of religion is expanded to consider, for instance, (a) the principles and motivations that underlie the creation of belief; (b) the institutions that make it possible; (c) the experience and purpose of belief; (d) the fine-grained discourse involving religious symbols throughout society; then, with its pervasive imaginative and political power, modern science can be considered a powerful contemporary religion: “scientific practices, techniques, knowledges, permeate and create the very fibres of social life in ways that [generally recognised] religion no longer does. In that sense, religion today *is* a perspective (or an ‘attitude’, as Geertz sometimes calls it), but science is not.”¹³⁶ Whereas natural science was once a branch of philosophy, which, in turn, was shaped by theology, now scientific beliefs are used to shape discourses about human origins, purpose, and ethics; indeed, to determine whether or not the beliefs of other religions are tenable.

In practice, this epistemological supremacy is maintained by strict demarcation. Notwithstanding Aquinas’ argument that regular, causal relationships in nature depended ultimately on God,¹³⁷ non-

¹³⁵ Geertz 1993: 90.

¹³⁶ Asad 1993: 47–49.

¹³⁷ McGrath 2005.

naturalistic considerations are more or less excluded from modern science.¹³⁸ Lewontin remarked, “To appeal to an omnipotent deity is to allow that at any moment the regularities of nature may be disrupted, that miracles may happen”: the investigator could no longer be held to control nature, and it would no longer necessarily behave in a mathematically predictable way. An absurd or essentially unsubstantiated scientific explanation is treated as innately more valid than an intuitively plausible non-materialist one.¹³⁹ This gives science a promissory aspect: a naturalistic explanation can be accepted as provisional, even if no plausible mechanism or convincing evidence exists to support it. This tendency can encourage the existence of “placeholders”, in which evidence is dubiously interpreted to fit a predetermined narrative.¹⁴⁰

Until the mid-19th century, natural science was an overtly religious discipline. For Christian Aristotelians, investigation of nature was also an investigation into God’s ways. Even after the Reformation, with a far less immanent God, the investigation of nature was a religious pursuit, and could improve the soul of the investigator;¹⁴¹ or, as Newton saw it, provide religious knowledge of a kind unavailable to most people.¹⁴² However, by around 1900, scientific discourse was divorced not only from religion but, largely, from the humanities.¹⁴³ The religious impulse did not vanish from science, which, after all, was a way of addressing mysteries of creation and human origins.¹⁴⁴ Scientific psychiatry can be described as a compassionate way of relieving suffering; or as a way of

¹³⁸ When the biologist Rupert Sheldrake aimed to introduce the concept of “morphogenetic fields”, for which no known material basis yet existed, to explain the development of organisms, his book was described by the editor of *Nature*, John Maddox (1981), as “the best candidate for burning there has been for many years.” Maddox later remarked, “Sheldrake is putting forward magic instead of science, and that can be condemned in exactly the language the Pope used to condemn Galileo, and for the same reason. It is heresy.” (Sheldrake 2009: 22)

¹³⁹ Lewontin 1997.

¹⁴⁰ A notorious example of this is Piltdown Man, which David Waterston (1913) recognised, shortly after its “discovery”, as a combination of a human cranium and an ape’s jaw. However, it had pride of place in the British Museum (Natural History), as an early man with apelike features, until 1953, by which time *Australopithecus* had gained apparent plausibility as a “missing link” between ape and man.

¹⁴¹ Harrison 2007; McGrath 2005.

¹⁴² Force and Popkin 1999.

¹⁴³ Gregory 1984.

¹⁴⁴ Midgley 1992. Stephen Hawking famously described (1988: 175) a millennial point at which physicists would “know the mind of God”.

serving humanity through the rational reform of others. Psychiatry arguably lies at the heart of the modern vision of perfecting mankind, since it addresses the mind.¹⁴⁵

Symbolic parallels can readily be drawn between psychiatry and priesthood.¹⁴⁶ The psychiatrist has a “bible” (as diagnostic handbooks are colloquially termed); the ability to identify figurative demons, and to cast them out; an exalted discourse liberally sprinkled with Latin and Greek, the terms and concepts of which are used by lay people to explain and understand their own suffering. The psychiatrist separates crime (or sin) from illness, hears confessions, prescribes remedial behaviours, gives sacraments: drugs are prioritised in hospitals even over food; naturally, given the machine metaphor, they are generally synthesised from petrochemicals. Psychiatry has symbolic vestments, evoking the laboratory (white coats) or the garage (overalls).¹⁴⁷ A hospital can be seen as a place of seclusion, where the self is remade; the inside of a hospital typically resembles a factory, with its functionalist aesthetic, hives of specialised activity, standardised regimens, productivity targets, and rationalised design; the chapel is liminal, and nowhere near as busy as the pharmacy. Doctors expanding the influence of modern psychiatry can be likened to missionaries; and many do frame their doctrines as uniquely sound, salvific, and worthy of state support. The state’s expenditure on healthcare closely approximates the medieval tithe.

The kind of salvation offered by clinical psychiatry is to be free of disease, or to have a disease controlled: which, backtranslated to a personalistic register, means an amelioration of suffering or deviance. However, if the patient does not respond well to treatment, he remains abnormal: there is no grace or consolation in disease (except perhaps for a slight increase in state benefits). The best that can be achieved is normality or conformity; any deeper happiness, or ability to transcend

¹⁴⁵ Lewis 2000.

¹⁴⁶ Whitley 2008; van der Geest 2005; Epstein 2006.

¹⁴⁷ In the UK, in the mid-20th century, the doctor’s suit, indicating a respectable professional, was replaced, at least in hospital, by the white coat—echoing the priest (as churches were being abandoned) and the vivisector (as animal physiology was being applied to humans, sometimes to excess: Pappworth 1969). The white coat, in turn, was replaced by short sleeves and surgical scrubs, as the doctor became a mechanic of the body. In psychiatry, the white coat and surgical scrubs have often been eschewed in favour of a calculatedly semi-formal look, on the grounds that this facilitates meaningful interaction.

norms, is not the business of the psychiatrist. Such gaps are not necessarily inadequacies, for the psychiatrist is only one of many priests who help to guide people through, explain, and justify the modern world.

Chapter 2: Sufi knowledge and healing

Knowledge is of two kinds, knowledge in the Heart which is the knowledge that availeth, and knowledge upon the tongue which is God's evidence against his servant.

—Hadith¹⁴⁸

CHAPTER SUMMARY

2.1. Knowledge. A critical discussion of the principles, and applications of Sufi knowledge, with particular reference to modernity.

2.2. Healing. A discussion of the concepts and techniques of Sufi healing, with critical reference to ethnographic studies.

2.1 Knowledge

Religious knowledge in Islam, almost by definition, derives from the Prophet Muhammad: from the Koran (*Qurʾān*), the divine revelation that was voiced through him; and from his life-example, the Sunna (*Sunna*), that can be considered an embodiment and explication of the Koran's teachings.¹⁴⁹

The Sunna includes the Prophet's words, the Hadith (*Ḥadīth*; Arabic plural *ahādīth*): a minority of which, the Hadith Qudsi (*Qudsi*) or "Holy Hadith", are the Prophet's paraphrases of divine words.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Quoted by Lings (1993: 90), in a translation from *Al-Qawl al-Maʿrūf* by Shaykh Ahmad al-Alawi. Lings traces the hadith to *Al-Jāmiʿ al-Saghīr*, a Hadith collection by Suyuti. I have retranslated *ʿabd*, "slave", as "servant", in accordance with Shaykh Nazim's usage and contemporary mores.

¹⁴⁹ The Prophet was famously described by his wife Aisha as "The Koran walking".

¹⁵⁰ In the words of the lexicographer al-Sayyid al-Sharif Jurjani (died c 1410), a Holy Hadith has been "communicated to [God's] Prophet through revelation or in dream, and he, peace be upon him, has communicated

After the Prophet's funeral, in AD 632, his teachings were held to be transmitted and applied by his erstwhile companions, the *Ṣaḥāba*, and by the people they taught. Gradually, the Islamic sciences crystallised into distinct disciplines: Koranic exegesis; the collation, classification, and interpretation of Hadith; *kalām* ("Islamic doctrinal theology");¹⁵¹ *fiqh*, in which the Koran and Hadith were interpreted to generate a code of conduct and a body of law; and *taṣawwuf*, purification of the soul (widely termed the *naḥs*). *Taṣawwuf* is generally translated into English as "Sufism".

The debate about the origins of the word *Ṣūfī* stretches back at least as far as the 11th century, when Ali Hujwiri (died c 1075) discussed its etymology in *Revelation of the Veiled (Kashf al-Maḥjūb)*, one of the earliest handbooks of Sufi studies:¹⁵²

Some assert that the Sufi is so called because he wears a woollen garment (*jāma-i ṣūf*);¹⁵³ others that he is so called because he is in the first rank (*ṣaff-i awwal*); others say it is because the Sufis claim to belong to the *Aṣḥāb-i Ṣuffā*,¹⁵⁴ with whom may God be well pleased! Others, again, declare that the name is derived from *ṣafā* (purity). These explanations of the true meaning of Sufism [*taṣawwuf*] are far from satisfying the requirements of etymology, although each of them is supported by many subtle arguments. *Ṣafā* (purity) is universally praised, and its opposite is *kadar*. The Apostle [the Prophet Muhammad]—on whom be peace!—said: "The *ṣafw* (pure part, i.e. the best) of this world is gone, and only its *kadar* (impurity) remains." Therefore, since the people of this persuasion have purged their morals and conduct, and have sought to free themselves from natural taints, on that account they are called Sufis...

"Sufi" is a name which is given, and has formerly been given, to the perfect saints and spiritual adepts. One of the Shaykhs says, *Man ṣaffāhu Ṭ-ḥubb fa huwa ṣāfin wa-man ṣaffāhu Ṭ-ḥabīb fa huwa Ṣūfiyyun*, "He that is purified by love is pure, and he that is absorbed in the Beloved and has abandoned all else is a "Sufi". The name has no derivation answering to etymological requirements, inasmuch as Sufism is too exalted to have any genus from

it in his own words. Thus the Qur'an is superior to it because, besides being revealed, it is His wording." (Ibrahim and Johnson-Davies 1997: 8)

¹⁵¹ Winter 2008: 2.

¹⁵² Reynold Nicholson, who translated the *Kashf* into English, called it "the most ancient and celebrated Persian treatise on Sufism." (in al-Hujwiri 1996: v)

¹⁵³ Still a popular explanation among academics (Green 2012).

¹⁵⁴ The *Aṣḥāb-i Ṣuffā* are the "People of the Bench": indigent people who stayed in the Prophet's mosque, to seek knowledge (al-Hujwiri 1996).

which it might be derived... All that exists is the opposite of purity (*ṣafā*), and things are not derived from their opposites.¹⁵⁵

The word *Ṣūfī* does not seem to have been in use at the time of the Prophet.¹⁵⁶ The tenth-century Sufi, Abu 'l Hasan Fushanji,¹⁵⁷ remarked: “Today Sufism is a name without a reality, but formerly it was a reality without a name.”¹⁵⁸ Purification of the soul had once been a widespread concern, and taught by the holiest of people (the Prophet and his companions), but had become more of a minority interest. In any case, no teacher could be of the standard of the Prophet, and no community as spiritually exalted as his companions.

The Sufis' knowledge was, in part, knowledge *about taṣawwuf*: techniques for purifying the soul, and avoiding evil. It was also knowledge *through taṣawwuf*, which was held to purify the intellect (*ʿaql*). Hujwiri, quoting Muhammad ibn Fadl of Balkh (d 931), describes knowledge *from* God, of the ways of living that benefit the soul (*sharīʿa*);¹⁵⁹ knowledge *with* God, of the spiritual path (*tariqa*) that is experienced if the *sharīʿa* is followed correctly; and knowledge *of* God, which manifests to prophets and saints. Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d 1111), a Sufi whose influence on the Islamic sciences (in particular *fiqh*) was immense, argued that *taṣawwuf* illuminated the intellect (*ʿaql*), and could provide more insightful, certain, and extensive knowledge than mere scholarship.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ al-Hujwiri 1996: 30–34.

¹⁵⁶ Green 2012. However, al-Ghazali (2014: 253) attributes the use of the word *Ṣūfī* to Abu 'l-Darda, one of the Prophet's distinguished companions.

¹⁵⁷ Also written “Fushanji” (al-Hujwiri 1996: 44).

¹⁵⁸ al-Hujwiri 1996: 44. al-Hujwiri (1996: 30) implies that the term *taṣawwuf* may in fact have been in use at the time of the Prophet, quoting a hadith that “he that hears the voice of the people of *taṣawwuf* and does not say Amen to their prayer is inscribed before God among the heedless.”

¹⁵⁹ *Sharīʿa* has, of course, entered the English lexicon as “Shariah”. However, it has strong connotations of punitive legalism, and is often used where *fiqh* would be more appropriate. To prevent this conflation of meanings, I have fully transliterated *sharīʿa* throughout this dissertation.

¹⁶⁰ al-Ghazali 1998, 2010, 2014.

Taṣawwuf was embodied knowledge, acquired through emulating the Prophet in action and intention. Sufis claimed to have inherited their teaching from the Prophet, through chains of teachers known as *silsilas*, in which the first teacher after the Prophet was either the first Caliph, Abu Bakr (d 634), or the fourth Caliph, Ali (d 661). The Prophet's students had been known as "companions" because he taught by companionship; similarly, a Sufi student was expected to learn by keeping the company of a master, in a spiritual apprenticeship. A master might be known as a *shaykh* (Arabic), a *pīr* (Persian), a *murshid* (Arabic for guide), or by other terms and local variants; a student as a *mutaṣawwif*, *murīd* (Arabic) or *darvesh* (Persian), among other terms.¹⁶¹ A true shaykh was said to be gifted not only with general skill and insight, but with specific knowledge of the circumstances and souls of the people for whom he was responsible:

It is said that the thought occurred to Khayr Nassaj that Junayd was waiting at his door, but he wished to repel it. The same thought returned twice and thrice, whereupon he went out and discovered Junayd, who said to him: "If you had followed the first thought it would not have been necessary for me to stand here all this time." How was Junayd acquainted with the thought which occurred to Khayr? This question has been asked, and has been answered by the remark that Junayd was Khayr's spiritual director, and a spiritual director cannot fail to be acquainted with all that happens to one of his disciples.¹⁶²

A master was required because a student who had not trained his *nafs* would end up being misled by it; a widespread tradition states that "Who does not have a master, his master is Satan."¹⁶³ Obedience was not, in general, enforced, but was considered crucial to the student's progress. Arthur Buehler (1998) has argued for a historical development in the role of the shaykh, from teaching to directing and then to mediation with God. However, this is belied by early Sufi

¹⁶¹ The local usage of such terms varies considerably. Valerie Hoffman (1995: 17, 19) noted that many Sufis in Egypt distinguished "true Sufism" from *darwasha*, "dervishism", which had come to connote "dirty, half-crazed, ignorant beggars... indulging in improper behaviour of all kinds". Among people in the lower social classes, *taṣawwuf* had connotations of extremism—so that a woman deeply involved in Sufi ways labelled her politically inclined, but certainly not Sufi, brother as *mutaṣawwif*.

¹⁶² al-Hujwiri 1996: 387.

¹⁶³ Schimmel 1975: 103. Hoffman (1995) notes that Koran 25: 59 is cited in support of this principle: "Ask one knowledgeable [or aware] about Him."

manuals; moreover, as Pnina Werbner (2003) points out, drawing on her anthropological fieldwork, the roles of a shaykh are more likely to reflect his perceived abilities, and his relationships with his followers, than a general historical trend. It should also, perhaps, be noted that biographies of the Prophet, for Sufis the archetypal teacher, describe him as teaching, directing, and mediating.¹⁶⁴

The Prophet's Sunna was all-encompassing: a Sufi lived in a world where every action could be a way of relating to God. Sufis (like the Prophet's companions) were found in most walks of life: which meant that people from any background might come across a Sufi; and each craft or way of life could be considered an expression of religion. Sufis were largely responsible for the expression of Islam in countless local vernaculars.¹⁶⁵ From the tenth century, Sufi centres started being established throughout the Muslim world. A Sufi centre, which might be known as a *zāwiya* (Arabic), *khānaqā* (Arabic, from Persian), *dargā* (Persian; *dergah* in modern Turkish), or *tekye* (Ottoman Turkish), was typically built in accordance with the directions of a Sufi master, or at the grave of one. A *dergah*¹⁶⁶ was a place of prayer, social support, and education. Sufis might also exert considerable political influence: Khwaja Ahrar (d 1490) was known as a kingmaker in central Asia; the Janissary army, strongly associated with the Bektashi Sufi order, was one of many Sufi or Sufi-influenced groups to exercise power in the Ottoman Empire.

Sufi orders (*turūq*, singular *tarīqa*; a word also, as above, applied to the Sufi path as a whole) started to manifest from around 1150;¹⁶⁷ although specific schools of thought and practice predated this development,¹⁶⁸ and may have been an inevitable result of differences in teachers' personalities, experiences, circumstances, and followers. The orders were generally named after charismatic

¹⁶⁴ Lings 1991.

¹⁶⁵ Geertz 1971.

¹⁶⁶ I have selected the term *dergah*, as it reflects common usage among the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis.

¹⁶⁷ Green 2012; Abun-Nasr 2007.

¹⁶⁸ al-Hujwiri (1996: 176) remarked, "The Sufis are divided into twelve sects, of which two are reprobated and ten are approved... Although [the ten] differ from each other in their devotional practices and ascetic disciplines, they agree in the fundamentals and derivatives of the religious law."

teachers, and were thought of as expressions of that teacher's spirit and teaching techniques;¹⁶⁹ although the techniques and spirit of the orders continued to evolve. They nonetheless continued to trace their spiritual ancestry to the Prophet, with *silsilas* indicating not only legitimacy but *baraka* (blessing). Sufi orders have developed branches and sub-orders as further charismatic leaders, or differences over leadership, have arisen: in the absence of charismatic leaders, they have tended to wither. Mark Sedgwick (2012) asserts that a Sufi suborder typically has a life cycle of two or three generations.

Sufi orders have tended to be associated with particular geographical areas: the Chishti with South Asia, for instance, and the Ba(ni) Alawi with the Indian Ocean littoral. The adoption of a local religious vernacular has led to sporadic suspicions of syncretism;¹⁷⁰ however, Sufi groups have generally maintained Islamic identity and doctrines. In Java, for instance, Sufis adopted the local "Hindu" practice of using shadow plays to illustrate metaphysical themes; but the design and roles of the puppets, and the stories told, changed.¹⁷¹ Sufi teachings did spread outside Islam: Shaykh Adi ibn Musafir, a Sunni Muslim Sufi who is said to have accompanied the renowned Abd al-Qadir Jilani on Hajj, influenced the development of the Yazidi religion: his shrine is at the heart of the holiest Yazidi site, at Lalish in Iraq.¹⁷² Jewish religious reformers in Egypt, from the 11th century, extensively remodelled their worship in emulation of Sufis.¹⁷³ In his magnum opus, the *Kifāya al-ʿĀbidīn* (*Complete guide for the servants [of God]*) Abraham Maimonides (d 1237), son of the great Moses, remarked,

Do not regard as unseemly our reference to the practices of the Muslim Sufis, for the latter imitate the Ancient Prophets of Israel and follow their footsteps... the ways of the ancient Saints of Israel which have ceased to be practised by our own coreligionists have now become the practice of the Muslim Sufis as a result of the iniquities

¹⁶⁹ An exception was the Khalwati (Turkish *Halveti*) order, named after the technique of *khalwa*, seclusion.

¹⁷⁰ From the anthropological perspective, "syncretism" is a problematic concept, not least because of the implied pursuit of an idealised, abstract norm.

¹⁷¹ Hobart 2017.

¹⁷² Kreyenbroek 1995.

¹⁷³ Fenton 1981.

of Israel. Observe, then, these wonderful traditions and sigh with regret over how they have been taken from us and bestowed upon other nations.¹⁷⁴

A strong influence was also exerted by Sufis on Islamic religious disciplines other than *taṣawwuf*. The early masters of *fiqh* were influenced by *taṣawwuf*.¹⁷⁵ Abu Hanifa (d 767), after whom the Hanafi school was named, is said to have remarked on the salvific effect of two years of companionship with the Sufi master Jafar al-Sadiq (d 765).¹⁷⁶ Centuries later, Ghazali argued that *fiqh* had degenerated into shallow wrangling that harmed, rather than healed, the soul;¹⁷⁷ he retired from his position as Professor of Jurisprudence at the Nizami University in Baghdad to study and practise *taṣawwuf*,¹⁷⁸ and, towards the end of his life, wrote *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn* (“Revival of the Religious Sciences”), a 40-volume exposition of *fiqh* as an expression of *taṣawwuf* that has remained highly influential. Ibn Arabi (d 1240) integrated *fiqh*, *kalām*, and philosophy into a theology made possible by *taṣawwuf* and inspired by the Koran. Ibn Arabi’s work has been likened to Plato’s, in that much of subsequent (premodern) Islamic thought could be construed as endnotes to it.¹⁷⁹

Ibn Arabi’s life and work were immensely controversial. In one account, widely credited in Damascus and among Sufis,¹⁸⁰ he was executed in Damascus after telling a crowd, “Your God is under my foot!” Later, people dug at that site and found a trove of gold. Other renowned Sufis, most famously Hallaj (d 922) and Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi (d 1191), were also executed when their words were (in hindsight) misconstrued or ungenerously interpreted. Actions could also be

¹⁷⁴ Fenton 2012.

¹⁷⁵ Gibril Haddad, *Four Imams*, 2007.

¹⁷⁶ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995.

¹⁷⁷ al-Ghazali 2015.

¹⁷⁸ al-Ghazali 2001. Ghazali’s academic post was described by Carole Hillenbrand (*In our time*, BBC Radio 4, broadcast 19 March 2015), perhaps hyperbolically, as “like being the Archbishop of Canterbury and Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford, all in one”.

¹⁷⁹ Winter 2008.

¹⁸⁰ Tosun Bayrak, a Halveti-Jerrahi shaykh, gives this account of Ibn Arabi’s death in his introduction to Ibn Arabi (1997); it is also generally accepted among Naqshbandi-Haqqanis. Addas (1993) admits that the story is widely credited in Damascus, but points out that it is not mentioned in any contemporary or near-contemporary accounts, and regards it as most unlikely to be accurate.

misunderstood. A hagiographical account, current among Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, describes Bayazid Bistami (d 875) as having been abandoned by all but one of his followers when he kissed a strange, heavily made-up woman, and disappeared into her house. She turned out to be his sister, to whom he promptly married his remaining disciple. Some Sufis really did commit antinomian acts, often on the grounds that, while other Sufis talked of poverty and self-abasement, they really practised it. But they were generally (and perhaps appropriately, given their doctrine) held in low regard, and regarded as inauthentic representatives of *taṣawwuf*.¹⁸¹ Even in the time of Hujwiri, the ostentatious pretender (*muṣtaṣwif*) was said to be far from rare.

Sufis as a whole were generally accepted in the Islamic world as interpreters and teachers of spirituality. Few of the arts and sciences of the Muslim world were without substantial Sufi influence: through the direct influence of charismatic masters, such as the writer and philosopher Rumi (d 1273); the characteristic practices of Sufi orders, such as the music of the Chishti order; the ability of Sufi orders to marshal resources and to inspire artists and thinkers; or, simply, the influence of Sufi ways and beliefs on culture in general.

Systematic opposition to Sufis as a whole is, in general (though not exclusively) a phenomenon of modernity. Its main sources can be outlined as follows:

A. Some Shi'a politics.

Shi'a Muslims regard legitimate religious and political leadership as having resided with Ali and his descendants. The principal leaders are known as *imāms*: most Shi'as acknowledge 12, beginning with Ali and ending with Muhammad ibn Hasan:¹⁸² who is said to have disappeared in 941, but is expected to return as the Mahdi, a just ruler, towards the end of time. Ismaili Shi'as acknowledge the first six imams, but then, instead of following Musa Kazim, follow the descendants of Ismail,

¹⁸¹ Green 2012; al-Hujwiri 1996.

¹⁸² The 12 imams are: 1. Ali. 2. Hasan. 3. Husayn. 4. Zaynu 'l-Abidin; 5. Muhammad Baqir. 6. Ja'far al-Sadiq. 7. Musa Kazim. 8. Ali Rida. 9. Muhammad Taqi. 10. Ali Hadi. 11. Hasan Askari. 12. Muhammad ibn Hasan.

the son of Jafar al-Sadiq. Zaydi Shi'as acknowledge the first four imams, but then follow a line of succession through Zayd, the half-brother of Muhammad Baqir.¹⁸³

All Sufi orders claim to be spiritual inheritors of Ali; in most orders, he is the principal inheritor of *taṣawwuf* after the Prophet. The first eight imams, up to Ali Rida, are held in high regard as Sufi teachers. The shrines of members of the Prophet's family are sites of much Sufi worship and veneration.¹⁸⁴ Sufi emphasis on the Prophet's family has even been ascribed to Shi'a influence;¹⁸⁵ although the argument could easily be inverted, to describe Shi'ism as an expression of a Sufi impulse. As the Sufi orders developed, they were seen as expressing pro-Shi'a sentiment within Sunni Islam. Sufi thought also influenced Shi'a theology.¹⁸⁶

In the early 16th century, the 12-Imam Shi'a Safavid dynasty was propelled to power in Iran, by an antinomian Sufi movement that supported its divine right to rule.¹⁸⁷ On taking power, the Safavids suppressed Sunni Islam; even though the Safavids had been a Sunni order until c 1450. The Safavids also persecuted other Sufi orders, to secure religious leadership. The Sunni Naqshbandi and Khalwati orders were particularly hard-hit. Only the Ni'matullahi order, that allied itself to the Safavids and proclaimed itself Shi'a, was allowed to continue its activities unoppressed.¹⁸⁸

Over the course of the 16th and early 17th centuries, the Safavids evolved from charismatic spiritual guides to political leaders supported by religious scholars; who became politically powerful. Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (d 1699), whose scholarship profoundly influenced the development of Shi'a Islam, sought to separate Shi'a thought from Sufi influence, and drove Sufi groups out of the country. In the late 18th century, Shi'a Sufi orders re-emerged in Iran, only to face renewed

¹⁸³ Momen 1985.

¹⁸⁴ Hoffman (1995) gives examples from contemporary Egypt.

¹⁸⁵ Hoffman-Ladd (1992) mentions this as an accusation levelled by some (Sunni) Egyptian Sufis at others.

¹⁸⁶ Momen 1985.

¹⁸⁷ Momen 1985; Rizvi 2007; Green 2012. There is some evidence that the Safavid ruler was considered a living incarnation of God.

¹⁸⁸ Rizvi 2007; Momen 1985.

persecution; the scholar Aqa Muhammad Ali Bihbihani (d 1801) earned himself the sobriquet *Ṣūfikush* (Sufi-killer).¹⁸⁹

With their belief that religious knowledge is transmitted through a shaykh, to whom they therefore owe obedience, Sufis have been perceived to pose an innate challenge to Shi'a religious authority. However, Sufi orders survive to this day in Iran and Iraq, the only Shi'a-dominated states. Even when Sufi orders were being suppressed, Sufi ideas influenced religious discourse.¹⁹⁰ *Hikmat-i Ilāhī*, the metaphysical philosophy characteristic of 12-imam Shi'a scholarship, has drawn on the teachings of Sufis such as Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi and Ibn Arabi; *ʿirfān*, a Shi'a mystical discipline, includes many of the ideas and much of the technical vocabulary of Sufism.¹⁹¹

A Zaydi polity was established in part of Yemen in 897, and lasted, with wide fluctuations in fortune, until 1970. Persecution of Sufis there began under Imam Sharaf al-Din (r 1506–58), who forbade adherence to Sufi Islam. Imam al-Mansur (r 1598–1620), who was fighting the strongly pro-Sufi Ottoman Empire, declared that Sufis were infidels and polytheists: all Muslims were duty-bound to declare licit the shedding of Sufis' blood, and the seizure of their property. The second-last Zaydi ruler, Imam al-Nasir Ahmad (r 1948–62), beheaded Shadhili Sufis and destroyed Sufi shrines.¹⁹²

B. “Wahhabi”/ “Salafi” Islam.

Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (d 1792), a religious reformer from Najd, sought to return Islam to the pristine religion of the Prophet and his companions: which meant, in his view, the eradication of much existing religious scholarship and practice, and the institutions that supported them.¹⁹³ Since “Sufism was inseparable from many aspects of Islam as such”, “an immediate and wholesale rejection of everything said and done by the Sufis was hardly possible and Ibn Abd al-

¹⁸⁹ Momen 1985, 2016; Luizard 1999.

¹⁹⁰ Rizvi 2007; Momen 1985.

¹⁹¹ Momen 1985; Pourjavady 1999.

¹⁹² Madelung 1999.

¹⁹³ Peskes 1999.

Wahhab in any case did not even use the term ‘Sufi’ in his denunciations.”¹⁹⁴ However, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab “succeeded in establishing a specific definition of the faith, one which entails a comprehensive conception of Islamic knowledge, obligatory action and individual responsibility to the complete exclusion of Sufism and its adherents.”¹⁹⁵ No follower of his teachings was ever publicly affiliated with a Sufi school.¹⁹⁶ “Wahhabism” became “an attack on all forms of Sufi thought as well as practice.”¹⁹⁷ “Wahhabis” were also opposed to *kalām* and to schools of *fiqh*, and adopted a radically revisionist approach to Koranic exegesis and Hadith studies. Much established Muslim worship and knowledge was labelled as *shirk*—the association of others with God—or *bid‘a*: innovation.

Najd was not historically an influential centre of Islamic culture or learning. However, in 1744, Ibn Abd al-Wahhab made an enduring spiritual and religious alliance with the al-Saud family, chiefs based in the town of Diriyah. Fired by the belief that other Muslims were polytheists and innovators, and that their blood and property were licit, Saudi Wahhabi armies occupied Mecca in 1803, and from 1806 to 1813; and occupied Medina from 1805 to 1812.¹⁹⁸ The holy cities were retaken by the Ottoman Empire; in 1818, Ottoman forces destroyed Diriyah and captured the Saudi king, who was beheaded in Constantinople.¹⁹⁹ However, a resurgent Saudi state, established in 1902,²⁰⁰ took advantage of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (and the British Empire’s withdrawal of support from the King of the Hijaz) to conquer the holy cities in 1924–25.²⁰¹ They have remained in Saudi hands ever since.

¹⁹⁴ Green 2012: 160.

¹⁹⁵ Peskes 1999: 160–61. The thought of Ibn Abd al-Wahhab is sometimes traced to Ibn Taymiyya (d 1328), a strident critic of certain Sufis, and in particular of Ibn Arabi. However, Ibn Taymiyya saw himself as criticising certain beliefs and practices, rather than Sufi ways in general: he was himself a follower of the Qadiri Sufi order (van Ess 1999).

¹⁹⁶ Peskes 1999.

¹⁹⁷ Green 2012: 160.

¹⁹⁸ Noyes 2013; Vernoit 2006.

¹⁹⁹ Trofimov 2007.

²⁰⁰ This was the third Saudi state: a second state had existed between 1824 and 1891.

²⁰¹ Schulze 2002.

The Saudi state has systematically demolished holy places, on the grounds that worship there involves *shirk*. In the 19th century, the attempted demolition of the Prophet's tomb stopped only when two assailants died.²⁰² Since the 1920s, and in particular since the 1970s, old Medina has been almost entirely destroyed, including the graves of many of the Prophet's family and companions.²⁰³ Of the millennium-old buildings present in Mecca in 1990, more than 95% have been demolished.²⁰⁴ The Ka'ba is dwarfed by surrounding skyscrapers, in particular the Abraj al-Bait ("Holy House Towers" [sic]), which, when completed, was, at 600 metres high, the world's second-tallest building, with the largest floor area of any building.²⁰⁵ Mountains around the holy cities have been cut down, including the holy mountains of Safa and Marwa; the holy well of Zamzam has been connected to the city's water and sewage systems.²⁰⁶ Sufi practice and teaching has also been strongly discouraged, although Sufis are tacitly acknowledged to exist in Saudi Arabia.²⁰⁷

Particularly since the establishment of the petrodollar system in the 1970s, the Saudi state's international political and religious influence has been considerable, resulting in the spread of Wahhabi thought and practice. Its practitioners generally dislike the appellation "Wahhabi", preferring the term *muwaḥḥid* (believer in a single God) or, more often in recent decades, *salafī*: which alludes to the *salaf al-ṣāliḥ*, the "righteous predecessors", whom Wahhabis claim to emulate. Many contemporary "Salafis" have little or no, conscious affiliation to Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's teachings, but are directly or indirectly influenced by them; and have largely the same approach to

²⁰² Noyes 2013; Vernoit 2006.

²⁰³ Oliveti 2002; Alharbi 2018.

²⁰⁴ Krieger 2013. In 2011, Meccan property was the most expensive in the world at up to \$18,000 per square foot; against, for instance, Monaco's average of \$4,400 (Wainwright 2012).

²⁰⁵ "Shooting 26 searchlights into the skies, and blaring its call to prayer 7 km across the valley," it "houses an array of luxury hotels and apartments, perched above a five-storey slab of shopping malls." (Wainwright 2012)

²⁰⁶ Oliveti 2002.

²⁰⁷ Werbner (2003) records that, asked to introduce her to a great shaykh, King Fahd (r 1982–2005) directed the wife of Pakistan's President Zia to "Biliwala" ("the Cat Man", so called because he looked after stray cats) Ghulam Rasool, a Sufi of Medina.

traditional Islamic intellectual disciplines.²⁰⁸ Salafis are not always opposed to Sufis, but many are; some Salafi groups have persecuted Sufis or destroyed holy places.²⁰⁹

C. *Modernist Islam.*

The initial stirrings of modernist Islam have been dated to roughly 1840, a time when the Islamic world was being increasingly commercially dominated, and colonised, by the “West”. Islamic modernists have aimed to revive the Islamic world through the application of Enlightenment values and techniques, in particular modern science, “rational” (actually materialist empiricist) thought, and rationalised organisations. Sufi thought and practice have been widely conceived of as outdated or decayed, if not misconceived or fraudulent, as part of a wider process of reconceptualising the Islamic sciences.²¹⁰ Islamic modernists have presented this not as abandoning the teaching of the Prophet but as reaching back to his original works and intentions, removing accretions and contingencies that might have been accumulated through cultural circumstances or ignorance.²¹¹ The *Salafī* label was applied to modernists before it was ever claimed by Wahhabis.²¹² Indeed, with its disdain for traditional discourse, its disenchanting suspicion of immanence, and its emphasis on political action, Wahhabi Islam has notable modernist elements.²¹³

The modernist idea that Sufism was in some way inessential to Islam, or consisted of a series of cultural imports, was echoed by academics who argued that parallels between “Sufism” and other religious and philosophical systems implied derivation. This view seems to have been attributable to patchy source material;²¹⁴ by 1975, Annemarie Schimmel was able to state confidently that Sufism

²⁰⁸ Lauzière 2016; Gibril Haddad, *Four Imams*, 2007.

²⁰⁹ Ridgeon 2015.

²¹⁰ Kurzman 2002; Hoffman 1995; Sirriyeh 1999.

²¹¹ Geertz 1971.

²¹² De Jong 1999; Lauzière 2016. The leading “Salafī” modernist Rashid Rida (d 1935) was an influential intellectual defender of the Saudi state, and Wahhabi thought, from 1924 onwards.

²¹³ Roy 2004; Gray 2007; Nasr 2010.

²¹⁴ Schimmel 1975. Schimmel also notes (1975: 9) a prejudice that Islam could not generate a “finer and higher spiritual movement”. It could, in addition, be argued that the term *Sufism* (derived from *Sufismus* [sic], coined by August Tholuck in 1821) implied, if only by its suffix, a set of beliefs distinct from those of Islam; although Tholuck

was not a product of neoplatonic, Christian, Buddhist, Zoroastrian, Hermetic, or Indian thought, or even primeval Aryan beliefs [sic], but traceable in its essence to the teachings of the Prophet. Irrespective of conceivable influences, as Nile Green remarks (2012: 8), “Sufis rarely perceived themselves to be other than Muslims... for many millions of Muslims Islam appeared to be inseparable from Sufism. While convention prevents it, we might do better speaking of ‘Sufi Islam’ than ‘Sufism’.”

States aiming at secularisation have tended to allow the (regulated and monitored) practice of Islam, but to strongly discourage Sufi ways. In the Soviet Union, Sufi orders were persecuted as primitivist, potentially counter-revolutionary associations of “malefactors”;²¹⁵ in Mao’s China, Islamic organisations linked to the state were dominated by the *Yihewani*, a Wahhabi-inspired group.²¹⁶ The newly founded Turkish republic abolished Sufi activity in 1925, in stark contrast to longstanding Ottoman policy.²¹⁷

Geertz (1968) noted, on fieldwork in Morocco and Indonesia, that the modernisation of the Muslim world was leading to “changes in the forms of economic activity, in political organisation, in the bases of social stratification, in moral values and ideologies, in family life and education, and, perhaps most critically, changes in the sense of life’s possibilities.”²¹⁸ Moreover, “even the humblest peasant or shepherd” was now aware that “everyday experiences can be set in a broader and more meaningful context by resort to symbols which picture reality in terms of general laws inductively established[,] as well as by resort to those which picture it in terms of fixed paradigms authoritatively revealed.”²¹⁹ The “classical” Islam of Sufi symbol and ritual could therefore not be expected to endure. It was being replaced by a “scripturalist” Islam driven by adherence to, and

himself concluded that “the Sufi doctrine was both generated and must be illustrated out of Muhammad’s own mysticism.”

²¹⁵ Gross 1999; Benningsen and Lemerrier-Quelquejay 1990; Sirriyeh 1999; O’Dell 2017.

²¹⁶ Cherif-Chebbi 1999. *Yihewani* was a Sinicisation of the Arabic *Ikhwān* (brothers).

²¹⁷ Algar 1990a.

²¹⁸ Geertz 1971: 21.

²¹⁹ Geertz 1971: 103.

interpretation of, text. Such an Islam was framed by its adherents as “plain”, “original”, and “uncorrupted”,²²⁰ but represented either a retreat from modernity, creating a dichotomy between the worlds of belief and experience, or a reshaping by it: Geertz quoted a modernist scholar who told him that the Declaration of the Rights of Man, the secret of atomic power, and the principles of scientific medicine were all to be found in the Koran.²²¹ Geertz remarked, “The symbols are still there, of course; so, for the most part, are the rituals, and they are still generally regarded as housing imperishable spiritual truths. But now people find it harder and harder, so to speak, to make them work.”²²² “Imagistic revelations of the divine” were being replaced by “ideological assertions of the divine’s importance.”²²³

Julia Howell and Martin van Bruinessen (2007: 8–9) strongly criticised Geertz’s opposition of traditional, Sufi Islam to “scripturalist” Islam, on the grounds that many Sufis were erudite: indeed, Geertz’s archetypal Moroccan Sufi, Shaykh Lyusi, was “the author of learned books”.²²⁴ But this is to confuse the expert use of scripture, an essential characteristic of the traditional Islamic sciences, with the modernist Islam that Geertz described as *scripturalist*. A more telling criticism might be that Geertz characterised traditional Islam as being based on “fixed paradigms”, which sets aside the experiential and intellectual aspects of the Islamic sciences, and in particular of *taṣawwuf*.

This did not necessarily make Geertz’s central argument empirically incorrect. Michael Gilsenan (1973: 196–206) found that Sufi orders in Egypt had been “rendered clearly redundant”: bypassed by modern social and political networks, and bearing a “complex of significances, interpretations, and metaphors” increasingly irrelevant to the modern world. The only exception was the Hamidi Shadhili order, which had a relatively formal organisation and the charisma of a recently deceased founder. Arberry (1950: 133), an orientalist rather than an anthropologist, argued that Sufism had been in pronounced qualitative decline since the days of Ibn Arabi, and had now “come to an end

²²⁰ Geertz 1971: 69.

²²¹ Geertz 1971: 69.

²²² Geertz 1971: 102.

²²³ Geertz 1971: 62.

²²⁴ Geertz himself (1971: 33) described Shaykh Lyusi as having been “one of the country’s most illustrious scholars”.

as a movement dominating the minds and hearts of learned and earnest men”; although he subsequently remarked that the “sanctity” of Shaykh Ahmad al-Alawi (d 1934), profiled by Martin Lings,²²⁵ “recalled the golden age of medieval mystics”.²²⁶

Declinist models were strongly challenged by Valerie Hoffman (1995), whose use of participant observation and flexible logistics, and openness to emic narratives, revealed far greater depth and intensity to Sufi practice than had been encountered by Geertz or Gilsenan. She found that Sufi orders in Egypt were flourishing; membership was increasing, and the number of orders had been growing continually, including during Gilsenan’s time. Hoffman developed personal and didactic relationships with several Sufi shaykhs, in particular a Shaykh Izz al-Arab al-Hawari, of the Shadhili order, who became a mentor and guide, and introduced her to all kinds of Sufis, from “empty kiosks” to “shaykhs whose feet he would gladly have kissed”.²²⁷ By the early years of the new millennium, a consensus had developed that Sufi Islam could thrive amid modernity.²²⁸

Perhaps unsurprisingly, ethnographers find that the knowledge characteristically claimed to be specific to Sufis is obtained through spirituality. Hoffman (1995: 140–41) described knowledge as being gained through stages of *fānāʾ*, “annihilation”. If a disciple loves and learns from his shaykh, he might reach the point where he “sees nothing but they shaykh in every place, thinks of nothing but him, and desires nothing but him. When the disciple speaks, it is as if the shaykh were speaking through him... The shaykh then functions as the gateway into the presence of the Prophet”, and the Prophet as the way to approach God. Werbner (2006: 136), researching a Naqshbandi group based around the charismatic Zindapir (d 1999), “was repeatedly told”, in Britain as well as Pakistan, “that hidden knowledge in Sufism is arrived at through experience rather than through intellectual scholarship; the way to gnosis is via the heart,” through religious practices and “the love of a shaykh.” Shaykh Abidi, a Sufi based in Manchester, developed

²²⁵ Lings 1993.

²²⁶ Lings 1981: 124.

²²⁷ Hoffman 1995: 38.

²²⁸ van Bruinessen and Howell 2007.

numerological charts, based on the Koran (and in one case the Koran and Torah), that were said to give access to divine knowledge. But he, too, claimed that his knowledge was given to him by his forefathers, whom he traced back to Ali; and he had been mentored by a *murshid* in Pakistan.²²⁹

This specifically Sufi knowledge is often naturalistically inexplicable: of books a Sufi master has never read (he might be illiterate), for instance, or of languages he has never studied.²³⁰ It is characteristically personally relevant to the Sufi and to those around him. Gilsenan (1982) observed that, as Hujwiri had described, a Sufi shaykh was expected to know details of the personal lives and souls of the people for whom he was responsible; otherwise, he was not a true shaykh.

2.2 Healing

The ethnographic concept of “Sufi healing” is problematic, with regards to both the “Sufi” and the “healing”.

A Sufi might be expected to be a specialist in *taṣawwuf*: the purification of souls. The concept of *taṣawwuf* is likely to be, in general, an important aspect of the context of Sufi healing, and a qualitative dimension of the patient’s experience. However, the concept of “healing” is generally viewed by ethnographers through a medicalising lens, without considering how the healing is part of *taṣawwuf*; even though the description of a Sufi shaykh as a “physician of souls” goes back at least as far as Hujwiri.²³¹ Even in Werbner’s seminal study (2003) of Zindapir, who was both a renowned spiritual guide and a popular healer, the medical and spiritual discourses are largely distinct. To measure or observe the purification of souls is beyond the ethnographer’s expertise and, arguably, professional interest; the ethnographer probably has to accept, as a Sufi, someone who has the cultural role or identity of a Sufi, irrespective of whether they are actually purifying souls. But to neglect the dimension of soul-healing can be an important omission.

²²⁹ Werbner 2009.

²³⁰ Hoffman 1995.

²³¹ al-Hujwiri 1996: 55.

Ethnographers rarely discuss, in detail, the healer's spiritual and intellectual heritage. We generally learn about the healer's medical beliefs, but not about how these arise from beliefs inherent in a Sufi order, or the Islamic intellectual sciences. This may reflect a dichotomy between ethnographic interests in the contemporary and particular, and the orientalist focus on intellectual tradition.²³² But it may also reflect an understanding that religious healing is non-scientific, and that its understanding can be considered a matter of belief, rather than knowledge. Even sympathetic ethnographers have characterised Sufi knowledge as emotional, rather than rational,²³³ perhaps reflecting Weber's view that charismatic authority is irrational by definition.²³⁴ The knowledge of some healers comes across as incoherent, as when an Indian healer uses numerology to assist in diagnosis, but makes mistakes in her arithmetic;²³⁵ but, as in modern medicine, individual mistakes do not necessarily invalidate or render uninteresting a worldview.

For disciplinary reasons, perhaps, ethnographers of Sufi healing rarely, if ever, describe it as working by means of non-naturalistic emic mechanisms. Most have concentrated largely on phenomenological descriptions of healing, with a tacit understanding that it is symbolic: the manipulation of symbols changes the meaning of the patient's experience, and leads to thoughts which catalyse healing. The generation of mind-body effects can be described as placebo; purely mental effects have sometimes been considered as psychotherapy.

Sufi healing has rarely, if ever, been subjected to randomised controlled trials. Such procedures tend to assume a standardisation of illness (conceptualised implicitly as pathology), treatment, and outcome that is problematic in many schools of medicine,²³⁶ including much Sufi healing; indeed, this model may be only fully understandable in physiological medicine, with its metaphor of man as machine. Clinical trials provide an impersonal view of efficacy that is lodged in experimental result,

²³² Algar 1990c.

²³³ Werbner and Basu 1998b.

²³⁴ Kalberg 2005.

²³⁵ Flueckiger 2006.

²³⁶ Waldram 2000.

rather than in the experience of the healer or patient. Their outcomes lie on an axis of external measurement, rather than in the embodied experience of living.²³⁷

Ethnographic studies of Sufi healing have been geographically patchy, with disparate analytical perspectives, and healers with various social roles and healing techniques. Particular attention has been paid to the healing of jinn-related illnesses, and to the painless ritual injury characteristic of the Rifa'i order. This may reflect the perceived specialisms of Sufi healers, or (especially with the deliberate infliction of injury) an anthropological preference for the liminal and dramatic. A comprehensive overview of what Sufi healers actually do, in the various communities in which they operate, is not yet available.

Perhaps the best way to bring together disparate studies is to work from a set of first principles. Symbolic healers must, by definition, dwell in a world of symbol and meaning recognised by the patient, and must have the authority to act in that world; which includes perceived efficacy. Religious healing, by definition, brings stigmatising, disabling, and tormenting experiences into religious discourse, in what might be termed the sacralisation of liminality.

A. Inhabiting a shared world of meaning

Sufi healers typically dwell in an enchanted world containing not only the spirit and the soul, but generally unseen beings: angels and jinns. Some Sufi healers are described as having non-human helpers: informants can be non-committal on whether these helpers are angels or jinns, but, on the whole, the helpers are identified as jinns.²³⁸

Some jinns are of good character;²³⁹ but on the whole they are conceived of as capricious or, indeed, malicious: Satan is a jinn.²⁴⁰ Humans and jinns are said to live in parallel communities.²⁴¹ The

²³⁷ A small minority of studies measure global changes in quality of life. However, even this converts experience into a parameter defined and interpreted by an external actor.

²³⁸ Flueckiger 2006; Werbner 2003.

²³⁹ Koran, chapter 72.

malicious attentions of a jinn can be provoked by “the most trivial human offence, as when the unaware human being steps on, pokes, or throws hot water over a [jinn], or wakes a group of [jinns] from deep sleep by shouting or crying after sunset”; by mocking or criticising someone who is possessed; or, indeed, by sexual jealousy.²⁴² Jinns can also be set on a person by sorcery (*sihr*),²⁴³ or by the evil eye.²⁴⁴ People may be more vulnerable at certain stages of life (puberty, childbirth), or after psychological trauma.²⁴⁵

People influenced by jinn are reportedly often unaware of that fact; the extent of possible influence varies, but can extend as far as possession.²⁴⁶ Jinn influence is associated, in particular, with psychiatric or neurological illness;²⁴⁷ the term *majnūn*, jinn-struck, can be used to describe mad people in general. Different individual jinns cause different illnesses, and have individual motivations: jealous or mischievous jinns may wish to break up relationships.²⁴⁸ Seemingly unnatural or unexpected events, including accidents or catastrophes, can also be ascribed to jinn.²⁴⁹

The existence of jinns is attested to in the Koran, where they are described as conscious beings made of “smokeless fire”.²⁵⁰ Belief in jinns, and therefore phenomena interpreted as jinn-related,

²⁴⁰ Werbner 2003; Crapanzano 1973; Flueckiger 2006; Hermans 2017.

²⁴¹ Indeed, jinn-human hybrids are reported to exist (Crapanzano 1973; Seddik Arkam 2017).

²⁴² El Hadidi 2016: 42; Crapanzano 1973; Hermans 2017.

²⁴³ The existence of a licit form of magic, in which the practitioner worked with the souls of things (notably stars), was argued for in the Muslim world by writers such as al-Kindi (d 873) and Ibn al-Nadim (d 995 or 998); but a consensus developed that magic always involved jinns. The concept of “natural” (non-demonic and hence licit) magic travelled from the Muslim world to western Christendom, where it survived well into the 17th century (Saif 2015; Hanegraaff 2012).

²⁴⁴ El Hadidi 2016; Flueckiger 2006.

²⁴⁵ El Hadidi 2016; Flueckiger 2006; Crapanzano 1973; Zarcone and Hobart 2017.

²⁴⁶ Similar beliefs were recorded by Csordas (1994), although his Catholic-charismatic informants spoke of demons, not jinns.

²⁴⁷ Crapanzano 1973; El Hadidi 2016. The biographer of the renowned Sufi healer Abd al-Qadir Siddiqi (d 1962) remarked, “Satan or jinns can influence man’s mind and thoughts similarly to hypnotism, where the hypnotist subdues the person’s thoughts to his own thoughts. Satan or jinns do not possess bodies, the common understanding is wrong.” (Valdinoci 2012: 503) This would mean that jinn syndromes affecting the body are essentially dissociative.

²⁴⁸ El Hadidi 2016; Crapanzano 1973; Seddik Arkam 2017.

²⁴⁹ Werbner 2003; Flueckiger 2006.

²⁵⁰ Koran 55: 15.

travels with Muslim communities.²⁵¹ A Sufi healer clearly has advantages over a naturalistic physician in addressing complaints that are felt to be jinn-related, or indeed best understood within a religious framework. Marja Tiilikainen (2012) described psychiatric patients travelling from Finland (where mental-health services are well funded and, in places, distinctively personalistic)²⁵² to Somaliland, where religious healers, including Sufis, were able to diagnose jinn-related illness and treat it with herbal remedies and prayer. The patients described by Tiilikainen found the Somali treatment effective, and were relieved to escape poor prognoses and “poisonous” medications. In contrast, Werbner (2003) recorded case histories where the therapeutic failure of Sufi healing led to patients adopting a more naturalistic perspective.²⁵³

Amma, a Sufi healer described by Joyce Flueckiger (2006), incorporates her Hindu patients’ religious perspectives into her own. Hanuman and Kali exist, but as powerful potential helpers (presumably jinns), rather than gods. This might be viewed as syncretism, but is perhaps better understood as an act of translation: Amma has not amended her creed. In Amma’s healing room, likened by Flueckiger to a crossroads (i.e. a place of social confluence), doctrinal differences tend to disappear; Amma emphasises that the only real difference between people is gender. Her own female gender allows her to enter a world of meanings and relationships closed to men.

The Sufi healers in Berlin described by Nasima Selim (2015) also attempt to translate their worldviews into the local vernacular. Shaykh Eşref Gökçimen, a Naqshbandi-Haqqani master, uses the postures of *namāz*,²⁵⁴ the standard Islamic daily prayer, as the basis of *Ḥayy-Kraft-Yoga* (Living-power-yoga),²⁵⁵ a physical and psychological therapy offered free of charge at the Naqshbandi-

²⁵¹ Werbner 2003.

²⁵² Scandinavian countries in general have a long history of using psychiatric drugs with less alacrity than, for instance, in the USA, with equal or better results (*Schizophrenia Bulletin* editorial 1970). In recent years, mental health services in Western Lapland, in Finland, have been notable for their use of open-dialogue therapy, in which psychotic illness is treated with family therapy and only sparing use of drugs (Whitaker 2015).

²⁵³ Werbner 2003.

²⁵⁴ *Namāz* is the Persian, Turkish, and Urdu term; the Arabic word is *ṣalāt*.

²⁵⁵ *Ḥayy* is Arabic for Living, and is one of the Names of God, chanted by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis in the weekly *Khatmu ‘l-khwājagān* zikr (see Appendix 3).

Haqqani centre; the instructor uses the (relatively widely understood) word *çakra* to describe an energy centre, rather than the Arabic *latifa*. The Universal Sufis sing lyrics from various religious traditions as they do their healing dances. The presentation of Sufi practice as therapy is not unusual in the West.²⁵⁶ Gritt Klinkhammer (2015) argues that this reflects a “therapeutic self-help culture”, in which medicalised discourse is privileged over religious perspectives.

Several ethnographers observe that, in practice, the doctrine of the healer is less important than his ability and personal qualities: “patients... are there not to discuss ideology but to be healed”.²⁵⁷ In the West, as in other parts of the world, the help of Sufi healers is sought by people of various cultural and religious backgrounds.²⁵⁸

B. Authority and efficacy

The Koran and, in particular, the Sunna of the Prophet Muhammad contain a great deal of guidance on illness and healing. The term “Prophetic medicine” is used to describe the body of medicine that developed around this revealed knowledge, consisting not merely of the Prophet’s direct example but of learned medicine consonant with it: which, historically, was often humoral, and, in particular, Graeco-Arabic. In Prophetic medicine, “medicine of the heart”, soul-healing,²⁵⁹ is distinguished from “medicine of the body”.²⁶⁰ However, the Prophet’s teaching on medicine was considered intrinsically sacred; and the health of the body was held to be linked to the health of the soul.²⁶¹

²⁵⁶ Klinkhammer 2015.

²⁵⁷ Flueckiger 2006: 33.

²⁵⁸ Werbner 2009; Zeleke 2014; Flueckiger 2006. To my knowledge, no good quantitative study exists of the ratio of Sufis: non-Sufi Muslims: non-Muslims among patients of Sufi healers.

²⁵⁹ al-Ghazali (2010) explains that in this context, *qalb*, heart, can be considered essentially synonymous with *nafs*, soul, or *‘aql*, intellect.

²⁶⁰ al-Jawziyya 1998.

²⁶¹ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, in al-Jawziyya (1998); Klinkhammer 2015.

As perceived inheritors of the Prophet's teaching and, in particular, his methods of purifying the soul, Sufis might be expected to have expertise in medicine. Indeed, apart from knowledge, healing might be described as the distinctive function of the Sufi. Holiness is said to create the capacity for healing, which can be framed as the transmission of *baraka*. A *silsila* can indicate the transmission of *baraka*, and of healing techniques.

The capacity to heal is expected in a holy person: even when healing methods are ostensibly naturalistic, they are expected to succeed partly because of the healer's holiness.²⁶² Apparent failure to heal can be explained as a difficult case, God's will, or a subtle form of healing not readily detected by the observer; or as the patient's failure to follow a procedure properly;²⁶³ but failure to heal altogether can damage a Sufi's credibility. Paulo Pinto (2016) described a Sufi order splintering because a new shaykh not only lacked charisma but was unable to heal: a problem magnified when one of his followers succeeded where he had failed.

When holy people die, they are held by their followers to be conscious and incorrupt, albeit in their graves.²⁶⁴ The flow of *baraka* therefore does not cease. Indeed, since they are still praying and being prayed for, the *baraka* associated with them can increase. The spirits of deceased holy people are thought to be active, and have even been reported to do physical healing (for instance, removing a lung abscess).²⁶⁵ People therefore request their assistance, and visit their shrines.

Sufi healing is characterised, above all, by prayer. In addition to *namāz*, Sufis engage in prayers known as *dhikr* (Arabic; the *dh* is pronounced *z* in Turkish, Persian, and Urdu, and often transliterated accordingly),²⁶⁶ "remembrance": the practitioner is remembering God. A set of prayers is known as a *wird*: Sufi orders and suborders have characteristic *wirds*. An individually prescribed

²⁶² Werbner 2003.

²⁶³ Flueckiger 2006.

²⁶⁴ Hoffman (1995) explains that this belief is held to be supported by the Koranic statement that those slain in God's way are not dead (2: 154; 3: 169).

²⁶⁵ Hoffman 1995.

²⁶⁶ In this thesis, I have used the spelling *zikr*, because it reflects the pronunciation of most Naqshbandi-Haqqani dervishes, as well as the Turkish origins of Shaykh Nazim.

zīkr is known as a *wazīfa*. Zīkr is often seen not only as a purification for the soul, but as having the potential to heal “mental” and physical problems. Specific *wirds* or *wazīfas* are prescribed for specific healing effects. Prayers are not only recited but written: whereafter they can be worn (in an amulet or pocket), drunk, eaten, buried, or even burnt and inhaled. Prayer can also be transferred when a holy person prays and blows on a patient, or into water that is drunk by the patient. Other healing techniques include the laying on of hands, spitting on, or gazing at the patient.²⁶⁷

Zīkr is always, to some extent, embodied, even if only through the mechanics of breathing and chanting; or, in silent zīkr, through (presumably) altered patterns of brain activation and blood-flow. Hoffman noted (1995: 41) that, during zīkr with Shaykh Izz, she could “sense the movement of his spirit”: since the spirit is (at least partly) in the body, this could also be regarded as a kind of embodied action. In most orders, at least some zīkrs are combined with physical movements that can be regarded as dance. The physical effects of zīkr are said to occur partly through physical action, and partly through the primarily spiritual effects of prayer. Indeed, the validity of zīkr can be demonstrated by its effects on the mind and body.²⁶⁸

Holiness is expected to provide healing that cannot be naturalistically explained. Gilsenan (1982) pointed out that the perception of miracles was partly a matter of trained alertness: one person’s miracle could be another person’s vaguely remarkable coincidence. However, many Sufi healers are associated with events too dramatic to attribute readily to mere selective attention. Zindapir’s associates told “saintly miracle stories... of cripples who walked out of his room unaided, of the blind who recovered their sight”;²⁶⁹ the village around the shrine of Ben Yeffu in El Jadida, Morocco, was electrified by an Emirati princess whose son recovered suddenly, at the shrine, from medically incurable paralysis.²⁷⁰ Such narratives of course help to support a healer’s authority (and, perhaps, the effectiveness of symbolic healing), and are evidence in themselves of holiness.

²⁶⁷ Valdinoci 2012; Flueckiger 2006; Werbner 2003.

²⁶⁸ Klinkhammer 2015.

²⁶⁹ Werbner 2003: 229.

²⁷⁰ Hermans 2017.

Successful healing can be the process that introduces a person to the Sufi who is supposed to be her *murshid*.²⁷¹ Conversely, Werbner (2003) profiled people who had become disillusioned with the concept of the *pīr*, as a result of unhappy experiences with Sufi healers.

Healing is conceived of not only as a potential spiritual experience for the patient, but a spiritual exercise for the healer, who serves God through healing, and through helping people to resort to God in times of need.²⁷² Some healers describe being influenced by (more or less) good jinns as part of an “elective illness” that eases only when they devote their lives to healing.²⁷³ An overtly sacrificial element can be present: Abd al-Qadir Siddiqi (d 1962), a theology professor of Hyderabad, India, was reported to transfer patients’ diseases to himself.²⁷⁴

In many cases, the healer has no overt commercial gain. Even so, donations from grateful clients may be considerable.²⁷⁵ Charitable donations are considered, in general, to be protective, and may well be directed through a Sufi.²⁷⁶ Even when the Sufi is deceased, donations may be given to his shrine or in his name. Werbner (1998) described a “good[-]faith economy”, in which people are happy to serve a Sufi with whom they have a personal connection. Vincent Crapanzano (1973), in contrast, described healing as an exchange of wealth for *baraka*. In practice, Werbner and Crapanzano are probably describing different points on a spectrum of perception and interaction; Hélène Basu (2015) showed that the same Sufi healers could have short-term transactional relationships with some visitors, and textured and interpersonal relationships with others.

Different saints, deceased or living, are thought to have different healing specialties.²⁷⁷ Several ethnographers have described the expertise of Sufis at treating jinn-related illnesses. Spiritually powerful healers are said to be able to order jinns: Abd al-Qadir Siddiqi was said to “look straight

²⁷¹ Flueckiger 2006.

²⁷² Valdinoci 2012; Hoffman 1995.

²⁷³ Zarcone and Hobart 2017.

²⁷⁴ Valdinoci 2012.

²⁷⁵ Werbner 2003.

²⁷⁶ Werbner 2003.

²⁷⁷ Hoffman 1995.

into the patients' eyes and tell the spirits to leave";²⁷⁸ Zindapir's charisma was said to be enough to draw jinns away from their victims.²⁷⁹ Other healers strike or whip the patient to drive the jinn out; a knife can be used to drive the jinn away (though not to stab the patient).²⁸⁰ A jinn may also be drawn out by the ingestion of certain foods: a Kazakh healer (*bakhsī*) profiled by Anne-Marie Vuillemenot (2017: 71) uses sugar to "work on the evil spirits from the inside, dissolving them". *Porkhāns*, Turkoman healers who are helped by good jinns, extract the evil from the throat of the patient; a *porkhān* profiled by Manijeh Maghsudi (2017: 112) puts his hand down the patient's throat, "transforms [sic—"transfers" is more likely] the pain or the disease into a small ball of fleece or interlocked hair, and takes it out of the patient's body." At the Bava Gor healing shrine in Gujarat, India, a jinn departs through the hair of its victim, and is "locked up" when the hair is nailed to a tree.²⁸¹ Evil can also be transferred without physical contact, for instance to a black chicken.²⁸² Some healers, notably in Central and South Asia, become possessed in order to heal:²⁸³ Vuillemenot (2017: 65) describes a highly regarded *bakhsī* who says that he takes a "double voyage, one of a shamanic type and one of a Sufi type, the sort in which one seeks to join the divine light in order to seek healing."

The deliberate, painless infliction and healing of wounds is associated with the Rifa'i and, to a lesser extent, other Sufi orders. Most commonly, a dervish is impaled with a skewer (the *darb al-shish*), but many other implements are used.²⁸⁴ The wounds often look potentially lethal, or at least highly

²⁷⁸ Valdinoci 2012: 502.

²⁷⁹ Werbner 2003.

²⁸⁰ Zarcone and Hobart 2017.

²⁸¹ Basu 1998, 2015.

²⁸² Flueckiger 2006.

²⁸³ Flueckiger 2006; Zarcone and Hobart 2017.

²⁸⁴ John Bennett (1975) described a ceremony in Istanbul in the early 1920s in which Rifa'i dervishes impaled and skewered themselves before one was chopped in half, all without apparent injury. A *Disappearing World* film for ITV (1973: anthropologists Ali Bulookbashi and André Singer) recorded Qadiri zikrs in a Kurdish community in Iran, in which "young boys licked red-hot metal spoons and pushed skewers through their cheeks. Men ate glass and long nails and drove swords through the skin around their stomachs. Two hundred volts of electricity were applied to one dervish, lighting up a bulb he was holding in his hand, and poisonous snakes wound themselves round arms and necks during the ceremonies... [all] without ill-effect." The shaykh's son and representative

dangerous; the healing is typically rapid and more or less bloodless. Howard Hall, a clinical psychologist with research interests in hypnosis and psychoneuroimmunology, pledged allegiance (took *bay'at*) from a shaykh in the Casnazani order, and demonstrated painless self-skewering with rapid healing at medical conferences. Another Casnazani dervish was subjected to extensive medical investigation while self-skewering. Naturalistic explanations of the phenomenon remain elusive.²⁸⁵

Esra Çizmeci (2018: 74) observed that the practice was treated as “proof that the natural laws of the world may sometimes not be valid—physical verification of God’s existence.” In addition, it was considered part of the training of the *nafs*, promoting mindfulness and reliance on God; and it gave practitioners the courage to persist with *taṣawwuf*. It is also, of course, a social practice, affecting the mood and understanding of the whole group, whether they are skewered or not; and it provides evidence of the *baraka* of the shaykh, and his connection to the Prophet Muhammad.²⁸⁶ Escalating self-injury can be regarded as a marker of spiritual advancement or status; Paulo Pinto (2016) reported a dervish who wore a skewer in his belt and felt that, as a result, even the secret police did not harass him. Relative failure of a procedure (visible bleeding, for instance) can be a sign of spiritual inadequacy.²⁸⁷

Anthropologists have likened the relationship of patient to healer to the transference that is said to occur in psychotherapy.²⁸⁸ The intense dyadic relationship that characterises some Sufi healing,²⁸⁹ and the fact that some Sufi healers are nicknamed “mother” and “father”, indicates that transference may indeed be taking place. However, the comparison to psychotherapy is problematic in that it tends to imply a scientific standard against which Sufi healing can be measured, or at any rate understood. Psychotherapy certainly exists within a scientific discourse, but a coherent and

remarked, “Some people... can put a skewer through the top of their head until it appears from under their chin. It doesn’t matter if it goes through their brain or their face. They will keep their normal sensations.” (Singer and Woodhead 1988: 168–70)

²⁸⁵ Hall and Schwartz 2004; Mason 2004; Micozzi and Dibra 2017.

²⁸⁶ Singer and Woodhead 1988; Pinto 2016; Çizmeci 2018; Clarke 2014.

²⁸⁷ Pinto 2016.

²⁸⁸ Crapanzano 1973; Werbner 2003.

²⁸⁹ Ewing 1984.

complete naturalistic explanation for its efficacy remains elusive; as, indeed, does evidence that it is substantially more effective than placebo;²⁹⁰ although, if Sufi healing is supposed to work through a placebo effect, this increases the appropriateness of the analogy.

With charismatic founders who established an understanding of the *psyche*, and how to heal it, schools of psychotherapy can be said to resemble religious orders;²⁹¹ Henri Ellenberger (1970: 550) commented that Freud had established a philosophical school, into which an initiation involving “heavy financial sacrifice... [and] surrender of privacy and of the whole self” integrated the follower “more indissolubly than ever was a Pythagorean, Stoic, or Epicurean in his own organisation”. Some illnesses, such as the dissociative disorders of possessed patients, are of the kind that can fairly straightforwardly (though not necessarily helpfully) be modelled using psychotherapy. Other phenomena, such as rapid cures of bubonic plague or cholera,²⁹² cannot. Such dramatic cures belie the generalisation that traditional healing is primarily a transformation of meaning, and physiological medicine a treatment of disease.

The analogy of Sufi healing as psychotherapy also neglects the qualitative dimension of the healer’s charisma, described by Werbner (2003: 218) as “deep calm and inner peace”, and by others as holiness;²⁹³ and the ultimate context of much Sufi healing, the purification of the soul. Through the charisma of a holy person, the “emotional ecology” of the world around them is altered.²⁹⁴ Their presence is also said to protect those nearby from harm.²⁹⁵

²⁹⁰ Epstein 2006.

²⁹¹ Epstein 2006.

²⁹² These naturalistically inexplicable cures were attributed to Abd al-Qadir Siddiqi (Valdinoci 2012).

²⁹³ Hoffman 1995.

²⁹⁴ Werbner 2003: 225.

²⁹⁵ Hoffman 1995.

C. *The sacralisation of liminality*

Serious illness consists of a transition to a different mode of experiencing the self and the world:²⁹⁶ which Susan Sontag (1978) evocatively called the “night-side of life”. Illness can be understood as a liminal experience, as the patient straddles the boundary between the self of memory, identity, and habitus, and the self of present experience. To this can be added the liminality created by the consequences of illness—stigma, incapacity, poverty; conditions which may have led to illness in the first place.

Religious healing may restore someone to the identity and way of being they had before illness. At other times, a new identity is constructed, of illness and health, day and night-side. In both cases, religious narratives can help to structure the world: narratives of sin and grace, being lost and found, blind and aware. Such narratives are reinforced not only by discourse but by embodied experience: the jinn leaving the body, the eyesight restored.

In a modern, naturalistic world, embodied narratives of religious healing are essentially countercultural. Healers can be liminal, stigmatised characters. The *sīdī* who run the healing shrine of Bava Gor are members of a black servant caste; they satirically call themselves *‘aql vagar loko* and *janglī*—people without intellect, savages.²⁹⁷ Mama Ji Sarkar of Rawalpindi, a Sufi whose touch is said to heal, has no formal qualifications or training as a healer, and is a bed-bound *majdhūb* (“holy madman”).²⁹⁸ Maghsudi (2017) profiled a *porkhān* who exorcised successfully, but nonetheless had to leave his village, reportedly because his methods (he became possessed) were not seen as quite respectable.

Some Sufi healers, rather than exorcise jinns, establish ways for people to have long-term relationships with them: the jinn ceases to provoke the illness it caused, but demands (typically) blood sacrifice and sexual favours. These healers occupy the boundary zone between Sufi and

²⁹⁶ Turner 1997.

²⁹⁷ Basu 1998, 2015.

²⁹⁸ Frembgen 1998.

sorcerer, as illustrated by ceremonies in which they honour God, the Prophet, and holy people—like other Sufi groups—and then the jinn “masters”. Part of their expertise consists of understanding the personalities and preferences of the jinns involved. Such Sufi groups include the Hamadsha of Morocco, and the Gheitani of Egypt, who assist the female masters of *zar* ceremonies, in which jinns are propitiated. These Sufi healers are generally viewed as disreputable; even the people they heal, who typically form a long-term relationship with the group, tend to be stigmatised.²⁹⁹ Crapanzano (1973) argued that men who joined the Hamadsha had an inner sense of inadequate masculinity, leading to illness that was resolved at the price of permanent marginality. He may not have been wrong; but the narrative of masculinity is one of many that could have been drawn out of people’s life stories, and its selection by Crapanzano owes something to contemporary psychoanalytic theory.

More commonly, Sufi healers convert stigma into redemption. Hélène Basu (2015) describes women with jinn-possession narratives that can be traced to experiences of poverty and exclusion. When they present at a Sufi shrine, they are treated as the plaintiffs in a courtroom, with the jinns as the accused: exorcism is vindication. “The ideal *pīr* welcomes all, especially the poor, the sick and the mentally anguished,”³⁰⁰ with a sympathy for the underdog that is said to be the legacy of the Prophet.³⁰¹ Many dergahs provide shelter, or asylum: not only for people deemed mad, but for outcasts and rejected people in general.³⁰² When, as a result of a Supreme Court ruling, people were sent away from Sufi shrines in India, on the grounds that the treatment there was inappropriate and dangerous, many had nowhere else to go; others ended up in psychiatric hospitals that were less safe and humanely run than the dergahs.³⁰³

Sufi healers can be effective partly because the social structures through which they operate are, to some extent, independent of others in society. Gilsenan (1982) describes an outcast being given

²⁹⁹ Crapanzano 1973; El Hadidi 2016.

³⁰⁰ Mills 1998: 37.

³⁰¹ Werbner 2003; Mills 1998.

³⁰² Davar 2015; Werbner 2003; Hoffman 1995.

³⁰³ Davar 2015.

safety through his association with a Sufi shaykh. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Sanusi order was able to provide the facilities of a state for the Bedouin of Cyrenaica, in part because the order's leaders had charismatic authority that transcended tribal divisions (indeed, most Sanusi leaders were not from Cyrenaica).³⁰⁴ In the modern world, Sufi orders are largely independent of the modern institutions that supposedly superseded them, and can be more flexible and sensitive in providing welfare, in part because of their deep roots in respected cultural narratives and long-established social networks.³⁰⁵

One person's liminality is another person's centrality: Sufis are sometimes portrayed as the real government of the world, people through whom blessings descend and God's mercy is made manifest;³⁰⁶ this theme can arguably be traced back to Prophetic traditions.³⁰⁷ Dynasties come and go but *silsilas* remain. The characteristic universality of Sufi healers, in which everyone is treated, irrespective of background or creed,³⁰⁸ is not only an ethical imperative but an expression of power.

³⁰⁴ Evans-Pritchard 1949.

³⁰⁵ Foley 2008.

³⁰⁶ Hoffman 1995; Werbner 2003.

³⁰⁷ Several hadiths refer to holy people "through whom the earth subsists", and through whom people are given rain (Gibril Haddad, *ESP*, 2016: 51–53).

³⁰⁸ Hoffman 1995; Flueckiger 2006; Basu 2015.

Chapter 3: The Naqshbandi-Haqqani order

Shah [Bahauddin] Naqshband said: “We are ashamed to ask intercession in the Divine Presence for one who destroyed people’s hearts. We can’t help them. For other sins we may ask forgiveness.”

—Shaykh Nazim al-Naqshbandi al-Haqqani³⁰⁹

CHAPTER SUMMARY

3.1 *Naqshbandis*. A discussion of the history and characteristics of the Naqshbandi order.

3.2 *Naqshbandi-Haqqanis*. A summary of research on the Haqqani branch of the Naqshbandi order, with particular emphasis on healing.

3.1 *Naqshbandis*

The Naqshbandi order is named after Bahauddin Naqshband. *Naqsh* is a word of Arabic origin, meaning a design, drawing, or engraving; *band* is of Persian origin, and means “bond”. A *naqshband* is a painter or designer, but this was not Bahauddin’s craft; at least, not in the usual sense. The *naqsh*, in this case, is the engraving of God’s name on the heart of the dervish; and the *band* is the heart’s bond with God.³¹⁰

The Naqshbandi-Haqqani *silsila* is in Appendix 2. Both versions are taken or adapted from *The Naqshbandi Sufi Way* (1995), a hagiographical history of the order by Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, a senior figure in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order. The Golden Chain lists the teachers who have been

³⁰⁹ Shaykh Nazim, *MO 2*, 1980: 144.

³¹⁰ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, in Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995. Buehler (1998: 55) gives a simpler explanation: “Bahauddin, with God’s name woven or engraved on his heart, began to imprint or impress the name of God on others’ hearts.”

responsible for carrying the spiritual essence, or “secret”, of the order. The Naqshbandi order is unique among Sufi orders in that its main *silsila* runs through Abu Bakr rather than through Ali. Other particularly notable masters, prior to Bahauddin Naqshband, include Salman al-Farsi, who, like Abu Bakr, was a companion of the Prophet; Jafar al-Sadiq, the sixth Shi’a Imam; Bayazid Bistami, the renowned early Sufi; and Yusuf Hamadani, who taught Ahmad Yasavi, after whom the Yasavi order is named, and associated with Abd al-Qadir Jilani, after whom the Qadiri order is named.³¹¹

As Hujwiri’s textbook shows, schools of thought existed before the Sufi orders formally crystallised; and it is reasonable to assume that “schools” of understanding and practice might have developed around influential teachers. Several Naqshbandi sources say that the main *silsila* was known as *Bakrī* or *Ṣiddiqī* after Abu Bakr, and later *Ṭayfūrī* after Bayazid (Tayfur) Bistami. Yusuf Hamadani was termed a *khwāja* (Persian word for “master”); from the time of his successor, Abd al-Khaliq al-Ghujdawani,³¹² the *silsila* was known as that of the *khwājagān*, the masters.³¹³

A complex diagram, printed after the Golden Chain in Appendix 2, shows the links between the shaykhs of the Golden Chain and other influential Sufis. Even this diagram cannot show all relevant teachers, or all the links between them: for instance, the association between Abd al-Qadir Jilani and Yusuf Hamadani (ninth on the Golden Chain) is widely documented, but not shown on the diagram. Notably, the diagram shows all the Shi’a Imams up to the eighth Imam, Ali Rida; as well as other luminaries such as Ibn Arabi, Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi, and Ghazali. This illustrates, of course, the belief that the Naqshbandi path has inherited, or at least interacted with, the insights and *baraka* of these great figures. It also depicts the Sufi orders as sharing an underlying unity.

³¹¹ Algar 1990a.

³¹² Since I am using Kabbani’s version of the Golden Chain, I have used his spelling of Ghujdawani. Algar (1990a) gives Ghijduvani; Weismann (2007) the essentially identical Ghijduwani; and Madelung (1987–88) and Murad (2011) give Ghujduwani.

³¹³ Algar 1990a; Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995.

In his textbook on the Naqshbandis, Itzhak Weismann claims that the *silsila* from the Prophet to Yusuf Hamadani is “obviously spurious”, but provides no elucidation of this claim.³¹⁴ Buehler remarks that three of the first six links in the *silsila* are “historically impossible”, and points out that, for Sufi orders in general, written *isnāds* (chains of authority) going back to Ali (and by implication to the Prophet) are first recorded in the tenth century.³¹⁵ But this leaves us with a conundrum. If the *silsilas* were indeed fabricated in the tenth century, why would the composers choose to use links that seemed unfeasible? And why would Sufi masters, respected partly on the grounds of their probity, create or tolerate obvious fabrications?

Buehler does slightly overstate his case. It is just about conceivable that Qasim met Salman al-Farsi, although he would probably have been very young;³¹⁶ the lifespans required for Bayazid to meet Jafar al-Sadiq, or Abu 'l-Hasan to meet Bayazid, would have been extraordinarily long, especially in Abu 'l-Hasan's case, but perhaps not literally impossible.

More tellingly, perhaps, Naqshbandis have traditionally pointed out that, since physical death does not mean death of the spirit, a spiritual connection can be made with a master long after that master's funeral. Such connections are known as *Uwaysī*, after Uways, a contemporary of the Prophet who longed to meet him in person, never did, but was nonetheless counted as one of the Prophet's most important spiritual inheritors. *Uwaysī* connections are regarded by Naqshbandis as being as strong, or stronger, than physical meetings, and are a characteristic feature of the order.³¹⁷ Shaykh Hisham describes the links between Jafar and Bayazid, and Bayazid and Abu 'l Hasan, as *Uwaysī*.³¹⁸

³¹⁴ Weismann 2007: 22.

³¹⁵ Buehler 1998: 88.

³¹⁶ Buehler (1998: 86) notes the opinion of Shah Waliullah (died c 1760), a Hadith scholar and eminent Indian Naqshbandi, that “the biographical literature unequivocally states that Qasim ibn Muhammad ibn Abu Bakr could not have met Salman al-Farsi”.

³¹⁷ Buehler 1998; Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995.

³¹⁸ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995.

The use of the term Golden Chain by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis does not match that recorded by Buehler and Weismann, who identify the Golden Chain as the *isnād* containing Ali and the other Shi'a Imams;³¹⁹ as, indeed, does Shaykh Amin Ala ad-Din, a recent master (d 1990) in another branch of the Naqshbandi order.³²⁰ However, all sources agree that the most characteristic *silsila* of the Naqshbandis goes through Abu Bakr; and this may well have informed the Naqshbandi-Haqqani decision to call the *isnād* through Abu Bakr the Golden Chain.³²¹

The Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain differs from the *silsilas* recorded by Weismann and Buehler, and Shaykh Amin, in that Khidr is placed between Yusuf Hamadani and Abd al-Khaliq Ghujdawani. Khidr is widely acknowledged in Naqshbandi sources as the man who taught Abd al-Khaliq silent zikr, but is not necessarily mentioned in the Naqshbandi *silsila*.³²² Shaykh Hisham writes that Abd al-Khaliq Ghujdawani received his “secret” from Yusuf Hamadani, both directly and via Khidr:³²³ which, presumably, justifies Khidr’s inclusion. Given the importance of silent zikr to Naqshbandi identity and practice, Khidr’s contribution to the life of the order is far from negligible.

The inclusion of Khidr in the *silsila* casts some light on the earlier discussion of lifespans, since Khidr is said to be the person who taught Moses a great deal about the difference between appearance and reality, in an episode recorded in the Koran.³²⁴ Having drunk from the water of life, Khidr will not pass away until the end of the world. This tradition is not confined to Naqshbandis, but is widely believed in the Muslim world.

³¹⁹ Buehler 1998; Weismann 2007.

³²⁰ an-Naqshbandi 2011.

³²¹ Buehler remarks (1998) that *Bakrī* origins were emphasised by Turkish Naqshbandis as a way of reinforcing Sunni identity.

³²² Algar 1990a; Buehler 1998; Weismann 2007.

³²³ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995.

³²⁴ Koran 18: 60–82.

Buehler draws an analogy between the *isnāds* of Sufi orders and those of Hadith.³²⁵ The conclusion, of most 20th-century scholars, that Hadith *isnāds* were extremely unreliable has recently met considerable academic challenge.³²⁶ The late writing down of an *isnād* does not necessarily preclude its existence in earlier oral tradition.

The *silsila* from the time of Bahauddin Naqshband is generally regarded as essentially historically verifiable.³²⁷ However, it has countless ramifications, only hinted at on the diagram in Appendix 2, as different Naqshbandi groups have had different ideas about who should succeed a deceased shaykh. Groups who acknowledge Ahmad Sirhindi, 25th on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain, are known as Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi, since Ahmad was regarded by his followers as a *mujaddid*, “renewer”, of the order and of Islam in general. Groups whose *silsila* runs through Khalid of Baghdad, 31st on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain, are known as Naqshbandi-Khalidi. Some of Khalid’s followers acknowledged Uthman Siraj al-Din as his successor;³²⁸ however, the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis believe that the “secret” of the Order was passed, through Shaykh Ismail,³²⁹ to Khas Muhammad of Dagestan, and from him, via a series of Dagestani shaykhs, to Shaykh Nazim.³³⁰

³²⁵ Buehler 1998.

³²⁶ Brown 2009.

³²⁷ Buehler 1998; Algar 1990a; Weismann 2007.

³²⁸ an-Naqshbandi 2011; Böttcher 2011.

³²⁹ Khalid Baghdadi had two prominent deputies known as Shaykh Ismail: Ismail Shirwani, his deputy in the Caucasus; and Ismail Anarani, who did not long outlive Khalid, and died in Damascus. Shaykh Hisham Kabbani (*NSW*, 1995; *CINST*, 2004) puts Ismail Shirwani on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani *silsila*. Shaykh Farhat Jouine, a Canadian Naqshbandi-Haqqani deputy, argues that this is a mistake, and the relevant teacher is Ismail Anarani. Indeed, Shaykh Hisham later remarks (*Guides*, 2009: 64) that Shirwani and Anarani were “two main caliphs and therefore two main sides to Shaykh Khalid’s representation in the world. The chain was stronger through Ismail an-Narani [sic], so although Khas Muhammad [33rd on the Golden Chain] took the tradition from both Ismails, he took a broader transmission from Ismail an-Narani.” This would be consistent with the report that, when asked about his followers, Khalid would reply, “I have not a single *murīd*. Ismail [Anarani] is only half a *murīd*.” (Abu-Manneh 1990: 289) Khalid was known for having many followers (Algar 1990b), so his answer might have been intended partly in irony, and partly to draw the distinction between an apparent and a real follower. In this context, the description of Ismail Anarani as “half a *murīd*” is arguably high praise. Böttcher (2011) says that Ismail Shirwani and Ismail Anarani were the same person, but this seems to be a mistake.

³³⁰ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995.

As in the other transnational Sufi orders, the various branches of the Naqshbandi order have a great deal of local autonomy: there is no central Naqshbandi bureaucracy to determine which holy person outranks another, or how local groups should develop Naqshbandi practice. Members of different branches of the Naqshbandi order may well know, acknowledge, and meet one another, but this is not necessarily the case.³³¹

Despite this decentralisation, the Naqshbandi order is characterised as having distinct features, which are often said to be traceable to its *Bakrī* ancestry:³³²

A. A sense of pre-eminence.

Abu Bakr is regarded in Sunni thought as one of the Prophet's closest followers, as befits the first Caliph. Hujwiri commented,

Purity (*ṣafā*) has a root and a branch: its root being severance of the heart from “others” (*aghyār*) [i.e., other than God], and its branch that the heart should be empty of this deceitful world. Both these are characteristic of the Greatest *Ṣiddīq* [truthful one], Abu Bakr... with whom may God be well pleased! He is the leader (*imām*) of all the folk of this Path.³³³

Naqshbandis characteristically regard Abu Bakr as the Prophet's foremost inheritor, citing hadiths such as, “Never has the sun risen or set on a person, other than a prophet, greater than Abu Bakr”,³³⁴ and “God has poured nothing in my heart that I have not in turn poured into the heart of Abu Bakr”.³³⁵

Since the Naqshbandi order is the only one to take its spirituality from Abu Bakr, this makes it, in the eyes of its adherents, pre-eminent. It is said to begin where the other *ṭarīqas* end.³³⁶

³³¹ Trimmingham 1971; Werbner 2003.

³³² Algar 1990a.

³³³ al-Hujwiri 1996: 30–31, in Nicholson's translation; the notes in square brackets are mine.

³³⁴ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995: 73.

³³⁵ Algar 1990a: 10; Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995: 73. Algar uses the translation “breast” rather than “heart”; “breast” arguably verges on being archaic, which may have informed Kabbani's decision to use “heart”.

³³⁶ Algar 1990a.

B. *A use of spiritual connections*

Naqshbandi Sufis have been reported to have *Uwaysī* connections not only with their immediate masters, but with other spiritual teachers. For instance, Khwaja Ahrar, 20th on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain, is said to have received spiritual support from Bahauddin Naqshband and from Christ; Ahmad Sirhindi had *Uwaysī* connections with Bahauddin Naqshband and with Ali, the fourth caliph.³³⁷

A spiritual practice that is not exclusive to the Naqshbandi order, but is emphasised in particular by the Naqshbandi-Khalidi branch, is *rābiṭa*, a visualisation of the spiritual master that is intended to evoke, or rather strengthen, a spiritual connection.³³⁸

C. *Sobriety*

Naqshbandi zikrs traditionally do without groups of musicians, dance, spirit-possession, or markedly dramatic behaviour. In everyday life, Naqshbandis are, by reputation and professed intention, “sober”: not triggered by ecstasy into unbalanced thought or behaviour.³³⁹ Through personalities such as Ahmad Sirhindi (25th on the Naqshbandi Golden Chain) and Shah Waliullah, the Naqshbandi order has been associated with “reform” of Islamic practice, as elements seen as detrimental to the focus on God are stripped away.³⁴⁰ In contemporary Syria, the Naqshbandi-Khalidi shaykh Ahmad Kuftaru (d 2004) encouraged a conceptually essentialist approach to Sufi practice, in which terms specifically associated with Sufis were not used.³⁴¹

³³⁷ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995.

³³⁸ Chodkiewicz 1990.

³³⁹ Algar 1990a.

³⁴⁰ Buehler 1998; Sirriyeh 1999. Ironically, Rashid Rida, the leading Salafi, was a Naqshbandi dervish before becoming disillusioned with Sufi ways.

³⁴¹ Weismann 2004.

Algar points out that Bayazid Bistami, sixth on the *Bakrī silsila*, “appears to be the very archetype of the intoxicated Sufi whose paradoxical behaviour and fondness for theophanic utterance seem totally to contradict the sobriety of the Naqshbandiyya”.³⁴² However, Bayazid’s behaviour and statements are presented by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis as unconventional and didactic, rather than uncontrolled or heretical. For instance, Shaykh Hisham quotes Bayazid as saying, “O my Lord, Your obedience to me is greater than my obedience to You”; and then explains that Bayazid meant, “O God, You are granting my request and I have yet to obey you”.³⁴³

D. Silence

The practice of silent zikr is characteristically Naqshbandi. In practice, masters have used loud and silent zikr according to the perceived impacts of the techniques, and the needs and capacities of the people doing the zikr.³⁴⁴

E. Seclusion

Khalwa, seclusion, often for a period of 40 days, is a practice shared by many Sufi orders. The Naqshbandi order is notable for its practice of *khalwat dar anjuman*, “seclusion in the world”: while engaged in work and family life, the dervish is supposed to have his heart connected with God.³⁴⁵ Naqshbandis are not supposed to be ostentatious about their devotions, since this would mean self-worship, rather than worship of God.

F. Sunni identity and practice

³⁴² Algar 1990a: 12.

³⁴³ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995: 10.

³⁴⁴ Algar 1990a; Vidich 2000.

³⁴⁵ an-Naqshbandi 2011.

With their emphasis on spiritual descent from Abu Bakr, rather than Ali alone, Naqshbandis are emblematically Sunni, rather than Shi'a. The Naqshbandi order has, indeed, been described as “unique among Sufi orders in its explicit hostility to Shi'ism.”³⁴⁶

Naqshbandi shaykhs did indeed tend to identify with, and support, the Ottoman empire against the anti-Sunni, and specifically anti-Naqshbandi, Safavid empire. Several prominent Indian Naqshbandis, including Ahmad Sirhindi, supported Sunni, as opposed to Shi'a, religious and political perspectives in Mughal India. But this is not quite the same as being anti-Shi'a; and indeed, other prominent Naqshbandis, such as Shah Waliullah, were notable for their ecumenical attitude towards Shi'a thought.³⁴⁷ Disagreeing with, or even opposing, the theology and politics of Shi'a groups is not the same as generalised hostility to Shi'ism. In contemporary Naqshbandi manuals available in English, criticism of Shi'ism is absent;³⁴⁸ Ahmad Kuftaru was, for many years, the mufti of the Ba'athist, Alawite-led³⁴⁹ Syrian state.³⁵⁰

G. Adherence to the Shari'a

Shari'a is often translated as “Islamic law”, an appellation that would perhaps better be applied to *fiqh*. It is an Arabic word meaning “watering-place” or “way to water”.³⁵¹ It is generally understood to mean the code of ethics and conduct intended to derive from the example of the Prophet; and is sometimes presented as outward, or exoteric Islam, with *ṭarīqa* (in this case used to mean *taṣawwuf*)

³⁴⁶ Algar 1990a: 11.

³⁴⁷ Weismann 2007.

³⁴⁸ An-Naqshbandi 2011; Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *CINST*, 2004.

³⁴⁹ The Alawites, or Alawi, of the Levant are not to be confused with the Alawi Sufi order or the Alevi of Anatolia. The Alawites are also known as Nusayris, after Muhammad ibn Nusayr, a close disciple of Ali Hadi and Hasan Askari, the tenth and eleventh Shi'a Imams. Ibn Nusayr is said to have been given a secret and true revelation, showing him that Ali was God, and that the souls of the faithful had been heavenly lights worshipping Ali, before being cast down to earth as punishment for failing to obey him. The Alawites were often counted among the *ghulāt*, people whose beliefs put them outside mainstream Shi'a tradition. In practice, beliefs among the Alawites seem to have varied; in recent decades, their religion has been increasingly influenced by 12-imam Shi'ism (Winter 2016; Momen 2016).

³⁵⁰ Habibis 1985; Weismann 2007.

³⁵¹ Lane 1984: 1535.

as the inner, or esoteric, part of Islam. Ahmad Sirhindi gave a more subtle interpretation that is characteristic of Naqshbandi thought:

The *sharīʿa* consists of three parts: knowledge (*ʿilm*), deed (*ʿamal*) and sincerity (*ikh̄lās*)... The *ṭarīqa*, by means of which the Sufi orders are distinguished from the rest of the community, is the servant of the *sharīʿa* and has the function of perfecting its third component, sincerity. The purpose for the attainment of the *ṭarīqa* is merely the perfection of the *sharīʿa*, not the creation of something additional to the *sharīʿa*.³⁵²

The Naqshbandi order is intended to preserve “the way of the [Prophet’s] Companions, with neither addition nor subtraction”;³⁵³ interpreting this Way in a changing world, for individuals and their circumstances, is held to require experience and insight.

H. Hanafi fiqh

The Naqshbandi order has been associated in particular with the Hanafi school of *fiqh*, in which Abu Bakr is characteristically regarded as pre-eminent among the followers of the Prophet.³⁵⁴ The Naqshbandi order and Hanafi school of *fiqh* (*madhhab*) have historically shared areas of influence, in Central and South Asia, Anatolia, the Levant, Cyprus, and eastern Europe.³⁵⁵

Historically, the Naqshbandi order has often been influential in areas where Muslims are a minority, and where communities are new to the faith. This has made Naqshbandi teachers’ expertise in *fiqh* especially relevant to the needs of the community.³⁵⁶

³⁵² Algar 1990a: 28.

³⁵³ Muhammad Murad al-Bukhari, who introduced the Mujaddidi branch of the Naqshbandi order to western Asia. Quoted in Algar 1990a: 10.

³⁵⁴ Buehler 1998: 90.

³⁵⁵ Kamali 2008. Similar, though less exact and vast, correspondences exist for the other two main surviving Sunni *madhhabs*, the Shafi’i school (associated with the Ba Alawi order and the trade routes of the Indian Ocean and west Pacific) and the Maliki school (the Shadhili order; north and west Africa). The other contemporary Sunni *madhhab*, the Hanbali school, is almost extinct, unless Wahhabis are counted as Hanbalis.

³⁵⁶ Abun-Nasr 2007.

I. *Political engagement and adaptation*

Naqshbandi shaykhs are known for, in the words of Khwaja Ahrar, aiming to “convince kings not to transgress against God’s law or to torment the people.”³⁵⁷ Khwaja Ahrar himself was a wealthy landowner and the master of the Timurid prince Abu Said, and as a result exerted considerable political and economic influence in and around Bukhara and Tashkent.³⁵⁸ Ahmad Sirhindi corresponded with the Mughal emperor Jahangir, who imprisoned him;³⁵⁹ the followers of Mawlana Khalid (notably his widow, Khadija) influenced the Ottoman administration in the mid-to-late 19th century, especially under Sultan Abdul Hamid II, the last sultan-caliph before the Young Turk revolution of 1908–09.³⁶⁰ The contemporary Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi master Zindapir was reported to exert considerable influence on politicians in Pakistan.³⁶¹

The Naqshbandi order had particularly strong associations with the Mughal and Ottoman empires. Babur, the founder of the Mughal empire, was a disciple of one of Khwaja Ahrar’s deputies, and translated Ahrar’s *Risāla-yi Vālidīya* from Persian prose to Turkish verse.³⁶² In the early history of the Mughal dynasty, several Mughal royals married descendants of Ahrar.³⁶³ Ahrar was also credited with miraculous intervention in the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople.³⁶⁴ Naqshbandi shaykhs advised various Ottoman sultans, though the sultans were often equally or more strongly affiliated to other orders.³⁶⁵

³⁵⁷ Algar 1990a: 20.

³⁵⁸ Algar 1990a.

³⁵⁹ Algar 1990b.

³⁶⁰ Algar 1990b. After Khalid died in 1827, Khadija oversaw his properties in Syria, and forged close ties with Ottoman royals and other elites. She had considerable political influence in Istanbul and Damascus until she passed away in 1888, aged 111 (Foley 2008).

³⁶¹ Werbner 2003.

³⁶² Algar 1990a.

³⁶³ Buehler 1998.

³⁶⁴ Algar 1990b.

³⁶⁵ Abdul Hamid I (r 1774–89) and Mustafa IV (r 1807–08) are known to have been Naqshbandi initiates, but are not considered among the more influential sultans (Algar 1990b). Naqshbandi-Haqqani dervishes told me that Abdul Hamid II (r 1876–1909) was also a Naqshbandi.

In a variant of this tactic, Naqshbandis in the Caucasus, hiding their religious affiliation, worked for the Soviet administration: which, from the late 1920s, had demolished or converted Islamic places of worship, exiled religious leaders, and destroyed most Sufi books. Bagautdin Arsanov, a Chechen, became a KGB colonel, and reportedly saved many Naqshbandis from persecution; in the late 1950s, Muslim Gerbekov, another Naqshbandi, became the prime minister of Checheno-Ingushetia.³⁶⁶

Political commitment has also manifested as a refusal to serve unsuitable rulers. Jamaluddin Ghumuqi Husayni, 35th on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain, was reportedly sentenced to be hanged by a tyrant he refused to serve, only to be reprieved at the last moment when the tyrant jumped to his own death.³⁶⁷ Imam ShamyI, who led resistance to the Russian state in the Caucasus between 1834 and 1859, was a close associate of Khas Muhammad, Muhammad Effendi Yaraghi, and Jamaluddin Ghumuqi Husayni.³⁶⁸ ShamyI's contemporary, the Algerian resistance fighter Emir Abdel Kader, had a Naqshbandi affiliation in addition to his Qadiri inheritance.³⁶⁹

Yet another form of political activity is studied quietism, or, indeed, active support of peace, stability, and tolerance. This not only creates the circumstances in which a Sufi order can flourish, but is often perceived as more realistic than overt opposition to a less than ideal ruler.³⁷⁰

Tasawwuf is not necessarily a public affair; and practices such as silent zikr, "retreat in the world", and *rābiṭa* have made the Naqshbandi order strikingly resilient in times of persecution. Less than a century after Atatürk banned Sufi orders in Turkey, politicians influenced by various branches of

³⁶⁶ Yemelianova 2003.

³⁶⁷ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995.

³⁶⁸ Algar 1990a; Shaykh Hisham, *NSW*, 1995. Remarkably, Thomas Huxley, the Ealing-born pioneer of the concept of agnosticism, and of education divorced from religion and the classics, wrote in favour of Imam ShamyI and his Sufi masters (Huxley 1854; Desmond 1999).

³⁶⁹ Algar 1990a. Abdel Kader was also renowned as a mystic (Chodkiewicz 1995), and is buried next to Ibn Arabi in Damascus.

³⁷⁰ Werbner 2003.

the Naqshbandi order held positions of official power.³⁷¹ Naqshbandi practices survived state persecution in the Soviet Union, and the Cultural Revolution in China.

Despite its political and social role, the Naqshbandi order tends to have loose, open structures based around the charisma of local teachers;³⁷² as Gilsean points out (1973: 90), drawing on Weber, groups “based on charismatic reputation and authority” tend to be “opposed... to that rational and bureaucratic authority characteristic of organisations”.

J. Periodicity

The Naqshbandi order is said to have “renewers”, masters who give the Order new impetus. Two figures characteristically regarded as renewers are Ahmad Sirhindi and Mawlana Khalid. Khalid, in addition to the perceived spiritual impetus he gave the Order, took its “secret” from India to the Levant, and exerted considerable spiritual and political influence across the Middle East.³⁷³ Interestingly, however, many Naqshbandi *silsilas*, to this day, do not go through Khalid.

K. Internationalism

Many orders are little known outside a small geographical area; the Naqshbandi order, in contrast, like the Qadiri order, can be described as a global Sufi order. A global labour market and increasingly available international travel have tended to erode such distinctions: even formerly local Sufi orders have spread well outside their regions of origin, and often to places that traditionally have little or no Muslim population. Even so, the Naqshbandi order is notable for its high number of adherents and international distribution. In many regions, more than one branch of the order is present.

L. Eleven characteristic practices

³⁷¹ Silverstein 2007.

³⁷² Weismann 2007.

³⁷³ Algar 1990a, 1990b.

Abd al-Khaliq Ghujdawani taught the application of eight spiritual principles: alertness when breathing; “watching one’s step”; the “journey in the homeland”, which can be a physical journey or a spiritual journey of the soul; *khalwat dar anjuman*; constant zikr; returning from zikr to the “Essence”; guarding the heart against heedlessness; and preserving the effects of zikr in the heart. Bahauddin Naqshband added three further principles: temporal, numerical, and heart-centred awareness. These eleven axioms are said to characterise the Naqshbandi order. Naqshbandi manuals describe the meanings of these teachings and their application.³⁷⁴

3.2 Naqshbandi-Haqqanis

The most visible branch of the Naqshbandi order is the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order.³⁷⁵ It has Sufi centres in over 30 countries: not just, or even mostly, in traditional Naqshbandi heartlands, but in the Christian “West”, and particularly in England, Germany, and the USA. The order has a strong internet presence: a Google or Bing search for “Naqshbandi” will be dominated by sites created by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis with various motivations and emphases.

In 1973, when Shaykh Nazim’s master, Grandshaykh Abdullah Dagestani, passed away, he was not the best-known Naqshbandi shaykh in his adopted home town of Damascus. Annabelle Böttcher has underlined Grandshaykh Abdullah’s relative obscurity by highlighting his absence from a compendium of biographies of Damascene shaykhs.³⁷⁶ In fact, as Daphne Habibis points out, Grandshaykh Abdullah had pupils throughout the Middle East, and was “quite widely known” in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan.³⁷⁷ Even so, the transformation into a global order is remarkable.

The number of Naqshbandi-Haqqanis is not known. Nobody seems to keep a central registry of followers. Moreover, one can become a follower of Shaykh Nazim merely by making the intention to follow him: so the exact number of followers cannot be known, at least not by worldly means.

³⁷⁴ an-Naqshbandi 2011; Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *CINST*, 2004.

³⁷⁵ Weismann 2007.

³⁷⁶ Böttcher 2011.

³⁷⁷ Habibis 1985: 78–79.

Shafiq Morton, a follower of Shaykh Nazim, estimated in 2013 that at least half a million people had embraced Islam through Shaykh Nazim;³⁷⁸ since adherence to the order spreads through networks of friends and family, and many (perhaps most) Naqshbandi-Haqqanis come from Muslim backgrounds, this estimate would give Shaykh Nazim well over a million followers. However, it is difficult to know how accurate it is. In 1999, the journalist Teresa Watanabe tried, by phone calls, to establish how many followers the order had in the USA, and came up with a figure of a few thousand, far short of the 30,000 claimed by Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, Shaykh Nazim's deputy in the USA.³⁷⁹ But given the fluid boundaries of the order, and the loose and informal links many members have with its Sufi centres, there is no reason to assume her method would have detected all, or even most members of the order.

Easier to gauge, perhaps, is the order's influence on public figures. Not all followers of Shaykh Nazim would necessarily wish to disclose their allegiance, perhaps especially if they have a public role. Nonetheless, Rauf Denктаş (for more than 30 years, the leading politician of the Turkish community in Cyprus)³⁸⁰ and Turgut Özal (prime minister of Turkey, 1983–89; president, 1989–93) were acknowledged followers of Shaykh Nazim. The Sultan of Brunei, Hassan Bolkiah, paid for Shaykh Nazim to convert a convent in Tottenham, north London, into a Sufi centre.³⁸¹ Shaykh Nazim's deputy in Malaysia, Raja Ashman, was a prince of Perak.³⁸²

The Naqshbandi-Haqqanis can be categorised as a traditional order. Their *silsila* is well established: Grandshaykh Abdullah's teacher, Shaykh Sharafuddin, was generally recognised as the leading Sufi in Dagestan, before he migrated to Ottoman Turkey.³⁸³ They emphasise the *shari'a*, and observe a

³⁷⁸ Introduction to Shaykh Nazim, *Adam*, 2013: vii.

³⁷⁹ Watanabe 1999.

³⁸⁰ Vice-president of Cyprus, 1973–74; President of the Autonomous Cypriot Turkish Federation, 1974–75; President of the Turkish Federated State of Cyprus, 1975–83; President of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, 1983–2005.

³⁸¹ Draper 2002.

³⁸² Farrer (2009) writes that the Perak royal family is notable as the last royal family to trace its lineage to the Malacca imperial family.

³⁸³ Yemelianova 2003.

rigorous regimen of Islamic prayer.³⁸⁴ This is in striking contrast to many Sufis who have been popular with “Western” followers. Idries Shah (d 1994) was depicted as a Sufi master, and had strong Naqshbandi sympathies,³⁸⁵ but was not known for his emphasis on the *sharīʿa*; his *silsila* was never published in full, and in his writings fact and fiction were difficult to disentangle.³⁸⁶ Frithjof Schuon (d 1998) received his permission to teach through a period of illumination, rather than direct contact with his master;³⁸⁷ his nude paintings of holy women were unconventional in the Islamic context, and his use of nude ritual and embraces even more so.³⁸⁸ Ian Dallas’ claim to be a shaykh in the Darqawi order has been hotly disputed; his group, the Murabitun, have had a strong Islamic identity, but with varying emphases: Sufi teachings, the Maliki school of *fiqh*, political militancy, and economic revolution.³⁸⁹

Despite their traditional approach, the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis have been dismissed as atypical of Sufi ways. Buehler (2001: 195) remarked that “to position Shaykh Nazim as a typical representative of the Naqshbandi tradition is like having Reverend Moon speak for the Christian tradition.” Hamid Algar, a scholar with a long and sympathetic engagement with Sufi orders, briefly described the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order as an “eccentric millenarian offshoot” of the Naqshbandi order,³⁹⁰ and remarked that the Naqshbandi order as a whole had undergone “qualitative decline... a shaykh who in another age would be unfit even to act as *murīd* will be perfectly suited to the diminished capacities of men in the present age.”³⁹¹

³⁸⁴ Vidich 2000.

³⁸⁵ Dervish 1982; Shah 1981.

³⁸⁶ Hammer 2004; Sedgwick 2016.

³⁸⁷ Lings 2005.

³⁸⁸ Hammer 2004.

³⁸⁹ Köse 1996; Dutton 2014; as-Sufi 1978. Dallas, a Scottish actor who played a magician in Fellini’s *8½*, took the name Abdalqadir in 1967, when he converted to Islam. In 1968, he was appointed as a representative by a Moroccan shaykh of the Habibi order, a branch of the Darqawi order (which, in turn, is a branch of the Shadhili order). His master died in 1971. In 1977, Abdalqadir met a Libyan shaykh of the Alawi order, and subsequently reported that the shaykh had appointed him as his successor. Since around 1978, Abdalqadir has been known as Shaykh Abdalqadir al-Murabit, and his followers as the Murabitun.

³⁹⁰ Algar 1990b: 141.

³⁹¹ Algar 1990a: 49.

Neither Algar nor Buehler gave a reason for their judgement (other than Algar's adjective, "millenarian"). A degree of possible clarification came from Simon Stjernholm, who, perhaps more than any other academic, has taken a sustained interest in the order:

While researching the Naqshbandi-Haqqani community, often referred to as "the group of Shaykh Nazim", it was not uncommon to hear sceptical views regarding the topic from fellow academics, or even be told that the shaykh is "a crook".³⁹² Several times, it has been implied to me that it is irrelevant to study this community, their shaykhs, beliefs and practices. Allegedly, it has "nothing to do with 'real Sufism' or 'mainstream Islam'".³⁹³

Stjernholm did not describe the substance of these criticisms (if it existed). A possible source of academic wariness might be *Naqshbandis* (1990),³⁹⁴ a landmark volume intended to summarise existing knowledge on the order. The two short papers on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, by Samra Galip and Daphne Habibis, both concluded with striking denunciations.

In brief, Shaykh Nazim, with his big blue eyes, his friendly air, his red Mercedes, his media image that he conscientiously maintains, is a cleric who recalls American preachers, knowing how to manipulate the strings of "show business" with a big dose of demagogy. The rumours that circulate on the origin and extent of the finances of his commune, [and] his reputation as a quack, smell of sulphur.³⁹⁵

By mixing dreams and visions with superstition and traditional folk expectations both Sheikh Abdullah Dagestani and Sheikh Nazim have left themselves open to criticism from Sufis and '*ulamā*' alike that they are practising *shirk* (setting up partners before the unity of Allah) and are acting irresponsibly towards their followers.³⁹⁶

Such views were not supported by the preceding text. Galip's only preceding mentions of Shaykh Nazim's media representation were references to a press campaign against Shaykh Nazim directed by Dr Fazıl Küçük, the first vice-president of independent Cyprus, and a (hardly flattering)

³⁹² Stjernholm clarifies in a footnote that this accusation was made once.

³⁹³ Stjernholm 2011: 46–48.

³⁹⁴ Edited by Marc Gaborieau and colleagues.

³⁹⁵ Galip 1990: 432. *Guérisseur* can merely mean "healer", but is also used to mean "quack"; given the context, I have used the pejorative term. According to the Collins-Robert dictionary (1978: 631) *sentent le soufre* means "smack of heresy"; but such an accusation would be so outlandish in this context that I have given the phrase a more literal translation.

³⁹⁶ Habibis 1990: 614.

newspaper report that Shaykh Nazim was a Zionist-controlled Baha'i. His finances and healing techniques, similarly, had not previously been discussed. Habibis had not previously mentioned dreams and visions in her essay (although she may have expected readers to infer that these were the sources of Shaykh Nazim's millenarian beliefs); nor had she classified teachings as superstitions or folk expectations, or identified potential partners of God.

Other researchers, in contrast, have used Shaykh Nazim as an exemplar of Naqshbandi teaching or of Sufi ways in general.³⁹⁷ Several have described him and his work with affection and respect, Andrew Vidich (2000) going so far as to title his dissertation *A Living Sufi Saint*.

Although this dissertation focuses specifically on healing practices in the order, with particular reference to the generation of knowledge, healing and knowledge are such central, and potentially revealing, aspects of Sufi identity and practice that light will be shed on the extent to which Shaykh Nazim stands in the Naqshbandi tradition; as well as on his ethics.

To allow as full an understanding as possible of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, and the research on it, I searched for all previous academic studies of the order (not merely those obviously related to healing or knowledge). I used the following sources:

- ◆ The JSTOR, Wiley Online Library, and University College London (UCL) academic databases.
- ◆ The library catalogue and shelves at London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), UCL, and Senate House Library (including the theological library at Heythrop College and the history-of-ideas library at the Warburg Institute).
- ◆ The British Library catalogue, including its database of doctoral dissertations (EThOS: E-Theses Online Service).
- ◆ Amazon.co.uk.
- ◆ Bibliographies of studies of the order.

³⁹⁷ Netton 1990; Vidich 2000.

When using computer databases, I used, with spelling variations, the search terms “Naqshbandi” (“Nakshbandi”, “Naksibendi”, “Naqshbandiyya”), “Haqqani” (“Hakkani”), “Nazim”, and “Hisham Kabbani” (“Qabbani”):³⁹⁸ the names of the order, of its leader, and of its most prominent deputy in the English-speaking world. I did several searches, of which the most recent was on 16 April 2019.

Such a strategy was biased towards English-language studies. Nonetheless, I did find papers and monographs in French, German, and Spanish. I also found works in Turkish, Arabic, and Czech, but these, regrettably, I lacked the language skills to understand.

The studies identified are summarised in Appendix 1 (I have excluded papers and books in which the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order and its masters are only mentioned briefly or superficially). Many describe the history and structure of the order, although these descriptions are, in general, incomplete (given the size and scope of the order) and outdated. Several studies (notably Atay, Nugroho, Habibis, Draper, Schlessmann, LeBlanc, Milani and Possamai, and Salinas) address the construction of Naqshbandi-Haqqani cultural identity with reference to the modern world or to non-Muslim wider societies. Other popular themes are the mechanisms and motivations that cause people to join the order; millennial beliefs; and the order’s political role, particularly in the USA.

Much less attention has been given to knowledge or healing in the Naqshbani-Haqqani order. The notable exception is the doctoral dissertation (2000) by Andrew Vidich. Daphne Habibis (1985), Douglas Farrer (2009), and Ludwig Schlessmann (2003) also made substantial observations on knowledge and healing. Rhiannon Conner (2015) specifically addressed the question of what happens when knowledge fails. Jamila Rodrigues (2017, 2018) made informative observations on the bodily experience of the *ḥadra*; Gritt Klinkhammer (2015) included the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis in a book chapter on Sufi healing in Germany; Nasima Selim (2015) included Naqshbandi-Haqqani dervishes in a book chapter on Sufi body practices in Berlin.

³⁹⁸ The JSTOR and UCL databases and, to a lesser extent, the main British Library catalogue gave very inclusive responses to these searches, so I narrowed down the lists by using combinations of search terms: “Naqshbandi-Haqqani”, “Naqshbandi Nazim”, “Naqshbandi Kabbani”, and “Shaykh Nazim”; with spelling variations, including the ones listed above, “Shaikh”, and “Sheikh”.

Vidich's study was on the "Naqshbandiyya method of self-transformation", i.e. on *taṣawwuf* in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order. His work is on the theory and practice of purification of the *nafs*, the *psyche*. He drew on a range of texts to summarise theoretical studies of Naqshbandi *taṣawwuf* in general, and did brief but intense fieldwork with Shaykh Nazim and Shaykh Hisham. Shaykh Hisham explained to Vidich that Sufi knowledge was something to be experienced rather than merely read about, and something that could be likened to medicine. Therefore, Vidich's work addresses knowledge and healing.

Through spending time with the masters, Vidich experiences *taṣawwuf*. He describes how Shaykh Nazim does psychological healing through the process of *sohbet*, companionship. Suitable advance commentary on the process is provided by Shaykh Hisham. Vidich's writing is vivid, informative, and valuable in being a first-hand account of Sufi healing. It is also, in a sense, authorised: he says that Shaykh Hisham checked his text prior to submission. In addition, Shaykh Abdul Kerim, another US-based Naqshbandi-Haqqani master, helped Vidich select dervishes for interview, grading them according to experience and attainment.

Vidich is rather unselective in his sources of "Sufi" theory, and does not really criticise them. The notion of being a Sufi, and the concept of Sufi practice, is somewhat idealised in his work and, except for his descriptions from fieldwork, abstract. His laudable attempt to provide a "correct" view of Naqshbandi-Haqqani practice results in a synthetic overview that is a little short on quotidian reality. His fieldwork, although intense and of high quality, was not extensive enough to allow him to depict everyday life in the order. He mixes devotional and academic sources somewhat uncritically, and does not refer back, in his conclusions, to academic discourse. Institutionally, Vidich's work is on the margins of academia, since it was written for Berne University in New

Hampshire;³⁹⁹ however, his primary adviser was Marcia Hermansen, a leading expert in contemporary Sufi studies.

Habibis' doctoral dissertation is essentially sociological in approach. She therefore describes Shaykh Nazim's activity rather than experiences it. Some unconscious bias may have been introduced by the fact that Habibis was doing a comparative study of two Sufi orders, and the other order was led by her husband. She describes Shaykh Nazim as trying to maintain Sufi practice in an early-1980s Lebanon riven by civil war and assailed by modernity. She is working within a declinist model, and the pessimistic tone of her writing is ironic in view of the subsequent expansion of the order. Her study could be criticised as somewhat dated.

However, Habibis does provide valuable insight into the origins and early years of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order. Her descriptions of the Sufi cultures of Damascus, and the role of Grandshaykh Abdullah Dagestani, are especially valuable. Her descriptions of Shaykh Nazim's life in Tripoli and Damascus are timeless vignettes of a Sufi master's work. Her descriptions of knowledge and healing are situated in everyday life, which gives them context and value.

Douglas Farrer did extensive work as a participant observer in a group learning *silat*, a Malay martial art. The teacher, Pa' Ariffin, is a follower of Shaykh Nazim, and of his local deputy, Raja Ashman; Naqshbandi-Haqqani beliefs influence Pa' Ariffin's teaching and practice. Although Farrer's focus is on *silat*, his work can be seen as a study of a local expression of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order: particularly since, in London, the group trains in the Tottenham dergah; and in Singapore, Farrer meets Shaykh Nazim. As Farrer points out, healing is an essential part of the martial arts, since practitioners often get injured.

Farrer's work is nuanced, layered, and thoroughly grounded in anthropological theory. Its main limitation is that, even though Farrer spent time in London, the cultural world he depicts is

³⁹⁹ The university relocated from New Hampshire to St Kitts, before closing down. It was described, while based at St Kitts, as a degree mill.

overwhelmingly Malay; and, of course, based around *silat*. It therefore presents a fairly specialised view of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani world.

Ludwig Schlessmann describes the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis as part of a general study of Sufism in Germany, and, understandably, devotes considerable space to the history and basic teachings of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, and its development and deputies in Germany. His descriptions of Shaykh Nazim's teaching are therefore quite brief. However, his descriptions are informative, and illustrated with rich and revealing vignettes.

The fieldwork in Conner's doctoral dissertation is quite slim, consisting largely of interviews with nine dervishes based in and around Glastonbury. However, her findings are well presented and thoughtfully analysed.

The studies by Rodrigues, Klinkhammer, and Selim are all restricted in compass; indeed, Klinkhammer and Selim devote most of their book chapters to orders other than the Naqshbandi-Haqqani. Rodrigues' work is particularly valuable for being based on participant observation by a woman researcher, and for concentrating on a Naqshbandi-Haqqani prayer that makes heavy use of the body. Her theoretical analysis is somewhat laboured, but her vignettes are interesting. Klinkhammer's research contribution is limited—she reproduces material from a book by Shaykh Hisham—but she valuably lodges Naqshbandi-Haqqani healing in a wider discourse about Sufi healing in the West. Selim briefly, but informatively, describes her experience, as a participant, of *Hayy-Kraft-Yoga*.

With the partial exception of Vidich's study, and the short contributions by Klinkhammer and Selim, none of the above focus on knowledge or healing; Vidich is the only researcher of these three to focus wholly on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order (leaving aside his tendency to generalise between different groups of Naqshbandis and Sufis). Habibis did (apparently) fairly extensive fieldwork as a sociological observer, and Farrer as a participant, but none of the above researchers reported on extensive fieldwork with the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis (outside a *silat* group) as a participant.

Understandably, therefore, the following summary of previous findings on knowledge and healing in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order is patchy. I have drawn primarily on the above studies, but have also used other studies when they discuss important themes helpfully. This summary illustrates the need for comprehensive and targeted research.

A. Knowledge

A framework for knowledge in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order is provided by Vidich (2000). Vidich explains that divine knowledge comes constantly to Shaykh Nazim by means of spiritual connection with his masters. It is then transmitted to his students, who learn according to the degree of their spiritual connection with him. Sufi exercises are ways of increasing this spiritual connection.

Vidich explains that learning is arrived at through *sohbet* (companionship) with Shaykh Nazim. This can mean his physical presence; or a spiritual connection sustained through *rābiṭa*: even when people are sitting with and listening to Shaykh Nazim, his words are less important than “heart-to-heart” transmission; “one enters the *experience of the Shaykh* while he talks.”⁴⁰⁰ The Shaykh can reach people in their dreams, and, through his spirituality, sends them educational tests in everyday life. Through companionship and training with the Shaykh, Vidich reports, dervishes may eventually attain *fanāʿ*, when there is no barrier between the dervish and the Shaykh. As Hoffman described, *fanāʿ* with the Shaykh leads to *fanāʿ* with the Prophet, and eventually to *fanāʿ* with God.

Moreover, Vidich notes, nine great saints are able to “communicate with any human being at any time... intercede on their behalf and direct them to the divine presence,”⁴⁰¹ through their control of nine points on the chest. These nine saints are all on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain, and all received *Uwaysī* training.

⁴⁰⁰ Vidich 2000: 353.

⁴⁰¹ Vidich 2000: 119.

Atay (2012), describing dervish beliefs, contrasted the divine knowledge available through Shaykh Nazim with the “ignorance” provided by modern (including academic) learning; and the heart, open to spirituality, with the mind, open to the tricks of the ego and the devil. He remarked (2012: 151), “From this perspective, mind, or reason, is not considered the most essential human faculty, but looked at with suspicion.” Farrer, however, described Pa’ Ariffin contrasting the animalistic *nafs* with the potentially rightly-guided *‘aql*, intellect. Vidich (2000: 296) found Shaykh Nazim to be “supra-rational, not irrational”: constantly in a state of spiritual connection and inspiration. “He does not speak from an intellectual level, and therefore even if one asked an intellectual question, his response would be according to what one needed to receive at that moment.” He remarked (2000: 354–55),

It seemed that Shaykh Nazim deliberately tried to confound the mind or dislodge the rational mind. The intellectual mind thinks in terms of causal relationships, time and space, and is necessarily limited by its preconceived ideas and points of view... Outwardly [Shaykh Nazim] is puzzling, perplexing, funny when one least expects it, and the next moment self-absorbed [sic] and serious...⁴⁰² I found it useful to simply observe his sudden shifts in moods and enjoy his “presence”, which provided me with ongoing insights and intuitions as well as much delight and entertainment.

Conner (2015: 245) uses Werbner’s phrase “technology of knowledge” to describe Shaykh Nazim’s ability to oversee his students’ lives. Shaykh Nazim was widely noted to have, in Habibis’ words (1985: 186), “a quality of perception which is uncanny”. His followers found that he had acute and ordinarily inexplicable insights into their minds and lives. However, his prophecies sometimes seemed to be wrong. Notably, the era of the Mahdi did not seem to arrive, although keenly anticipated by Shaykh Nazim. Habibis (1985: 181–83) accused Shaykh Nazim of failing to interpret his experiences “in the light of [a] dual understanding of inner and outer meaning”, and remarked, “a large element of fantasy is operating”; although she did not explain how she determined whether Shaykh Nazim was fantasising. Conner noted that, while some dervishes accused Shaykh Nazim of

⁴⁰² According to Hoffman (1995), apparent self-absorption is a characteristic of Sufis in a spiritual state, *hāl*.

inaccuracy, others reflected that they had not interpreted his words insightfully;⁴⁰³ or concluded that the expected course of events had been changed through prayer, and God's mercy.

Habibis questioned the success and depth of Shaykh Nazim's educational efforts. She noted (1985: 197) that he was "far more successful than the *'ulamā'*" at inspiring people to adhere to their religion. However, most of his followers, even his deputies, seemed not to learn adequately from him: he had no true *murīds*. Moreover, in her view (1985: 194), he made "no conscious effort to provide his followers with intense spiritual development", apparently because of a belief that "teaching concerned with the full development of human potential is now irrelevant because man's condition is such that it is impossible for him to learn".

B. *Healing*

Habibis' views of Shaykh Nazim's teachings as limited in scope are flatly contradicted by Vidich's findings. Vidich describes Naqshbandi-Haqqani teaching as ultimately salvific: the student is returned to the divine presence. Shaykh Hisham uses medical metaphors to describe this process: dervishes are in a hospital, and *taṣawwuf* is a "pill". Shaykh Hisham likens an early stage of Sufi training to psychotherapy. The shaykh reads the student's personality and destiny, and finds the weakest point in their ego (*nafs*), "flipping them over" to loosen its control of their personality. Unlike in other orders, teachers in the Naqshbandi order emphasise controlling the ego before anything else can be achieved: so a student is unlikely to have visionary experiences; which are in any case dangerous, because they feed the ego. Any apparent achievements should not be attributed to the student, since this is egotistical, and in any case inaccurate: a student owes all advances to his shaykh, who, in turn, is the student of his masters. So as not to fuel the ego or the imagination,

⁴⁰³ Nielsen (2003), writing not long after the period of heightened anticipation around the year 2000, noted the view of a professor of philosophy, and reputed follower of Shaykh Nazim, that Shaykh Nazim's predictions should have been interpreted as descriptions of trends, rather than imminent events.

teachings are not described to the student until he is ready to understand and act on them; and the “veils” between God and the seeker are removed in such an order as to avoid illusions of holiness.

Vidich describes Shaykh Nazim gently undermining Vidich’s self-image, with absurd humour and a practical joke, before directly confronting his overvalued idea that he is “a very clever professor”. Schlessmann gives a powerful vignette in which Shaykh Nazim, again using a gradual escalation of absurd humour, devastatingly loosened the grip of anger on a student’s mind.⁴⁰⁴ Both Schlessmann’s informant and Vidich reported a sense of relief and gratitude. Habibis pointed out that the undermining of a student’s self-esteem was often painful.

Vidich (2000: 135–55) described the body as having energy centres, *laṭāʿif* (singular *laṭīfā*), that are “connected to the physical body as a mirror is connected to an image”; *dhikr* allows students to “access the higher spiritual worlds” through the *laṭāʿif*. Five *laṭāʿif* were said to be linked to the nine points on the chest that were controlled by the great *Uwaysī* saints. Klinkhammer quoted Shaykh Hisham on energy-healing through the *laṭāʿif* and the use of *dhikr*.

Farrer described Pa’ Ariffin as healing by means of prayer, massage, herbal treatments, and the laying on of hands. When healing took place, it was said to be with Shaykh Nazim’s spiritual permission. Pa’ Ariffin exorcised, but not by becoming possessed: this was not the Naqshbandi way. A jinn affliction addressed by him was said to have arisen in the first place through Shaykh Nazim’s permission. The Shaykh was therefore conceived of as overseeing, and to some extent controlling, many aspects of his followers’ lives.

Silat was intimately connected with Naqshbandi-Haqqani understandings of Islamic prayer. Prayers for the Prophet allowed Farrer to dip his hands into boiling oil without sustaining burns. *Namāz* postures, especially if sustained for long periods, developed the body and built will-power. Selim described the use of these postures for *Ḥayy-Kraft-Yoga*. Rodrigues’ informants described the *ḥaḍra*

⁴⁰⁴ I have used an edited version of this vignette in section 6.2.

as physically and psychologically cleansing, and said that it climaxed with an “outside of the body moment”, which they regarded as *fanāʿ* in God.

In addition to healing of the soul, Shaykh Nazim provides more overtly medical services. Habibis (1985: 153) remarked,

People come to him in the hope that he can cure cancer, colds, backache, babies suffering from colic, adults from [sic] suffering from heartbreak, the temptations of the devil, possession by djinn and the malicious desires of evil-doers. His cures range from the medicinal to the supernatural. They consist of charms, cures, *duʿā* (personal prayer) and folk remedies. Cures of all types are covered by the term *raka* (magic).⁴⁰⁵

The most commonly used prayers were the *Fātiḥa* (the opening chapter of the Koran) and a talisman given to Shaykh Nazim by Grandshaykh Abdullah, who, in turn, claimed to have received it from the Prophet.⁴⁰⁶ Böttcher (2011), briefly describing Shaykh Nazim’s healing techniques, noted the use of holy water, the laying on of hands, plant medicines, honey, spittle, diet, and toothbrushing. Habibis (1985) described water being made holy, by Shaykh Nazim blowing into it several times before it was drunk.

Habibis noted that Shaykh Nazim was willing to help anyone who came to him, without payment. People sometimes came to him as a last resort, or because they could not afford modern treatment. However, others went to him out of preference: women, and people from “lower” social classes, tended to take a particular interest in Shaykh Nazim’s medicine. Some people took modern and Sufi medicine simultaneously. Parallel discourses occurred: a man was described simultaneously by Shaykh Hisham as having a severe migraine and as having a jinn problem. Shaykh Nazim gave substantial financial support to people otherwise unable to afford modern healthcare, whether or not they were his followers. One person was given free treatment in a Jeddah hospital owned by the Kabbani family.

⁴⁰⁵ By *raka*, Habibis probably meant *ruqya*, a word widely used to describe healing by means of prayer.

⁴⁰⁶ This talisman is printed and translated in Appendix 3.

Although Shaykh Nazim evidently does not oppose modern medicine as a whole, conflicts can arise. Schlessmann described a case prominent in the German (and Lebanese) press in 1999, when the parents of “Emil”, an infant with a retinal tumour, took him away from the German health services to the perceived safety of Northern Cyprus and Lebanon, having understood (rightly or wrongly) from Shaykh Nazim that an operation would be counter-productive. The boy eventually returned to Germany and had the eye removed. Schlessmann commented that it was difficult to know what Shaykh Nazim had recommended, and how this differed, if at all, from what the family had done.

Chapter 4: Investigating healing in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order

“I wish to advise you that the remainder of your life will be a continual suffering. Do not be frightened. In your suffering you will find me and also Mary whom you love very much.”

—Locution with Christ, reported by Conchita González, San Sebastián de Garabandal, Spain, 13 February 1966.⁴⁰⁷

CHAPTER SUMMARY

A description and critical discussion of the ethnographic methods used.

Various reasons exist not to do participant observation in medical anthropology. Evans-Pritchard (1937: 150–51) remarked,

Previous experience of participation in activities of this kind had led me to the conclusion that an anthropologist gains little by obtruding himself into ceremonies as an actor, for a European is never seriously regarded as a member of an esoteric group and has little opportunity of checking to what extent a performance is changed for his benefit, by design, or by the psychological responses of the participants to the rite being affected by his presence. It is, moreover, difficult to use the ordinary methods of critical investigation when one is actually engaged in ceremonial and is supposed to be an eager member of an institution. The many practical difficulties of a European being actively engaged in the trade of an African witch-doctor were also weighty enough to act as a deterrent to this mode of enquiry, particularly as members of the noble class (*Avungara*) do not become witch-doctors.

⁴⁰⁷ Pelletier 1971: 204–05.

With, admittedly, 80 years of academic hindsight, Evans-Pritchard's arguments can be countered as follows:

1. Experience has shown that people of different ethnic and cultural background (one aspect of Evans-Pritchard's "Europeans") can be taken seriously in emic magic or religion. Paul Stoller was taken seriously enough, as a sorcerer, to be the target of apparent murder attempts.⁴⁰⁸
2. It is difficult to argue, in this era of international liberal capitalism and resource extraction, that colonialism is over. Nonetheless, the dissolving or evolution of formal colonial structures may make the relationship between the first-world, "white" ethnographer and his informants less restricted, in terms of roles and personas.
3. If ritual seems to be changed as a result of the participant's presence, this illustrates the beliefs of the group and the relationships in and around it. It is useful material for analysis, rather than contamination of a field idealised as pristine.
4. The conflict between personal interaction and detached observation is essentially the same, whether the investigator is conversing or doing sorcery. Even when an informant is providing apparently neutral information, the interaction with the informant is part of the material to be analysed, or at least reflected on.

Participant observation is arguably the most revealing way to study healing. Healing is a social and an embodied experience, and is known much more fully through participation in the social group and experience of being healed. Although Evans-Pritchard highlighted the possible distortions caused by participation, these are not as severe as the distortions caused by remaining an outsider, when every action and gesture is edited because of the investigator's presence. In my own fieldwork, the material obtained when I introduced myself as an anthropologist was shallow and halting, compared to the easy flow and depth obtained when I was just part of the group. After a while in the field, to insist on professional identification, with people one knows well, can be artificial and

⁴⁰⁸ Stoller and Olkes 1987.

somewhat bizarre: one is not a psychiatrist, acrobat, or quantity surveyor with close acquaintances. On reflection, my early attempts to sustain the identity of an anthropologist felt more like a defence mechanism than a research position.

Hoffman (1995) had obtained substantially more deep and layered material than Gilsenan (1973), despite working in largely the same field, through her willingness to be a participant observer and a student of Sufi masters. The investigator comes to groups engaged in healing, or in *taṣawwuf*, as a student, not an expert. Dervishes told me that the only way to study Sufi ways was as a dervish: which meant that I began as a novice in a very large Sufi order: effectively, everyone was more senior than me, though it took me a while to realise this, partly because of the exquisite manners of initial contacts.

The narrative of my fieldwork is therefore that of an officially learned person—someone with the social habit, or rather the overvalued idea, of being one of the smartest people in the room—being taught basic knowledge from basic principles. The persona of learned buffoon that may come across is partly a product of the mechanism of fieldwork. It is not entirely inaccurate; but there were other dimensions to my relationships and experiences in the Sufi order, that have not made it into this study.

I have used a descriptive, arguably phenomenological approach, as seemingly by far the best way to report on the beliefs and practices of a previously patchily documented culture. To use a semiotic approach would have been premature, and would have greatly restricted the field of inquiry. I have resisted the temptation to interpret uncanny, magical, or spiritual experiences in naturalistic ways. This would, to me, be an absurdly dogmatic profession of faith not only in a naturalistic philosophy, but in the current, ever-changing body of knowledge derived from empirical materialism. It would require, to the best of my imaginative powers, a series of absurd coincidences and shared hallucinations. Moreover, it would be essentially pointless: the purpose of this study is not to provide naturalistic explanations for religious beliefs, but to depict the cultural and practical worlds shaped, in part, by these beliefs.

Farrer (2009) has likened the *epoche* (bracketing out) characteristic of phenomenological method to the suspension of judgement that a student must undertake to follow a Sufi master's instructions. Up to a point, I concur: my initial fieldwork involved not only an upturning of my previous sense of like and dislike,⁴⁰⁹ but substantial change in what I had come to think of as my values. Over time, the masters retained their capacity to surprise, but I was rarely disorientated: it was as though we were both riding the same wave, which had passed under the feet of a master before reaching me.⁴¹⁰

The best way to find out about knowledge and healing in the Order was to do as much fieldwork as possible, of a varied nature. Only through broad-based interactions in the order could I explore the range of approaches to knowledge, or come to understand how the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis viewed, and did, healing. Initial attempts to find "healing" in the order were frustrating. Gradually, it dawned on me that healing was implicit in the processes of the order, and had been going on around me all the time, while I fruitlessly looked for it. I later came across specialist healers, and did some "healing" myself, but such experiences came along, in a way determined by my relationships in the order, when I needed them: when I was sick, or was looking after people who were. I fell seriously ill in 2010, having had health problems before then, and remained markedly ill, with periods of severe disability, until just before my study ended. The various illnesses ranged from inconvenient to devastating, but much improved the quality of fieldwork.

In general, the field data were of higher quality through arising situationally, rather than as a result of staged investigation; and through personal relationships that, over time, acquired depth and texture. On the whole, I did not rely on "key informants", but let situations develop naturally. However, dervishes with a special interest in health, and dervishes with whom I developed close relationships (and the two were often the same), naturally contributed more to this study than did others.

⁴⁰⁹ A similar experience is reported by one of Schlessmann's informants (2003).

⁴¹⁰ I wish to emphasise that this does not make me more "advanced" than Farrer was at the time of his study. Perhaps I was simply denser; or perhaps the masters were being gentle with a fragile man.

The development in my understanding of the order, through participant observation, made my initial understandings seem superficial, and reflective more of my etic preconceptions than of anything inherent in the order. A project based primarily on interviews or focus groups would not have worked. I had considerable cause to endorse William Whyte's judgement (*Street Corner Society*, 1993: 303): "As I sat and listened, I learned the answers to questions I would not even have had the sense to ask if I had been getting my information solely on an interview basis."

The Naqshbandi-Haqqani order is based around the charisma of a Sufi master, so a researcher really should attempt to spend time with the master. However, most previous researchers have had little, or no, contact with Shaykh Nazim himself. The exceptions were Atay, who travelled with and spoke to Shaykh Nazim, presumably when the Shaykh was in Britain for Ramadan (as was the Shaykh's habit at the time); Vidich, who spent around 6 days with Shaykh Nazim in Cyprus;⁴¹¹ Stjernholm, who made four field trips, of uncertain duration, to Cyprus between 2008 and 2014; Farrer, who spent time with Shaykh Nazim when the latter visited Singapore; and Habibis, who spent an uncertain period of time in Tripoli and Damascus with Shaykh Nazim, at a time when he was based in these cities. Böttcher also seems to have spent time with Shaykh Nazim, though it is unclear where, and for how long. None of these studies clearly indicates a substantial period of time spent with Shaykh Nazim, although Stjernholm, Habibis, and Böttcher may in fact have managed this.

In addition, although the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order is a global organisation, most of the studies seem to have been based largely or entirely in one location. Nielsen (2003) and colleagues (2006) review the order as a transnational organisation, concentrating in particular on Britain, Lebanon, and Dagestan, but focus more on the presence and organisation of the order than on beliefs and practice. Böttcher reports that she did fieldwork in five countries, but her study does not bring out the variations in culture and practice between these locations. Farrer's study is fine-grained and

⁴¹¹ Vidich spent 8 days in Cyprus, of which 2 were spent in a hotel in Bellapais.

reflective enough to attain universality through particularity, but is, on the surface, more a study of Malay Sufi practices than of a transnational Sufi order in Malaysia.

My own fieldwork reflected the need to see Sufi healing in the “West”, the charisma of the Shaykh, and the order’s psychogeography. For personal and family reasons, including health problems, I was often unable to leave London. Fortunately, this was an ideal location to sample Sufi healing in the West, London being urban, cosmopolitan, and, as a useful contrast and practical background, a centre of scientific psychiatry. Moreover, the order’s centres in London are regarded as holy places: the mosque in Peckham was described to me, by a senior dervish with a special interest in British Sufi lore (and who lived near the more ostensibly sacred town of Glastonbury), as the holiest place in Britain.

The backbone of my fieldwork was regular attendance at Friday prayers at one of Shaykh Nazim’s centres in London: the mosque in Peckham, the dergah in Tottenham, or, on rare occasions, the mosque in Feltham. Between October 2007, when my study began, and May 2019, I estimate that I attended 360 Friday prayers. With the prayers came, very often, communal meals; and, even more often, gossip. I gradually became a member of the community, and much of my admittedly scant social life was based around the order.

From March 2019, when my circumstances eased, I was able to attend weekly zikrs at Feltham and Peckham. Since these are held at evenings and weekends, they are easier for dervishes in employment to attend than are the Friday prayers; accordingly, the attenders have a more middle-class profile, although, so far as I could tell, the majority were still working-class. Peckham, Tottenham, and Feltham are all working-class areas, although Peckham partly gentrified during my study; and dervishes came several miles to attend zikrs and Friday prayers.

Most of my informants in London were men, since the prayers and zikrs were essentially gender-segregated. Rather as Evans-Pritchard persuaded his personal servant to become a witch-doctor, my mother came with me to many Naqshbandi-Haqqani events, and told me about life among the

women. Through my mum, Shaykhs Nazim and Eşref, and dervish networks, I eventually got to know Naqshbandi-Haqqani women in London.

The London Naqshbandi-Haqqani centres were enlivened several times a year, when visited by a master: usually Shaykh Hisham or Shaykh Mehmet (Shaykh Mehmet began public visits in around 2010). At these times, if circumstances allowed, I visited the shaykhs, usually taking my mother with me. We attended their talks, prayed and did zikrs with them, and, on occasion, got personal advice.

I also made pilgrimages to Naqshbandi-Haqqani centres:

- ◆ Shaykh Nazim’s house and mosque in Lefke,⁴¹² Cyprus: four pilgrimages: 3 days (May 2009); 2½ days (September 2009); 44 days (May–June 2010); 5 days (October 2012). On the first three pilgrimages, I stayed in the dergah; on the last, I stayed in a guesthouse linked to the dergah. On each pilgrimage, I visited other Naqshbandi-Haqqani centres in Cyprus, notably the shrines of Hala Sultan near Larnaca, and St Barnabas near Famagusta.
- ◆ Damascus: 9 days (July 2010). I was in a party led by Shaykh Eşref, one of the senior masters under Shaykh Nazim.
- ◆ Glastonbury: four short visits of 1 to 3 days, between April 2010 and May 2015. Glastonbury is a holy city for Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, associated in particular with Christ.
- ◆ Naqshbandi-Haqqani centres in Germany, at Sötenich (near Cologne), “Sufiland” (in Eigeltingen-Reute, a village near Lake Constance), and Berlin: one pilgrimage each, in 2010. Each visit lasted 1½ to 3 days. Sötenich is overseen by Shaykh Hassan Dyck; “Sufiland” and Berlin by Shaykh Eşref.

⁴¹² Towns in Cyprus typically have more than one name. Lefke (Turkish) is Lefka in Greek. The neighbouring town of Güzelyurt is known as Morphou to the Greeks. Nicosia is known as Lefkoşa to the Turks and Lefkosia to the Greeks.

The Naqshbandi-Haqqani communities I visited in Germany, and in England outside London, consisted largely of people born in Germany or England, many or most of whom were converts to Islam. In these communities, gender segregation was not very marked, and I conversed quite freely with women and made good friends (and informants). The rules in Damascus were much the same as in Germany, since I was travelling with a German group. Gender segregation was more marked in Cyprus, although I understood that men and women did find ways to socialise together. My mother accompanied me to Cyprus in September 2009, and spent time working and resting with the women in Shaykh Nazim's family home, where female dervishes were treated as members of the extended family (men, in general, had to stay outside).

I speak some German, and found that many German dervishes spoke excellent English; some, with great courtesy, interpreted for me when Shaykh Eşref spoke German. In Cyprus, the lingua franca was English, although Turkish, and to a lesser extent Arabic, Spanish, and Russian, were also widely spoken. On my 44-day stay in Cyprus, I was accompanied by an old friend who worked professionally as an Arabic-English translator, and interpreted for me. He also worked as a research assistant, accompanying me in my travails and describing some informative experiences.

My association with the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order did not begin in 2007. I first came across members of the order in the late 1990s. Starting around 1999, I regularly attended zikrs in Oxford. On returning to Surbiton in 2001, I often attended Friday prayers in Tottenham, and occasionally in Peckham. I estimate that, between 2001 and October 2007, I attended 100 Friday prayers at Naqshbandi-Haqqani centres. I also, for a period of several months, attended weekly zikrs in Tottenham, since they followed Friday prayers. Thereafter, for several weeks, I attended weekly classes in religious education at "The Prophet's Academy", which was run in a single room at the Tottenham dergah, by one of the senior dervishes. When in Sheffield, in 2006, I visited the Naqshbandi-Haqqani centre there.

On Shaykh Nazim's last visit to London, in 2000, I spent the holiest night of the year, *Laylatu 'l-Qadr* (27th night of Ramadan), at Peckham mosque, where he led the prayers. It was packed with

dervishes. A few years later, I spent the same night of the year on the floor of the Tottenham dergah, and was the only dervish there. Perhaps I had the wrong night?—the Islamic calendar is based on moonsighting, and the dates observed by Muslim groups sometimes vary by a day or two. All the same, having heard how lively the Shaykh Nazim mosques were at Ramadan, I was amazed. I had not then learnt the difference his physical presence made to the number of attenders and the experiences they reported.

In January 2002, my plans to attend Hajj had fallen through, and the prospect of getting a place at very short notice looked remote. Still, I felt I must try to go, and take my mother, since by the next year I expected to be in full-time work. I went to an evening zikr at the Tottenham dergah, and asked a man who ran a stall there if he knew a travel agent. He pointed me in the direction of a Mauritian man who was taking a Hajj party and who did, indeed, have two spare tickets. I therefore did Hajj with a Naqshbandi-Haqqani guide, a man who was highly respected within the order and, to the best of my knowledge, in Sufi circles in London in general. He took us to Mecca and Medina, and, of course, guided us through the rites at Mina, Muzdalifa, and Arafat. He later accompanied me on my first visit to Cyprus.

Despite these extensive contacts, I did not consider myself at this stage to be a member of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order—even though I had undergone a *bayʿa* ceremony in Oxford; because it was what people were doing, rather than because I knew what it was. I subsequently participated, with greater understanding, in *bayʿa* ceremonies, but considered myself to have a general interest in Sufi ways, rather than a specific attachment to Shaykh Nazim.⁴¹³ My sense of connection to him deepened during the fieldwork. My initial plan was to contrast Sufi healing with psychiatry by doing a general study of Sufi healing in London. But this foundered as it became evident that Sufi groups differed vastly in their practices and in the depths and contexts of their discourse. I also found Sufi groups un fascinating and unalive, and, in general, became somewhat suspicious of the

⁴¹³ Naqshbandi-Haqqanis teach that the *bayʿa* is, strictly speaking, a pledge to God, rather than to the shaykh. The shaykh is conceived of as the master through whom one serves God.

character of their leaders—with the notable exception of Shaykh Nazim, and the interlocking groups established by him.

This does, of course, say something about me, as well as about the Sufi groups. Since the ethnographer is the instrument as well as the analyst, it is probably worth considering my background. Parents migrated from different parts of India, met in London in the 1960s and had a cross-cultural marriage, unusual and physically hazardous at the time. Father a lecturer in social work, from a formerly landowning Muslim family driven into extreme poverty (hence his migration); mother from a left-wing Sikh family, won a scholarship to medical school but ended up working in factories, and then as a teacher, after her family migrated—again for financial reasons. Upbringing in 1970s–80s Surbiton, at a time when other brown faces were rare; spoke English at home; loved language and history, snooker and London buses, Madness and The Kinks. One younger brother. Loving and stable nuclear family; very little contact with the extended family or, indeed, with many people outside school. Professional success, I suppose: Oxford medical school (but did I really want to be a doctor?), work with survivors of torture, psychiatry at the Maudsley, senior editor of the *Lancet*. Personal life a mess: single in my 30s despite one deep love and one pretty deep one, and several other near misses; there comes a point when tragedy ineluctably points to character flaws or psychological problems, but whenever I tried to look them in the eye, they seemed shadowy and elusive.

Religion? Mum started to pray regularly after she became a Muslim, Dad followed. A man of deep religious sensibilities, but not someone for whom religion was demonstrative or communal. Attended Friday prayers when free from work, and, late in life, did campaigning research into the religious needs of Muslim children in care.⁴¹⁴ Never spoke about Sufis but I found, just before he died in 1997, that he donated every year to the Chishti shrine at Ajmer.⁴¹⁵ Mum quietly devout,

⁴¹⁴ Yawar 1992.

⁴¹⁵ I was told, by my mother (!), that my father had been homeless for a period in Delhi; and, for a while, had found shelter in a mosque. During my fieldwork, it crossed my mind that any mosque in 1950s/ 1960s Delhi that sheltered a stranger was quite likely to be a Sufi establishment.

commonsensical, and charismatic (in personality rather than beliefs); her parents officially atheist; only during my study would I discover the Sufi links there.⁴¹⁶

Quite an unusual upbringing for a South Asian Muslim of my generation in England: middle-class, Anglicised, socially quite isolated; an “Asian” or “Muslim” culture to connect to that was essentially fictive rather than lived, except for brief periods at university. I first came across the word “Sufi” in a book on my dad’s shelf.⁴¹⁷ No experience of Sufi practice until a seemingly chance encounter with a Naqshbandi zikr in my early 20s; but an immediate feeling of connection and intellectual curiosity.

Even in Naqshbandi-Haqqani centres, I tended to stand out: brown skin, middle-class London use of words and body language; a sense of not being part of a group. But a lot of this, I suspect, was down to ingrained attitudes that had gone by the end of my fieldwork. Feeling I fitted in, I did. This was reflected in changes in my clothing: nothing dramatic, but a short, small beard (as recommended by Shaykh Eşref), and a flat cap worn backwards, so the peak doesn’t get in the way when you pray. I developed a network of several Naqshbandi-Haqqani close friends (and informants), and many more friendly acquaintances.

When health problems rendered me immobile, this did not put a stop to my fieldwork. I was still in touch by telephone with informants, some of whom had a special interest in healing; and I could read Naqshbandi-Haqqani books, or watch broadcasts over the internet. Naqshbandi-Haqqani practice also required me to reflect on, and use, the masters’ teachings, including those on illness and suffering; to make spiritual contact with the masters, through a “heart-to-heart” connection; and to follow the prescribed prayers and zikrs. I was erratic in my practice, but understand this to

⁴¹⁶ In Punjab, before partition, my grandfather’s friends were mostly Muslim. After he was bitten by a snake, they carried him to a Sufi for healing. The Sufi blew into a bottle of water, gave it to my grandfather to drink, and he walked back home. Although officially an atheist, my grandfather believed in God, and spoke reverentially of the Prophet and the Koran. My mum’s primary school, that she attended after partition, was at the site of a Sufi shrine, by then no longer attended for religious purposes.

⁴¹⁷ If I remember correctly, it was Eaton (1985).

be typical. I sometimes got instructions from Sufi masters in my dreams. In a sense, therefore, “fieldwork” was constant, because the field was everywhere.

I rarely made video or audio recordings of my fieldwork. To record people without permission would have seemed unethical; to record people with permission risked turning their behaviour into performance. The teaching of the masters was, in a sense, performance; and I was confident it would not be affected by recording. Recording some of the masters’ talks would have been possible, and I could have done so within my role as a dervish. However, so many of the masters’ talks were recorded anyway that, at the time, extra efforts seemed unnecessary; recording also made me uneasy, for trauma-related reasons. I later came to recognise that recordings would have provided helpfully personalised information.

Ethnographic notes ought, ideally, to be promptly taken, extensive, and well curated. My notes often fell short of these standards. Note-taking provoked crippling panic attacks, with such severe dissociation that I could hardly recognise the attacks, let alone process them. The trauma underlying these attacks became clear to me in the latter stages of my study. My other problems included generally high levels of anxiety and despair, and the impaired concentration, exhaustion, and brain fog characteristic of chronic fatigue syndrome (one of my diagnoses). Therefore, when looking for examples to provide as full a picture as possible of the order, I have occasionally had to rely on memories. I have prioritised memories that are clear, vivid, and, where possible, corroborated.

I have not disclosed full details of my health problems, for reasons of privacy. I have tried to be at least as ethical with my informants and fellow participants. Vignettes have been anonymised (except for people who are public figures), and edited to remove material that might be unnecessarily hurtful. I have omitted details of Sufi masters’ family lives that could diminish the privacy of their families.

I look back on my experiences as a healer with a sense of how little I knew at the time; but this is common to all health practitioners as they continue to learn. Although I was naive, this was not inappropriate in the context of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, where people are constantly being confronted with their inadequacies, in a series of dramas within dramas. I was always under supervision by an expert, whether I knew it or not. My intentions were to care as best I could for the people I was (or thought myself to be) responsible for, with the facilities available. A tension invariably exists between emic and etic models. In general, I followed emic models in the field, since this was more socially acceptable and more respectful of people's wishes and expectations. I sometimes reverted to etic models when fearful, in hindsight wrongly, of impending catastrophe. Because I was neither experimenting on people, nor in a formal role as a healer, it was not appropriate to ask for informed consent in a formalised way.

When receiving healing, in general, I trusted people, feeling either that I knew them as people, or that they had been authorised by Shaykh Nazim. When my instinct told me to avoid a person, but, hungry for data, I accepted healing anyway (on the grounds that I had not yet realised that it was all around me), I lived to regret it. In general, the field was safe, certainly when a Sufi master was physically present. At other times—England, Germany, and Cyprus are, in general, safe places, but Naqshbandi-Haqqani centres can attract the viciously criminal, as well as the apparently saintly. I generally tried to be in the company of people I knew and trusted. In Damascus, and on Hajj, I was under tight supervision from caring people; there was no hint, in Damascus, of the civil war that would break out the next year.

I have tried, in presenting and analysing my data, to be as rational and systematic as possible: to present a comprehensive picture, based on first principles of the order as I experienced them. This does not mean that mine is the only way of looking at things: my work could be compared to a *bricolage*, an effort to make a coherent picture from disparate elements. It is not entirely a *bricolage*, however, because of the methodological focus, and the depth of immersion in the field and in the culture.

Vidich was fairly closely guided by Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters. In contrast, although I did have valuable dialogues with several Naqshbandi-Haqqani teachers, in particular with Shaykh Nazim and Shaykh Eşref, I did not receive such direct guidance, at least as regards my thesis. This is not necessarily a sign of rejection. The leader of a local Naqshbandi-Haqqani community remarked that Naqshbandi-Haqqani dervishes are expected to work things out without much overt instruction: this made the order, in her view, more advanced than other Sufi orders, since it required a greater degree of autonomy and maturity. In Cyprus, I had the following dialogue with a deputy in the order:

How long have you been here?

About 30 days.

Has he given you an interview yet?

[Somewhat abashedly:] *No.*

That is good. If you were a “plastic person”, the Shaykh would invite you up, give you an interview, treat you like a VIP. But because you have potential, he is keeping you here on the “compost heap”—so you can mature.⁴¹⁸

This certainly does not mean I was considered more mature than Vidich (who went on to give joint presentations with Shaykh Eşref): many possible explanations exist for our different treatment within the order, including the requirements of our different methods (Vidich’s brief participant observation, and extended interviews, versus my prolonged, immersive participant observation). The absence of overt direction from the order’s masters did make my work ostensibly more objective: or, at least, possessed of appropriate academic distance from the subject.

To give as complete a picture as possible of knowledge and healing in the order, I have reported experiences according to salience, rather than frequency. I have, perhaps, indulged the ethnographer’s prerogative of including material that is dramatic.⁴¹⁹ Such experiences are helpfully illustrative of general principles, but should not be taken to mean that life in the field was always so

⁴¹⁸ Among my tasks was sorting out the kitchen rubbish; this gave an added layer of meaning to “compost heap”.

⁴¹⁹ Geertz (1984: 275) described anthropologists as “merchants of astonishment”.

eventful—although I must admit that my time in Cyprus, at Shaykh Nazim’s home, was never less than thrilling, and occasionally terrifying.

Chapter 5: Knowledge in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order

I was a Hidden Treasure
and I wanted to be known,
So I created this whole creation
that it may know Me.

—Holy Hadith⁴²⁰

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter describes the acquisition and transmission of knowledge in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi order. It has three sections:

- 5.1 *Shaykh Nazim's life*. The life of the spiritual head of the order, through whom knowledge is transmitted.
- 5.2 *The nature and acquisition of knowledge in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order*. The understanding of, and access to, knowledge revealed by Shaykh Nazim's teachings and practice.
- 5.3 *Being with Shaykh Nazim*. How dervishes within the order gain required knowledge through contact with Shaykh Nazim.

⁴²⁰ Although this Holy Hadith is well known, its *isnād* is generally considered extremely weak, at best. Ibn Arabi declared that it was sound, on the basis of *kashf*, “unveiling”. It is presented here as in Shaykh Nazim, *M O Lovestream*, 1987: 14. Shaykh Nazim comments, “Our Lord... loves to grant His servants gifts from His Divine Knowledge, Beauty, Mercy, Wisdom, Power and Penetrating Will endlessly, as He said, He wants to make Himself known.” (*M O Lovestream*, 1987: 16)

5.1 Shaykh Nazim's life

So far as I know, no critical biography of Shaykh Nazim has been published, although various academic authors have provided snippets of information that do not usually appear in his hagiographies.⁴²¹ Shaykh Nazim has at least as many oral hagiographies as disciples: for each of his followers has a unique account of, and perspective on, their master. Written hagiographies provide narratives of Shaykh Nazim's journey to, and use of, holiness. His life can therefore be divided into three stages: his path to his spiritual master, Grandshaykh Abdullah Dagestani; his years as a student and deputy of Grandshaykh Abdullah; and his time as the head of his branch of the Naqshbandi order. Since Shaykh Nazim's knowledge is said to derive from his holiness, a hagiography, accurate or otherwise in the historical sense, is also an epistemological exercise.

To compile the account that follows, I have drawn quite heavily on Shaykh Hisham's hagiography, which is the most extensively reproduced biographical account of Shaykh Nazim. Given the prominence of its publication, in books and on websites, and its compilation by one of Shaykh Nazim's senior deputies, it is as near as the Order gets to an "official" biography. I have also used other hagiographies, principally the one on the website *sheiknazim2.com*, and widespread oral traditions among the dervishes.

Mehmet Nazim Adil was born near Larnaca, Cyprus, in April 1922, just under 8 years after the island formally transferred from Ottoman to British rule. Nazim was descended from the Prophet: indeed, from both the Prophet's grandsons, Hasan and Husayn. His mother was a descendant of Jalaluddin Rumi; his father was descended from Abd al-Qadir Jilani. His maternal and paternal grandfathers were shaykhs in the Mevlevi and Qadiri orders, respectively. Shaykh Nazim's family were caretakers of the shrine of Hala Sultan, an aunt of the Prophet,⁴²² who died on an expedition to Cyprus. From 4 or 5 years of age, Shaykh Nazim would often go missing from his house, and be

⁴²¹ Habibis 1985; Böttcher 2011; Nevzat and Hatay 2009.

⁴²² Hala Sultan is an honorific form of address, from the Arabic *khāla*, aunt, and *sultān*, monarch.

found next door at the shrine of Hala Sultan: sitting with the Sufi shaykhs and scholars, or conversing with the spirit of Hala Sultan.

By the time he left school, he was leading zikr circles in the Qadiri and Mevlevi orders. He was also known in Larnaca for his outstanding insight into human nature and seeming knowledge of the future.

In common with his three older brothers, and at least one sister, Shaykh Nazim went to study at the University of Istanbul, where he read chemical engineering. He also, in his spare time, studied *fiqh* and Arabic; and met his first Naqshbandi teacher, Shaykh Sulayman Arzurumi.

Around the time Shaykh Nazim completed his degree, his third-oldest brother, Nefii, a young doctor, died. Shaykh Nazim had always been drawn more towards the spiritual sciences than the modern sciences, but Nefii's death catalysed his transformation into a wandering dervish.

Shaykh Nazim's wandering was not undirected. He had long had visions drawing him to Damascus; but it took some time until Arzurumi told him that the time had come to go to his real shaykh, Grandshaykh Abdullah Dagestani, who lived at the time in Damascus. Shaykh Nazim knew nothing of this shaykh except what he had just been told, but made his way from Istanbul to Damascus. This took one-and-a-half years, because of the war between the Vichy French and the British in the Levant. He travelled via Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Tripoli, and Homs (again). On his first visit to Homs, he spent a year in seclusion at the shrine of Khalid ibn Walid, a companion of the Prophet. He emerged from his room only to pray and to study: he learnt Koranic recitation and exegesis, Hadith studies, and *fiqh* from Muhammad Ali Uyun al-Sud and Abd al-Aziz Uyun al-Sud, the Mufti of Homs; and he studied with two Naqshbandi shaykhs, Abd al-Jalil Murad and Said al-Suba'i. In Tripoli, he stayed for a month with Shaykh Munir al-Malek, the Mufti of Tripoli.

Shaykh Nazim eventually arrived in Damascus in 1945, just before the end of the war. He was guided to Grandshaykh's house in a vision:

As I approached to knock, the shaykh opened the door. He said, "Welcome, my son, Nazim Efendi."

His unusual appearance immediately attracted me. I had never seen such a shaykh before. Light poured from his face and forehead. Warmth was coming from his heart and from the brilliant smile on his face. He took me upstairs, climbing up to his room telling me, "We have been waiting for you."⁴²³

During pre-dawn prayers with Grandshaykh Abdullah,

A vision came to me. I saw myself climbing a ladder from our prayer place to the *Bayt al-Ma'mūr*, the Ka'ba of the heavens, step by step. Every step was a state in which he put me. In each state I received knowledge in my heart that I had never before learned or heard about. Words, phrases and sentences were put together in such a magnificent way, transmitted inside my heart in every state that I had been lifted to, until we reached the *Bayt al-Ma'mūr*. There I saw 124,000 prophets standing in rows for prayers, with the Prophet Muhammad as imam. I saw 124,000 Companions of the Prophet Muhammad standing in rows behind them. I saw the 7,007 saints of the Naqshbandi Order standing behind them for prayer. I saw 124,000 saints of the other orders, standing in rows for prayers.

There was a space left for two people directly on the right side of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq. Grandshaykh went to that open space and he took me with him and we performed the dawn prayer. Never in my life had I experienced the sweetness of that prayer. When the Holy Prophet Muhammad led the prayer, the beauty of his recitation was indescribable. It was an experience that no words can describe, because it was a Divine matter. As the prayer ended, the vision ended, and I heard the shaykh telling me to make the call for the dawn prayer.

He prayed the dawn prayer and I prayed behind him. Outside I could hear the bombardment of the two armies. He gave me initiation in the Naqshbandi Order and he said to me, "O my son, we have power that in one second we can make our disciple reach his station." As soon as he said that he looked into my heart with his eyes. As he did so, they turned from yellow to red, then to white, then to green and black. The colour of his eyes changed as he poured into my heart the knowledge associated with each colour.

The yellow light was the first and corresponded to the state of the heart. He poured into my heart all kinds of the external knowledge which is necessary for the daily life of people. Then he poured from the stage of the secret, the knowledge of all forty orders which came from Ali ibn Abi Talib. I found myself a master in all these orders. While transmitting the knowledge of this stage, his eyes were red. The third stage, which is the secret of the

⁴²³ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995: 380.

secret, is only permitted for shaykhs of the Naqshbandi Order, whose imam is Abu Bakr. As he poured into my heart from this stage, his eyes were white in colour. Then he took me into the stage of the hidden, the station of hidden spiritual knowledge, where his eyes changed to green. Then he took me to the station of complete annihilation, the station of the most hidden where nothing appeared. The colour of his eyes was black. Here he brought me into the Presence of God. Then he brought me back to existence...

I desired nothing more than to stay with him forever and serve him... My heart was in despair when he told me, "My son, your people are in need of you. I have given you enough for now. Go to Cyprus today."⁴²⁴

Shaykh Nazim gave away all his money and belongings, and got a lift to Tripoli, Lebanon,⁴²⁵ where he met Shaykh Munir al-Malek, who had been told by the Prophet, in a dream, "My son Nazim is coming. Take care of him."⁴²⁶

Given the war, and the shortage of fuel, Shaykh Nazim was unable to find motorised transport across the Mediterranean, or anybody particularly keen to attempt the journey. A friend of Shaykh Munir agreed to take Shaykh Nazim across in his small fishing boat.⁴²⁷ The journey took 7 or 8 days.⁴²⁸

As soon as I landed and put my foot on the soil of Cyprus, immediately a spiritual vision was opened to my heart. I saw Grandshaykh Abd Allah al-Dagestani saying to me, "O my son, nothing was able to keep you from carrying out my order. You have achieved a lot by listening and accepting. From this moment I will always be visible to you. Any time you direct your heart towards me, I will be there. Any question you have, you will receive an answer directly from the Divine Presence. Any spiritual state you wish to achieve, it will be granted to you because of your complete submission. The saints are all happy with you, the Prophet is happy with you." As soon as he said that I felt him beside me, and since then he has never left me.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁴ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995: 380–81.

⁴²⁵ Kabbani (*NSW*, 1995) records that Shaykh Nazim was given a lift by a truck driver. The anonymous biographer on *sheiknazim2.com* reports that Shaykh Nazim went to the bus station, where a stranger addressed him, "Oh Shaykh Nazim, do you want to go to Tripoli?" and offered to pay his fare.

⁴²⁶ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995: 382.

⁴²⁷ Kabbani (*NSW*, 1995) reports that Shaykh Munir had to give the man rather a lot of money to attempt the trip.

⁴²⁸ Kabbani (*NSW*, 1995): 7 days. *Sheiknazim2.com*: 8 days and nights.

⁴²⁹ Shaykh Hisham, *NSW*, 1995: 383.

Shaykh Nazim was returning to an island heavily influenced by Kemalist thought and politics. In 1949, a law was passed that the call to prayer, the *adhān* (*ezan* in Turkish), only be given in Turkish.⁴³⁰ Shaykh Nazim continued to give the call to prayer in its traditional Arabic, so that a reported 114 legal cases were brought against him. However, before he could be sentenced, Adnan Menderes' government in Turkey revoked the edict there that the *ezan* only be given in Turkish. Not wishing to be out of step with the mainland, Cypriot politicians permitted the call to prayer in Arabic. By around 1980, the Turkish call to prayer was extinct in Cyprus.⁴³¹

In the early 1950s, Shaykh Nazim returned to Damascus, where, in 1952, he married Amina Adil, a young Russian Tatar woman who was also a student of Grandshaykh Abdullah Dagestani.⁴³² Shaykh Nazim and Hajjah Amina had two boys, Mehmet and Bahauddin, and two girls, Nazihe and Rukiye. The family lived in Damascus, on Jabal (Mount) Qasyun, as close neighbours of Grandshaykh Abdullah. Shaykh Nazim was Abdullah's deputy and secretary.

Grandshaykh Abdullah was not the most popular Naqshbandi shaykh in Damascus, or even on Jabal Qasyun. When he moved there, many people already had a Naqshbandi shaykh, Hajji Ali Efendi. Moreover, Abdullah "had a reputation for not mincing his words"; and his claims about the salvific powers of *taṣawwuf* were thought by many to be overstated and perhaps even heretical.⁴³³ Although he came from a medical family, Grandshaykh Abdullah had never learnt to read or write. Nor did he speak good Arabic, having been born in Dagestan and raised in Turkey; his neighbourhood on Jabal Qasyun was mostly Turkish-speaking. People questioned how a man with so little apparent learning could be a religious leader. He did, however, attract followers through his

⁴³⁰ Nevzat and Hatay 2009.

⁴³¹ Nevzat and Hatay 2009.

⁴³² Böttcher (2011), who spoke to Hajjah Amina in 1999, says that Amina and Shaykh Nazim had been students of Muhammad Dhu 'l-Faqar (d 1951), a Kurdish Naqshbandi shaykh with many followers in Damascus, before becoming followers of Grandshaykh Abdullah. This is difficult to reconcile with the hagiographic sequence of events. In 2006, Böttcher wrote that Hajjah Amina and Shaykh Nazim had been "disciples" of Muhammad Dhu 'l-Faqar, but did not specify that this relationship preceded that with Grandshaykh Abdullah.

⁴³³ Habibis 1985: 75.

charisma, and was respected by scholars with Sufi sympathies. He was admired by the Mufti of Lebanon, Mukhtar Alaily, and by Alaily's brother, a professor of Arabic.⁴³⁴ He was also friends, in the 1930s, with the Mufti of Jordan,⁴³⁵ and is said to have had at least two audiences with King Abdullah I of Jordan. On the first occasion, he took King Abdullah a message from the Prophet that now was not the time to attack the Saudis; on the second occasion, he warned the King not to pray Friday prayers in congregation, because he would be killed. The King took his advice on the first occasion, having had a warningful dream himself, but not on the second, and was indeed shot dead at a Friday prayer.⁴³⁶

It may sound paradoxical that Shaykh Nazim, a man of considerable formal learning, should be the student of Grandshaykh Abdullah, who lacked both literacy and good Arabic. But Grandshaykh Abdullah was held to be senior to Shaykh Nazim in *taṣawwuf*. Moreover, he was regarded by his followers and sympathisers as having divinely inspired knowledge, reaching him from God via the Prophet. To this day, he is referred to among Naqshbandi-Haqqanis as *sulṭānu 'l-Awliyā'*, the king of saints: the highest-ranking saint of his lifetime. Some of his followers also described him as *khatmu 'l-Awliyā'*, the "Seal of Saints". The *khatm* is also the highest-ranking saint of his time; Grandshaykh Abdullah's followers, drawing on Ibn Arabi, argued that the *khatm* was the saint through whom other saints had to come to reach spiritual knowledge.⁴³⁷

Although Grandshaykh Abdullah's deputy, Shaykh Nazim did not spend all this time in Damascus. He spent 3 months a year in Cyprus, and travelled annually on Hajj as a leader and guide of pilgrims. He also travelled to Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Turkey;⁴³⁸ and, if Galip (1990) is correct,

⁴³⁴ Habibis 1985.

⁴³⁵ Habibis 1985.

⁴³⁶ Habibis 1985; Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995.

⁴³⁷ Naqshbandi Mureeds of Sri Lanka 2006.

⁴³⁸ Habibis 1985.

spent some time in England.⁴³⁹ He was expelled from Cyprus in 1965, as a result of his ongoing opposition to Kemalist politicians; and was deported from Syria in 1967.⁴⁴⁰ In neither case, however, does the ban seem to have been lasting. In 1970, he was able to form the Cyprus Turkish Islamic Association, which then had 50 members;⁴⁴¹ he was back in Damascus in the early 1970s, if not earlier.

In 1973, Grandshaykh Abdullah passed away, and was buried in his mosque. He had appointed Shaykh Nazim as his successor, but not in public, and his will was reportedly lost. Not all his followers became followers of Shaykh Nazim. Some followed Shaykh Hussein, a Kurd from Afrin who was Grandshaykh Abdullah's other deputy; others considered themselves followers of Grandshaykh Abdullah but not of Shaykh Nazim. However, Shaykh Nazim and Shaykh Hussein remained on good terms; and most of Grandshaykh Abdullah's followers do indeed seem to have acknowledged Shaykh Nazim as his successor.

Grandshaykh Abdullah's hagiographies claim that he met, and inspired, George Gurdjieff,⁴⁴² John Bennett, and an unnamed, eminent French orientalist. Bennett writes of his meetings with Abdullah in his autobiography. He remarks, "I felt at ease from the start, and very soon I experienced a great happiness that seemed to fill the place. I knew that I was in the presence of a really good man." Bennett goes on to describe Grandshaykh Abdullah as telling him, correctly and uncannily, what he has been seeking guidance on in his private prayers, and giving him incisive advice. Later, Abdullah tells Bennett and his female companion that it is God's Will that their souls are united. Bennett

⁴³⁹ Habibis (1985) states, in contrast, that Shaykh Nazim did not travel to London until the early 1970s. This is consistent with the hagiographies. Böttcher (2011) says that Shaykh Nazim spent time in Egypt, but her stated source is Galip, who does not mention Egypt.

⁴⁴⁰ Böttcher 2011.

⁴⁴¹ Habibis 1985.

⁴⁴² This meeting is described by Shaykh Hisham Kabbani in *NSW*, 1995, and is commented on by him in *PC I*, 2005.

comments, “We experienced an intense happiness. He had dared to put into words what we secretly felt in our hearts.”⁴⁴³

Having had a notable career in military intelligence, theoretical physics, and industrial chemistry, Bennett became a full-time writer, teacher, and populariser of spirituality, drawing in particular on the techniques taught to him by Gurdjieff, whom he identified as sharing similarities of organisation and methods with Naqshbandi Sufis, and as having had Sufi teachers (though Bennett did not mention Grandshaykh Abdullah in this context).⁴⁴⁴ Bennett was based in Kingston-upon-Thames until, a few years before his death in 1974, he moved to Sherborne House in the Cotswolds.⁴⁴⁵ It is therefore fair to say that Grandshaykh Abdullah’s teachings had, indirectly and mixed with many other influences, reached the “West” by the time of his death.

However, Grandshaykh Abdullah specifically charged Shaykh Nazim with taking his teachings to the West. Every year, from 1974 until 2000, Shaykh Nazim travelled from Cyprus to Turkey, and then overland to England, where he would spend Ramadan. He acquired followers especially in Germany and in England. Many of his early followers in England were, understandably, Turks from Cyprus and the mainland. But Shaykh Nazim also acquired many followers of British, South Asian, and Caribbean ancestry. One catalyst, among many, was his acceptance as a teacher by many of Bennett’s followers, after Bennett’s death.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴³ Bennett 1975: 308–10, 314–15.

⁴⁴⁴ Bennett 1976. 70 years after his death, Gurdjieff remains a controversial character, and Bennett’s interpretation is by no means the only one (Sedgwick 2016). Raoul Lefort (1979; possibly a pseudonym for Idries Shah) claimed to identify Naqshbandi teachers of Gurdjieff, but did so by means of educated fantasy rather than conventional research.

⁴⁴⁵ Bennett 1975.

⁴⁴⁶ Weismann (2014) claims that Shaykh Nazim met Bennett, but his sources do not confirm this. Damrel (1999) and Shaykh Hisham Kabbani (*PC 1*, 2005) describe Shaykh Nazim meeting Bennett’s followers, but not Bennett himself.

Until c 1981, Shaykh Nazim resided in Damascus.⁴⁴⁷ He then returned to Cyprus, buying an old townhouse in the small town of Lefke, just north of the 1974 partition line. Although in poor condition (Shaykh Nazim described it as a “ruin”), this house could potentially receive larger numbers of visitors than had been possible in Damascus. In subsequent years, it was restored and extended. Taking care, by his own account, not to buy any land that had been expropriated from Greeks during Cyprus’ partition, Shaykh Nazim gradually acquired other houses, farmland, and orchards. These were used to house and train dervishes, and to provide the dergah, as it had become, with food and an income.

Shaykh Nazim’s house in Damascus, and Grandshaykh Abdullah’s mosque, remained in use by the order. Their major social centre outside the eastern Mediterranean was London, where, after using premises in Harringay and Dalston, the Order settled on two bases: the New Peckham Mosque, established in 1980, and the Tottenham dergah, converted from a convent in the early 1990s. In 2009, Shaykh Hisham established a third London centre, in Feltham, though this was not in full-time use.

The rapid expansion of the order may be attributed, at least in part, to Shaykh Nazim’s charisma. In contrast to most contemporary Sufi orders, the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order has spread not along trade and migration routes, but with the teaching journeys of its charismatic masters (and, increasingly, by use of modern communications technologies).⁴⁴⁸ Naqshbandi-Haqqani membership seems to reflect the wider society more closely than is the case with other Sufi orders. In the USA, it draws members from various ethnicities and classes, not just the white middle-class converts characteristic of some Sufi groups, or the migrant population typical of others.⁴⁴⁹ Similarly, in Britain, the order has been exceptional in attracting substantial numbers of followers from outside the ethnic and sectarian backgrounds of its leaders, and in the extent to which it transcends social

⁴⁴⁷ Galip (1990) gives the date as 1980. However, Habibis (1985) claims to have concluded her fieldwork in Lebanon in 1981. *Mercy Oceans’ Hidden Treasures* consists partly of transcriptions of lectures, by Shaykh Nazim, given in Damascus in 1981.

⁴⁴⁸ Nielsen et al 2006; Schmidt 2004.

⁴⁴⁹ Hermansen 2000, 2004.

class:⁴⁵⁰ followers in London have included aristocrats as well as people in the “lowest” social classes.⁴⁵¹

People who travelled with Shaykh Nazim reported that he would be approached by strangers, some of whom would become his followers there and then. Some dervishes described their decision to follow him as “falling in love”. This does not seem to be a mere metaphor: they described feeling that here was someone with knowledge and insight, whom they could trust with their souls, and with whom they had a deep connection. Dervishes described having had his mastership and personal insight rapidly demonstrated to them. I heard of a wrestler who could not throw an elderly Shaykh Nazim; Sean Foley (2008) described a record producer who knew Shaykh Nazim was his master after the Shaykh called him asking how to produce CDs cheaply. Some dervishes described having seen Shaykh Nazim, or Grandshaykh Abdullah, in their dreams before having met or heard of them.

Becoming a follower of Shaykh Nazim was, at least organisationally, a simple affair. Ideally, you took his hand and recited a prayer after him, as part of a pledge of allegiance (*bayʿa*).⁴⁵² People who could not meet him in person took the pledge with one of his deputies, or in absentia. Naqshbandi-Haqqanis commented that this was acceptable because, when the Prophet had taken the archetypal pledge from his followers at Hdaybiya, he had taken the pledge in absentia from Uthman, later the third caliph: indeed, because he used his own hand to represent Uthman’s, the connection in that particular case was a special honour. The pledge is therefore essentially a matter of intention and spiritual connection. Some Naqshbandi-Haqqani books and websites include a photo of Shaykh Nazim, and instructions on how to take the pledge by looking at the photo, making a spiritual

⁴⁵⁰ Geaves 2014.

⁴⁵¹ Regular attenders at the Tottenham dergah, in the mid-1990s, included “doctors, politicians, British aristocrats, a Persian prince, even the former King of Yemen [presumably Muhammad al-Badr, the last Zaydi Sultan, r 1962–70]” (Backer 2012: 129); which is all the more striking, given that the dergah was in a markedly run-down area of London. Anthropologist Tayfun Atay claimed, in a newspaper interview, that Shaykh Nazim “had links with the British royal family” (Taştekin 2014).

⁴⁵² The prayer that is said at the time of the pledge is in Appendix 3.

connection with Shaykh Nazim, and reciting a prayer. Some people renew their *bayʿa* when they sin, since a heedless or selfish act implies losing the connection with Shaykh Nazim.

I heard dervishes not affiliated to Shaykh Nazim complain that he was being irresponsible by accepting a pledge from people who had only just come to Sufi ways. A pledge was, in principle, a matter of obedience; and people who had not learnt much could not be expected to be obedient. They also commented that it was incongruous for Shaykh Nazim to accept so many disciples when great saints from the past had been much more selective.

Shaykh Nazim said that he did not seek to make anyone his follower: he knew who would follow him, because their spirits had already met. Naqshbandi-Haqqanis acknowledged that many people who took *bayʿa* were beginners in Islam: but argued that, for anyone, *bayʿa*, the acceptance of a teacher, marked the beginning of a serious learning process, not the end. *Bayʿa* was considered to confer a special blessing: anyone who sincerely decided to follow Shaykh Nazim would eventually be guided to their spiritual stations.

Shaykh Nazim's followers were sometimes described, in general, as *murīds*. The masters of the order, echoing Khalid Baghdadi, sometimes pointed out that very few followers were true *murīds*. Most were *muḥibbs*, lovers: they loved Shaykh Nazim, but were not really following him.⁴⁵³ In time, however, they might. Moreover, love was enough: love was the key to salvation and understanding.

In the 1980s and 1990s, Shaykh Nazim travelled widely: notably to central Asia, after the collapse of Soviet rule, and to Indonesia and Malaysia. In 1991–92, Tayfun Atay counted followers from more than 40 nationalities in Shaykh Nazim's mosque in Peckham.⁴⁵⁴ In 1991, Shaykh Nazim appointed Hisham Kabbani to set up a base in the USA. Shaykh Hisham, who came from a well-known

⁴⁵³ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani (*Guides*, 2009) gives a more detailed hierarchy: between the *muḥibb* and the *murīd* are the *muttadiʿ*? (beginner) and *mustaʿid* (prepared one).

⁴⁵⁴ Atay 2012.

Lebanese family of scholars and businessmen,⁴⁵⁵ had been a follower of Grandshaykh Abdullah, and later Shaykh Nazim, since his teens; he was also the husband of Shaykh Nazim's older daughter, Nazihe (sometimes spelt Naziha). Islam in the USA was characterised then, as it is to a lesser extent now, by non-Sufi perspectives: modernism, Wahhabi-Salafism, and African-American nationalism.⁴⁵⁶ However, by the year 2000, Shaykh Hisham was a prominent, if controversial, figure. He accompanied Shaykh Nazim on teaching journeys, and made public journeys of his own.

From 2001, Shaykh Nazim hardly left Lefke. However, the spread of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order did not necessarily require Shaykh Nazim's physical presence. One dervish of my acquaintance, a Jamaican disc jockey, came to Islam through Shaykh Nazim: within a few years, 70 of his friends and family had become Muslim, and many of them had become followers of Shaykh Nazim. He also catalysed other Caribbean Muslims to be more Sufi-orientated.

The Order also started spreading through the internet. Through Shaykh Hisham, the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis had been early adopters of the medium: and, as internet use took off, so did use of their websites. An early problem was the "cuckoo-nesting" of unhelpful content, on Naqshbandi-Haqqani websites, by people unfriendly to the order:⁴⁵⁷ but this seemed to be resolved. By the mid-2000s, people could watch Shaykh Nazim, and sometimes Shaykh Hisham, on *Sufilive.com*, a website run from Shaykh Hisham's headquarters in Michigan; this website was joined in 2009 by *Saltanat.org*, which was operated from Lefke, and which concentrated more exclusively on Shaykh Nazim. Videos of Shaykh Nazim also appeared on widely used sites such as Youtube.

Some dervishes referred to Shaykh Nazim as "my Sultan": which seemed to reflect not just their wish that he rule over their personalities, but their appreciation of his influence over others. Dervishes remarked that an old man, living in an unfashionable town in Cyprus, was treated as a teacher and adviser by a range of statesmen: from Pakistan (Pervez Musharraf), Indonesia,

⁴⁵⁵ Habibis 1985.

⁴⁵⁶ Ahmed A 2010; Hermansen 2004.

⁴⁵⁷ Nielsen et al 2006.

Malaysia, Brunei, Jordan (King Abdullah II), Turkey, and Cyprus. Dervishes told me that some politicians who followed Shaykh Nazim wished to keep their attachment secret: one mentioned that certain politicians visited him at night, aiming at anonymity. After many years as a Muslim, Yusuf Islam (Cat Stevens) became a follower of Shaykh Nazim, as did Muhammad Ali. By the time he passed away, in 2014, Shaykh Nazim's group was unusually prominent and influential.

5.2 The nature and acquisition of knowledge in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order

According to his hagiographies, Shaykh Nazim took a very good degree in chemical engineering, and was encouraged by his lecturers to go into research. He studied the Islamic sciences under distinguished masters, including the Mufti of Homs. However, the knowledge that shaped and determined his life was spiritual knowledge. He had several spiritual masters as a young man, but his spiritual knowledge came as a grant from Grandshaykh Abdullah Dagestani, his true master. Grandshaykh Abdullah, in turn, was acting on behalf of the Prophet.

Shaykh Nazim claimed to be always in spiritual contact with Grandshaykh Abdullah. The first books of Shaykh Nazim's compiled talks were credited not to Shaykh Nazim, but Grandshaykh Abdullah, from whose spiritual presence Shaykh Nazim claimed to be receiving spiritual instruction and inspiration. This can be considered an *Uwaysī* connection even during Grandshaykh Abdullah's lifetime; and certainly after his funeral. Shaykh Nazim also reported being in the spiritual presence of other teachers. Sometimes, during his talks, he would indicate that the Prophet was present, and would stand up from respect. Towards the end of his life, he often addressed Ali, the fourth caliph, whom he referred to respectfully as *Shāh-i Mardān* (Persian, and Ottoman Turkish, for "king of humanity"; *mardān*, or *merdān*, has connotations of greatness and spirituality).⁴⁵⁸

The Prophet is depicted, in Naqshbandi-Haqqani discourse, as the ultimate human source of knowledge, because he gets his knowledge directly from God. Knowledge by divine revelation is of

⁴⁵⁸ Redhouse (1978: 1808) notes that *merdān* can mean, "Seven spiritual beings held to be guides and rulers of the faithful".

an altogether different, and higher, quality from that received by empiricism or analytical reasoning. The Prophet's journey towards knowledge is symbolised, and encapsulated, by his Night Journey, which culminated in his ascent into the heavens. Shaykh Nazim comments,

On his Night Journey the Holy Prophet was shown the whole universe and only thereafter was invited to leave it and enter the realm of absolute Truth. He left everything, including his self, and entered the Divine Presence... When Gabriel was leading the Holy Prophet in his ascension, he stopped at a certain point, for fear of being annihilated in the Divine. That Station represents the highest attainment possible through the mind. [The Prophet was the foremost of] those who are prepared to sacrifice everything, even themselves, to attain absolute Unity Oceans. Their Station is absolute Unity, *Aḥadiyya*, while the station of those who fail to throw off the yoke of mind, form and relativity is the station of Gabriel, the station of the awareness of Unity, *Wāḥidiyya*. The station of *Wāḥidiyya* is in Unity Oceans, but it is a 'sub-station'."⁴⁵⁹

Shaykh Nazim was quoted as saying that he had asked scholars how many times the Prophet had ascended into the heavens, and none of them could answer. He replied that the Prophet's love for God was always increasing, as was the Prophet's knowledge: so the Prophet was always ascending. The knowledge that the Prophet can transmit is always increasing. The Prophet's knowledge is held to be valuable, not least because he is the ultimate human expert on the nature and salvation of souls.

On his journey into the heavens, the Prophet first rode on a heavenly creature known as a Buraq, that resembled a winged horse; then, in the higher stages, he was accompanied by the Archangel Gabriel. The Buraq was compared by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis to the "ego", the term they characteristically use to describe the *nafs*, or animalistic soul. To begin his journey towards the divine presence, a person must master his ego.

In Naqshbandi-Haqqani accounts, the ego is an essential component of humanity. But it wants to be the most important being in the world; and it is lazy. People who have not mastered their egos

⁴⁵⁹ Shaykh Nazim, *M O Lovestream*, 1987: 102–03.

develop personalities and perceptions based around the ego's wish to have its will, and to be right. This inevitably makes people, in Shaykh Nazim's characteristic terms, crazy or mindless.

Until people have tamed their egos, they are, generally unconsciously, committing the sin of *shirk*, the ascription of partners to God: because they are giving some of their worship to God, and some to their ego. Only after people have tamed their ego can they receive knowledge without damaging themselves and others. A metaphor Shaykh Nazim often used was that of preparing a rocket: people can take off once the rocket has been checked by experts and found to be safe. If they take off in an unsafe rocket, they crash.

The early stages of Naqshbandi learning are therefore about loss: of pride, and of the false personality created by the ego. Shaykh Nazim uses the metaphor of emptying a glass so that it can be filled.

The first step, at least in principle, is humility. A senior dervish told me that, in a way, this is the essence of *bay'at*. A person has understood that they are not fully in command of, or knowledgeable about, their souls, and that they need a teacher. Dervishes commented that learned people can find it difficult to take *bay'at*, because they are used to believing that they know things.

From the intention of humility comes the process of bringing the ego back to reality. Shaykh Nazim has commented,

The Ways of Heaven are ways of travelling light. Therefore, all of your burdens, one after the other, have to be taken from you. You cannot lay them down yourself, for they are important to you, important claims. Claims to be something and someone. Claims to be a doctor, a businessman, an architect, an artist. Claims to be oneself, claims to be. The more you claim, the more you must undergo. Become less. Become less, until you have vanished. Then you are free.⁴⁶⁰

In similar vein, a German master remarked,

⁴⁶⁰ Shaykh Nazim, *IFS*, 1997: 80.

Do you like mathematics, Athar?... Only the zero can receive 1. If you can receive 1, you can receive anything: 2, 3, 5, 9, any number you like. But first comes 1. Everything comes through the One.

Shaykh Nazim is careful to emphasise that he himself is nothing. Before giving a talk, he always asked permission from his masters, with whom he claimed to be in spiritual contact: and he presented his talks as paraphrases or interpretations of his masters' thoughts. He remarked, more than once, "If I were to say this comes from me, I would be cut off."

According to the Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters, most spiritual paths embody an innate paradox. If people acquire spirituality, or related skills, and attribute them to themselves, this constitutes pride. In addition, people may be distracted, by spiritual experience, from the single-minded pursuit of the truth. The ego may be fuelled more by apparent goodness and spirituality than by obviously worldly gains; and a person may not recognise selfishness or greed under the cloak of spirituality.

Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters say that they get round this problem, by teaching in such a way that their followers tend not to have experiences that make them aware of remarkable advancement or abilities. Shaykh Hisham explains that 70,000 veils reportedly exist between the seeker and the station of the Prophet, and should be removed by a Sufi master. Masters in other Sufi paths start with the veils nearest the seeker, which can lead to overwhelming and exciting experiences; Naqshbandi masters start by removing those nearest the Prophet.

A seeker cannot, by definition, see his master removing those veils. But he can be aware, to some extent, of the processes his master is putting him through. Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters emphasise ethical, practical knowledge. A dervish reminisced,

I first came across Shaykh Nazim in 1997 or 1998, in London, and I went to every one of his talks.

He rarely said something that would be considered "deep". It was mostly "remember God", all that kind of stuff. Then he would tell a story. Maybe he thought it ["deep" material] wouldn't be suitable for that kind of audience.

Anyway, on this occasion, he said, “Some of you have asked me to say something of a spiritual nature. I will say something ‘spiritual’. Maybe some of you understanding, some of you not understanding.

“If you are saying, ‘I am here and I am praying to Allah [points upwards],’ that is *shirk*. If you are saying, ‘I can be in Allah’s existence’, that is also *shirk*. But Allah can be in your existence.

“Understanding? Not understanding?”

Books of Shaykh Nazim’s talks contain much information on practical, ethical training, as do books of Shaykh Hisham’s talks. Shaykh Hisham wrote *The Sufi Science of Self-Realisation*, which included a guide to the various ruinous character traits, and advice on how to combat them. Many of the techniques are based on what might be called the acceptance of God. In a phrase often used by Shaykh Eşref, “Thy Will be done.”

God’s Will is, by definition, related to His nature and attributes. In Sufi writings, these attributes have often been expressed in lists of 99 “names of God”.⁴⁶¹ The names used are broadly similar between different lists, but do vary:⁴⁶² indeed, Shaykh Nazim has said that God’s attributes are countless.⁴⁶³ But when talking of God, Shaykh Nazim emphasised, above all, God’s mercy. He encouraged all his students to begin every act by saying *bismi ‘Llāhi ‘l-raḥmāni ‘l-raḥīm* (a phrase known as the *basmala*): “In the name of God, the *Raḥmān*, the *Raḥīm*”. *Raḥmān* and *Raḥīm* are names of God based on the concept of mercy. As with other Koranic concepts, the networks of meanings around these words, and the varying contexts in which they are found, have caused translations to vary.⁴⁶⁴ Drawing on classical Arabic lexicons, Edward Lane translated *Raḥmān* as “Compassionate” and *Raḥīm* as “Merciful”, and noted that the consonantal root *r–ḥ–m*, from

⁴⁶¹ Among the books devoted to study of these names are those by al-Ghazali (1995) and Bayrak (2000)..

⁴⁶² Gimaret 1988.

⁴⁶³ Shaykh Nazim, *MO I*, 1980.

⁴⁶⁴ Koranic translations of *Raḥmān* and *Raḥīm* include “Merciful, Compassionate” (Arberry), “Beneficent, Merciful” (Pickthall), and “Most Gracious, Most Merciful” (Yusuf Ali). Martin Lings translated the Names in five different ways, selecting “Infinitely Good, All-Merciful” for his unfinished Koran translation (2007). In his linguistic analysis of Koranic concepts, Toshihiko Isuzu (2002), perhaps surprisingly, mentioned but did not discuss *Raḥīm*, and did not mention *Raḥmān* at all.

which both words are derived, signified mercy, pity, compassion, tenderness, inclination to favour, pardon, and forgiveness; as well as generating *rahim* and *rahm*, which both mean “womb”.⁴⁶⁵

A Naqshbandi-Haqqani teacher pointed out to his class, in Tottenham, that every *sūra* (a word often translated as “chapter”) except one of the Koran began with the *basmaala*. The “missing” *basmaala* was in the middle of another *sūra*. In the same way, everything from God was from His mercy: when it seemed absent, it was only hidden, and might be all the more effective for that. Several early books of Shaykh Nazim’s talks contained, in the title, the phrase “mercy oceans”, a characteristic formulation of his. For Shaykh Nazim, humanity was existing in, and through, God’s mercy. Even His apparent punishment was part of His mercy.

If everything comes from God, and God is ultimately merciful, then there is no sense or point in complaining about anything, or getting angry. Even if unpleasant things seem to come from people, they came ultimately from God, so anger and bitterness towards people is pointless. Such negative emotions, in Naqshbandi-Haqqani thought, represent the ego’s rage at having its will thwarted. As a fundamental exercise, dervishes are instructed to swallow their anger. This helps to adjust the ego to reality.

In general, dervishes are taught to attempt to have “good manners” towards all creation. A motto of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, which is used in calligraphy and as a catchphrase, is *Adab Yā Hū*. *Adab* (*edeb* or *edep* in Turkish) is Arabic for good manners, appropriate conduct. *Yahu* means, roughly, “See here!” in Turkish, and this is often how dervishes interpret the phrase. However, in Arabic, *Yā Hū* means “O He!” and is a way of calling on God: and, at least potentially, a reminder that everything is from Him.

Shaykh Nazim explained that perfect manners were taught by the Prophet: his Sunna consisted of acting towards everything in the most merciful and appropriate way. In teaching dervishes manners, Shaykh Nazim was aiming to communicate the example of the Prophet, and to interpret the Sunna

⁴⁶⁵ Lane 1984: 1055–57.

for the dervishes' circumstances and personalities. Good conduct arose out of understanding, but also helped to shape it, by disciplining and training the ego.

Shaykh Nazim was called *al-Haqqānī*, an Arabic word derived from *ḥaqq*, meaning truth, reality, and justice. Redhouse's Ottoman lexicon gives three meanings for *ḥaqqānī*:

1. Proceeding from or regarding God.
2. Related to the truth.
3. Just, equitable.⁴⁶⁶

This range of definitions underscores the concept of good manners as central to the claimed ethos of the order. In addition, a couple of dervishes said that a meaning of *ḥaqqānī* was “the arranger”: certainly, it was fairly widely believed, at least in Lefke, that Shaykh Nazim was instrumental in arranging his students' lives in ways that supported their learning. This was not because he had a will separate from God's, but because, as someone who had surrendered to God, he acted as a channel for, and distributor of, God's mercy.

For some dervishes, the concept of Shaykh Nazim as arranger seemed to signify a kind of mercy that underwrote their lives. Once, I was limping painfully towards the Tottenham dergah (I had inflamed feet), when a young, highly educated man stopped to give me a lift. I expressed my gratitude, and explained my difficulty in walking. He remarked that he usually did not have access to a car at that time on a Friday, but “Shaykh Nazim arranged it”. Some dervishes find that the concept of Shaykh Nazim as arranger sharpens the sense of moral choice and spiritual connection. This principle is illustrated by a story often used by Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters:

A wrestler approached Grandshaykh Sharafuddin, a pistol and a dagger in his belt, so full of pride. He roared, “Shaykh Sharafuddin, teach me your way!” Shaykh Sharafuddin was going to refuse—how could he teach someone so proud and violent?—when he got an instruction from the Prophet, saying, teach him.

⁴⁶⁶ Redhouse 1978: 794.

So Shaykh Sharafuddin told the wrestler to go to the market, where he would see a man selling sheep stomachs. He should hit the man and come back to Shaykh Sharafuddin.

The wrestler was so happy. “This *tariqa*, this is the way for me!” He went to the market and thumped the man, who fell down, covered by his messy cargo. He scowled, but did not retaliate.

Grandshaykh Sharafuddin gave the wrestler his next task: to hit, really hard, another man in the market. The wrestler did that, but the man just smiled. The wrestler returned to Shaykh Sharafuddin, but was starting to feel a bit troubled.

Shaykh Sharafuddin then said, “Your next task is to go to a follower of mine who is ploughing a field. Take this stick. Hit him until it breaks.” The wrestler took the stick and attacked the man, who just said to his oxen, “We are being lazy! Plough faster!” Finally, the wrestler struck the man so hard that the stick broke. The man, who was quite old, knelt down and said, “I know my shaykh has sent you to teach me. I am so sorry to put you to so much trouble. Your hand must be hurting and your stick is broken. Can you forgive me?”

The wrestler wept. All the desire to hit other people went out of him. He went back to Grandshaykh Sharafuddin, who said, “The first man you hit was a new student of mine. He is educated, and that has made him proud, so I have given him a job that will reduce his pride. He got angry, but had the self-control not to act on it.

“The second student was more advanced. He did not get angry. The third student knew that everything comes from God, and sees his shaykh in everything. He is a true disciple.

“Now I want you to take this stone and throw it at that apple tree.” The wrestler did as he was told, and a branch of the tree fell, containing some fruit.

“This is how a dervish must be,” said Grandshaykh Sharafuddin. “A stone hits him, and he gives beautiful fruit.”⁴⁶⁷

When living near or travelling with a master, this kind of direct instruction becomes possible. I heard that, when he had been younger and healthier, Shaykh Nazim had been very visibly involved with everyday life in the Lefke dergah, spending the days with his students. By the time I visited, he

⁴⁶⁷ My retelling of a story that has been told several times by Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters, each time with a slightly different emphasis (and hence with different details emerging); the Sufi master has been described as Grandshaykh Sharafuddin (Shaykh Hisham, *PC 1*, 2005: 143–55; *Ascent*, 2009: 99–103; and *SSSR*, 2006: 46–50) or Mawlana Khalid (Shaykh Nazim, *MO 2*, 1980: 210–15).

was largely in seclusion, and was too weak to walk unsupported. He emerged from the front door of his house once daily, to be driven around the area; and every Friday, to walk a few metres to the dergah's prayer room.

Nonetheless, he was widely held to be the main orchestrator of events in and around the dergah. He had, at any rate, appointed its caretakers, and the people who ran the training exercises for junior male dervishes. These consisted, during the daytime, mainly of physical work, in teams: usually in farming or horticulture. People were sometimes given tasks far removed from their everyday experience. The young man intensely chopping wood for the ovens turned out to be, to my surprise, an Iranian academic with no previous experience of such labour; my first task was to help to build a hen-house, when I had no experience of any outdoor work beyond light gardening and occasional psychiatric conversation. Some dervishes found the allocation of tasks frustrating: one, who had stayed several months in Cyprus, told me that he had given up on the work parties after one day, when, as someone experienced in handling tools, he had watched as a work organiser insisted that the hammer be given to a dervish who had little idea how to use it. Some dervishes, however, developed skills they had not imagined acquiring. My preconceptions about my ability and personality were challenged by the work on the hen-house. My understandings of religion were also challenged: right at the start, the organiser asked me, "When are you going to use your holy body?"

The idea that Shaykh Nazim could know about events in the dergah without being physically informed of, or witnessing, them is not naturalistically explicable. Rather, many dervishes believe, he has spiritual knowledge which keeps him informed of their deeds and thoughts. Without such knowledge, he would not be fully qualified as a spiritual director. Knowledge of a person's deeds and intentions is depicted in biographies of the Prophet,⁴⁶⁸ and accounts of other holy people. Shaykh Nazim is said by his disciples to be a *sultānu 'l-Awliyā'*, the fullest contemporary inheritor and representative of the Prophet.

⁴⁶⁸ Lings 1991.

By inference, a dervish should try to obey an instruction from his Sufi master even if it seems unlikely or preposterous. A saying of Grandshaykh Abdullah's was cited:

tarīqa is three nails that you hammer into your forehead. If I tell you to empty the ocean with a bucket, go ahead and try. If I tell you that you get your trust by digging through the seven earths with a broken spade, keep on digging till you make it. If you are in the east and I tell you your provision is in the west, go there even if there are mountains and oceans in the way. Maybe you will be given the power to cross them.⁴⁶⁹

The dilemma about apparently impossible instructions was illustrated by two dervishes in Lefke who were told by Shaykh Nazim to go to Damascus. The first, a lovable but warlike man whose relationships with other dervishes tended to be conflictual, returned after a few days looking somewhat embarrassed. He had arrived at the Syrian border; been informed he lacked the necessary papers to enter; and been turned back. His manner thereafter in the dergah was gentler, and he got into fewer arguments. I met the second dervish a couple of months later, in Damascus. He told me that he also had been turned away by the border guards. But he knew that if Shaykh Nazim had given him an order, the Shaykh knew what he was talking about. Therefore, the dervish had slept on a bench next to the border post. After a few nights, the guards took pity on him, and let him in.

As well as being persistent, dervishes are encouraged to be consistent. The masters teach that it is better to do a little good, consistently, than to aim high and be unable to sustain it: indeed, ambition can come from the ego. In one group I attended, the regulars were amazed when someone they had previously known to live a wild life not only became a Muslim but was content to spend most of his days in the local Sufi mosque. They predicted that it wouldn't last (which the dervish himself ascribed to envy). Another dervish, brought up as a Muslim but not observant as a young man, remarked,

When I started, I used to do everything. Two-and-a-half years later, I nearly went out of the whole thing. It was only Shaykh Nazim that saved me. When you start, you've got this thing [drive].

⁴⁶⁹ A retelling, by me, of an often repeated saying of Grandshaykh Abdullah Dagestani (another version is in Shaykh Hisham, *Fifty Days*, 2010: 44).

For every student, Shaykh Nazim prescribes a daily prayer routine. Some receive it from him or from his assistants directly; others, who are not given personal instructions, can, and do, fall back on the daily Islamic prayers, and on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani *awrād*, which are usually simply called the Naqshbandi-Haqqani zikr (see Appendix 3). Shaykh Nazim emphasises, in general, not only the five well known Islamic *namāz* prayers (dawn, noon, mid-afternoon, sunset, night), but other prayers that are regarded as part of the Sunna: *ishrāq* (just after sunrise), *duḥā* (late morning), and *awwābīn* (immediately after the sunset prayer). These prayers are brief, but are said to provide special blessings: for instance, regular praying of *awwābīn* makes a person free from the fire of Hell. Most important is *tahajjud*, prayed before dawn. *Tahajjud* is said to fill a person with love and knowledge; and, when a person gets up before dawn and prays, these prayers are likely to be answered. Shaykh Nazim recommends a particular form of *tahajjud* known as *najāt*, as well as the *ṣalātu 'l-wudū'*, in which the dervish does two prayer cycles every time they do their ablutions; and *ṣalātu 'l-tasbīḥ*, a special form of *namāz* which tends to be done on Fridays by more experienced dervishes (see Appendix 3).

However, Shaykh Nazim encourages people to begin gently: someone unaccustomed to prayers may be asked to begin with two prayer cycles daily, or even a single prostration. Consistent devotions are said to be good for disciplining the ego. Prayer is also said to bring spiritual knowledge, or the potential for spiritual knowledge, to the practitioner. In Sufi traditions, some prayers are said to have specific effects on the mind or the soul.⁴⁷⁰ One dervish warned me, seemingly from personal experience, that to do such prayers without a guide can lead to madness.

Obedience to the shaykh consists of doing the right thing, in the right way, rather than mere enthusiasm. In Lefke, in particular, some dervishes are given fairly well defined practical roles, and are given to understand that this is a personal spiritual prescription.

⁴⁷⁰ See, for instance, Bayrak 2000.

Disobedience to the shaykh was considered by dervishes to be a sign of egotism. People might imagine that they know themselves better than the shaykh does; but, paradoxically, people are often the least well informed about themselves, as in this Nasrudin joke told by Shaykh Eşref:

Nasrudin married a woman who was—not so good-looking. He didn't see her face before the wedding. Afterwards, she removed her veil, and asked, "Dear husband, to whom can I reveal my face?"

"You can show it to anyone you want," said Nasrudin, "So long as you don't show it to me."⁴⁷¹

Dervishes told me that attempting to direct your own spiritual progress tends to lead to worsened egotism and illusion. The concept of spiritual directorship means that people who are fallen can regain their innate purity by being guided by someone in whom the Fall has already been reversed. Shaykh Nazim, in turn, is said to take instructions from the Prophet Muhammad: who had the "black spot" that predisposes to sin removed from his heart, by angels, in childhood.⁴⁷²

Innocence and knowledge are considered to be primordial in the individual life, as well as in the history of mankind. Babies are born innocent, and therefore free from the accumulated damage caused by the ego's distortions: one Naqshbandi-Haqqani teacher told a fable that the indent on the upper lip is caused when an angel puts its finger to the baby's lips, asking it to be quiet, because what it knows must not be divulged. Similarly, Adam, in paradise, knew the names of all things.⁴⁷³

This was not a generic, categorical knowledge, but knowledge of each individual creation, and its

⁴⁷¹ The trickster-figure Nasrudin, well known in Turkish folklore, was popularised in the English language by Idries Shah (1964, 1966, and several subsequent publications).

⁴⁷² "In every human heart there is a spot of black blood that is called the part of Shaytan, which consists of fear and evil suggestion. The angel had come to Muhammad and told him that he must remove this spot, that it was not right for him, and he opened his heart and performed the operation." (Hajjah Amina, *Muhammad*, 2002: 105) Years later, before the Prophet's ascent to the heavens, an archangel "opened up my heart and took from it the small black clump of clotted blood, while saying, 'This bit of clotted blood is the reason why [people] feel fear when they behold an awesome sight. I have taken it from you, for tonight you will behold the Heavens and the Lote Tree, the Divine Throne and Divine Court...'" (Hajjah Amina, *Muhammad*, 2002: 155)

⁴⁷³ Koran 2: 31.

nature and purpose. This was an aspect of knowledge of God, who “has as many names as all the atoms in the universe, as all the particles of all the atoms, down to the very last one”.⁴⁷⁴

Adam lost his knowledge when he was tricked by the Devil into following his own desires, rather than God’s command. But before Adam could fall, the Devil had to fall. He was once called Azazil:

The Lord created the worlds before creating mankind, and He created the angels and the jinn... One of the jinn was called Azazil... he was the best of their number. So the Lord gave him a pair of wings that he could fly up and join the angels and learn from their ways. Once the Lord ordered them to make war on the disobedient, and in the battle they [the disobedient] were defeated. Azazil was at the head of the fighters, and upon their victory, pride took hold of his heart.⁴⁷⁵

When God ordered Azazil to bow to Adam, Azazil’s pride made him refuse: “You created me of fire, and him of clay.”⁴⁷⁶ For disobeying God’s command, he was cast out of heaven. His name Azazil, indicating honour, was changed to Iblis, or Shaytan.⁴⁷⁷

Since being thrown out of heaven, the Devil has devoted himself to misleading mankind. In Naqshbandi-Haqqani accounts, he has immense knowledge, and uses it to mislead people’s egos. He has recruited many, many jinns and men to serve him, wittingly or otherwise. He influences people to damage their souls and the world around them. In Naqshbandi-Haqqani discourse, scientific knowledge is sometimes likened to the Devil’s knowledge, as being based on discontent and a desire to manipulate the world according to one’s own will. Shaykh Nazim argues that scientific knowledge can nonetheless be used for good. Shaykh Hisham has even been known to adduce scientific evidence in explanation, or support, of traditional Sufi accounts. Notably, he

⁴⁷⁴ Shaykh Nazim, *MO 1*, 1980: 10.

⁴⁷⁵ Hajjah Amina, *Lore 1*, 2008: 30.

⁴⁷⁶ Koran 7: 12.

⁴⁷⁷ Azazil comes from the Arabic root *ʿ-z*, associated with honour; Iblis from *b-l-s*, associated with despair; and Shaytan from *sh-t-n*, the central concept of which is distance and remoteness (Lane 1984).

explained the hadith that people are resurrected from the coccyx by briefly describing scientific experiments in which the DNA of the coccyx reportedly could not be destroyed.⁴⁷⁸

In contrast, a theme of dervish thought is that Shaykh Nazim knows more than scientists do about the natural world, and that some have become his followers after being moved by his insight into scientific processes. In general, dervishes describe spiritual knowledge as providing a more reliable view of the natural world than science does:

Me: Who can say what a fact is? It depends on the perspective and the context.

Peckham dervish: The fact is God. Ultimately, behind everything, you find God. The closer to God someone is, the more likely he is to know. Scientists [polite, short pause] have been known to be wrong. They discover they were wrong, they change their minds. But divine knowledge is always right.

Shaykh Eşref commented that self-knowledge, arising from *taşawwuf*, leads to knowledge of the rest of the world:

If you understand yourself, the ant from the desert and the city, the flea, horse and cow, Peter and Mehmet will come to you and introduce themselves. Even if there are millions of them. Even [though] this is physically not possible.

But if you understand yourself, you will be beyond physical things. And every creature, on order from above, has to introduce itself to you and to show its secret.⁴⁷⁹

5.3 Being with Shaykh Nazim

Dervishes acquire spiritual knowledge by learning from Shaykh Nazim. This requires them to have access to his teachings. This can be done in the following ways:

1. *Personal interaction.*
 - a. In Shaykh Nazim's physical presence;

⁴⁷⁸ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *AA*, 2003.

⁴⁷⁹ Shaykh Eşref, *The Secret of the Ant*, 19 May 2012. Translation retrieved from www.sufi-zentrum-rabbaniyya.de.

- b. In Shaykh Nazim's dergah;
- c. *Rābiṭa* and *murāqaba*;
- d. In dreams;
- e. By electronic media.

2. *Interaction through an intermediary.*

- a. With transcripts of his talks;
- b. With one of the masters who represent Shaykh Nazim;
- c. In holy places;
- d. With objects blessed by him;
- e. In the world in general.

I will discuss each of these techniques in turn.

Shaykh Nazim's physical presence is the most comprehensive way of experiencing the man's personality and teachings. Dervishes say that an hour in the company of the friends [of God] (*Awliyā'*) is better than a lifetime. Shaykh Nazim is an intense, subtle, and deeply personal communicator, with remarkable variation and skill in expressing himself through tones of voice and facial expressions. I had never come across anyone, even a theatre actor, able to communicate so much thought and emotion so subtly and quickly. Shaykh Nazim's eldest son, Shaykh Mehmet, has a similar skill, although he is a much less effusive communicator.

Shaykh Nazim communicates with many people in a short period of time. He can be speaking to one person, and catch someone's eye with a different expression, so that the second person takes a personal message from the word he is pronouncing at the time. In this way, a single encounter can be individualised for the people in the room.

Dervishes explained, further, that, through a spiritual gift, Shaykh Nazim was able to communicate personally with anyone who witnessed his talks. This meant that even a talk given to a large audience could be listened to, and experienced, as though Shaykh Nazim were addressing the listener personally.⁴⁸⁰ In Lefke, I found that his individual talks could indeed be used for personal reflection and instruction. I had just reminded myself, naturalistically, that this reflected on my imagination, rather than any particular quality in the talks, when Shaykh Nazim called out “Doctor!” and described what I had just been doing—out of his field of vision or possible knowledge, as far as I knew. This I also tried to explain, naturalistically. But, as a participant observer, I found it easier, and more appropriate, to let such experiences happen without trying to think myself out of them at the time. I found that Shaykh Nazim’s talks often worked like a conversation: with him saying something, me thinking something in response, and him replying to it with his next words. This effect was heightened in meetings with him. Dervishes told me that, indeed, there was no need to ask Shaykh Nazim questions. He knew what was on people’s minds, and would answer them at the right time.

Shaykh Nazim was not the only Naqshbandi-Haqqani master I had this strange experience with. One Ramadan, I slipped into a bad habit in a way that left me mortified and shaken. Shortly afterwards, I went to see Shaykh Eşref in Germany. The day after I had confessed my wrongdoing to my family, Shaykh Eşref called me into the room where he was sitting with other dervishes, and described, in fine detail, the circumstances in which I had done wrong, and some of my thoughts at the time, in a subtle enough way that none of those present could have worked out what I had done;⁴⁸¹ although I felt, watching their faces, that they felt as though they were gaining from the interaction. I struggled to find a naturalistic explanation for Shaykh Eşref’s knowledge. Even if he had bugged my room and listened to my conversation with my family (which seemed unlikely to

⁴⁸⁰ Hoffman (1995) described this as an acknowledged gift of Sufi masters.

⁴⁸¹ Hoffman (1995: 135) quotes Shaykh Izz as saying, “If I am speaking to a group and I want to say something to a particular person, I speak in a riddle which only he will understand.”

me, and not consistent with his character), I did not understand how he could have had such a fine-grained understanding of my mental processes, or of my actions when I was alone.

Group discussions are usual with the Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters. On the whole, they do not have enough time to see their dervishes individually: although Shaykh Nazim tried to make sure that dervishes got an individual audience with him before they left Lefke. Shaykh Nazim sometimes says something to one dervish that is equally, if not more, salient to another person in the room:⁴⁸² this way, dervishes say, people can receive messages without their egos being challenged head-on. Group interactions can make meetings like a kind of drama, in which dervishes play roles, wittingly or otherwise, and are expected to learn from each other: a dervish sees aspects of his mind mirrored in the others present.

Very occasionally, I observed that the existence of a drama was announced: after the event, since knowing that it was staged would have prevented the dervishes from participating fully in it. In Damascus, as a rule, all Naqshbandi-Haqqanis ate together, at a long table. On one occasion, Shaykh Eşref contrived to be eating alone, with the rest of us watching. To our shock, he seemed angry: “I said I wanted these potatoes roasted, and they’re boiled. And when I say roasted, I mean roasted!” I thought he was acting—but convincingly; and, despite my conviction, was glad not to be the person he was complaining to. So far as I was aware, all of us apart from Shaykh Eşref were a bit stunned. Such behaviour seemed most out of character, and bizarre in a Sufi master. The lady who had done the cooking was visibly shaken, not least because she had received a message that the potatoes should be boiled.

Later that day, Shaykh Eşref explained that the scene had been staged. He had communicated the message about the potatoes via a dervish whom he had once employed—and who, he knew from experience, “always garbles messages”. He had intended to show us always to question the sources of messages. This was particularly important to the lady who had done the cooking, and who had a

⁴⁸² Possible examples are discussed by Atay (2012) and, with reference to Pa’ Ariffin, by Farrer (2009).

position of responsibility: if she did not take on this instruction, she would come to great harm. That was why he had made the lesson so dramatic.⁴⁸³

His final remark was a compliment to the man who had delivered the message. Although he was not good at delivering messages, he was a pure-hearted man: “as old as me”. As Shaykh Eşref sauntered off, several of us exchanged bewildered glances. Shaykh Eşref looked much younger than the man he spoke of. We asked the man: how old are you? He confirmed that he was as old as he looked: a comfortable 10 or more years older than Shaykh Eşref seemed to be. Perhaps Shaykh Eşref was remarkably well preserved?

Shaykh Eşref clarified matters, at least for me, a few days later when he spoke to the young man who had made it from Lefke to Damascus. “My little brother!” he said, standing on a chair to affectionately greet the visitor (who, without the use of the chair, was much taller than Shaykh Eşref). Shaykh Eşref then explained, “In 2 years’ time, you will be older than me”. The idiom of age is sometimes used by Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters to refer to spiritual maturity.

In general, however, the masters speak directly, and in the vernacular. Shaykh Nazim makes an effort to speak in the language of his visitors. His main languages are Turkish, Arabic, Greek, and English, but he has a way of dropping in the occasional word in (for instance) Urdu, depending on whom he is speaking to. With dervishes who speak a language with which he is ostensibly unfamiliar, such as Spanish, he uses an interpreter. He sometimes seems to have inspired knowledge of other languages. Sri Lankan dervishes reported that fish came up to the shore to converse with Shaykh Nazim, and he understood their language. Some dervishes say he understands every language. In any case, much of his communication is through his personality and his facial expressions.

Shaykh Nazim’s English is somewhat idiosyncratic. He apologises that he is getting inspirations from his masters, like rainfall, and is seizing any vessel to catch them in. But it is possible that some

⁴⁸³ Before and after this event, I came to considerable grief through not questioning the sources of messages.

of his idiosyncrasies are deliberate. For instance, he has a habit of saying “divinely” rather than “divine”, and this has been assumed to be an error.⁴⁸⁴ But it is the only instance, so far as I am aware, where Shaykh Nazim uses an adverb instead of an adjective; which is, in any case, a curious mistake to make. Perhaps he deliberately uses the adverb to highlight the transcendence of God: since things other than God cannot be divine.

The transcendence of God is one of many themes Shaykh Nazim touches on in his talks. He once, for instance, argued that the personality described as sitting on the heavenly Throne in the Koran must be the Prophet:⁴⁸⁵ since God was far too great to be sitting on a throne (even metaphorically). Shaykh Nazim’s talks often functioned as a kind of extended commentary on Koranic verses or hadiths. He described himself as being like an electrical substation, converting a high-power supply into something people could use. Shaykh Eşref explained that beginners in spirituality get the Koran “back to front and upside down”: so, for someone in my position, it was best to study the masters’ teachings. This did not mean I should stop reading the Koran; but I should be cautious about any conclusions or insights I derived.

Shaykh Nazim is held not just to teach the Koran but to embody its teachings, and those of the Prophet: he is held to teach not just through his words but through his personality and behaviour. Dervishes told me to watch even the way he held a teacup. Shaykh Hisham pointed out that, in interpreting Shaykh Nazim’s words, it was important to note what he actually did.

Interpreting Shaykh Nazim’s advice therefore calls on people to use their intellect (one of Shaykh Nazim’s characteristic phrases was, “Use your mind!”). Once, for instance, he spoke of the importance of the turban. Just as I was envisaging wearing a turban in Surbiton, he asked, “Where are you living?” He also spoke sceptically of the power of universities to transmit knowledge, and to facilitate independence of mind; but his own family attended university. One dervish told me that people at the time had felt that this was a sign of greed on the part of Shaykh Nazim’s family:

⁴⁸⁴ Böttcher 2011.

⁴⁸⁵ Koran 20: 5.

“people aren’t stupid, you know”. I recalled an incident when Shaykh Nazim had spoken badly of the idea of doing a doctorate, and a professor of medicine had commented, “He wants you to complete your PhD. He just doesn’t want you to be attached to it. He used to call me ‘doctor’ until I grew out of it.”

However, the mind is used as part of an ongoing relationship with Shaykh Nazim and with the Prophet. This is, of course, different from the Wahhabi/ Salafi position that a personal teacher of spirituality is not necessary. Some dervishes remarked that such a perspective derived from egotism: a failure to recognise one’s own limitations, and the abilities of others. They pointed out that even the Prophet had a teacher, in the Archangel Gabriel. One remarked that, in the time of the Prophet, the hypocrites among his followers had found it difficult to ask him for help: Wahhabis, as a whole, suffered from the same disease.

Dervishes were, on the whole, only too happy to show their affection and respect to Shaykh Nazim. They would rush up to him and kiss his hand as he walked; when he was still, some even kissed his feet. When he emerged from his house in Lefke, the crowd waiting for him typically broke into song. To dervishes, it was entirely reasonable to honour a man whose holiness, some remarked, even animals recognised. Some non-dervishes found the behaviour troubling and jarring. In a garage in Bermondsey, a non-dervish started expressing his dislike of “99 percent of shaykhs”:

Non-dervish taxi driver: ...And people bow down and kiss their feet!

Dervish taxi driver: Would you kiss your mother’s feet?

Non-dervish: Well, if she was lying down, I would, I wouldn’t get down on the floor! (Laughs.) Of course I would.

Dervish: And your father? Would you kiss your father?

Non-dervish: (Nods.)

Dervish: And your children? Don’t you love them? Wouldn’t you do anything for them?

Non-dervish: Yes, of course.

Dervish: So when you see a teacher who is that beautiful, and you read his books and you see that everything makes sense...

Kissing Shaykh Nazim is not just envisaged as an expression of affection or respect, but as a blessing. On my last trip to Cyprus, I was given strict telephone instructions, from an experienced dervish friend who had talked to Shaykh Nazim's family, to kiss Shaykh Nazim's feet, "No matter what people say." An English dervish reported that he had had qualms about kissing Shaykh Nazim's hand, but had done so anyway, and had felt something like a perfume go up from Shaykh Nazim's hand into his brain. "Oh, so that's why you do it!" This time, he felt, Shaykh Nazim had let him feel the kind of process that usually happens anyway, undetected.

Shaykh Nazim's dergah

Shaykh Nazim's dergah, in Lefke, is a townhouse with an attached kitchen, prayer rooms, small canteen, toilet and shower block, and garden. In my years of visits, 2009–12, a new toilet block was built and the rear extension was augmented. I understood that this was typical of the history of the dergah, which had been much shabbier and less developed when Shaykh Nazim had bought the property.

Properly speaking, the dergah arguably includes the land, belonging to Shaykh Nazim, on which junior male dervishes spend their days, in guided exercises. This includes orange and olive orchards, farmland, stables, hen-houses, and, when I was there, a building site on a hill where a new *tekke* was being constructed.

Lefke is not, on the whole, a busy town. Some of its shops did not seem to see much business from one day to the next, and I wondered how the shopkeepers made a living. The main source of globalisation seems to be the dervishes: even the internet cafe I regularly used was run by a dervish from Iran. Against the backdrop of a fairly sleepy Cypriot town, the dervishes sometimes made a startling contrast, many of the men wearing baggy trousers, flowing shirts, and turbans, and the women dressed in similarly striking fashion. Native Cypriots have a wide range of skin colours, but

nothing that matches the wide range of ethnic, linguistic, and cultural backgrounds of the dervishes. Some dervishes remarked that the dergah was like the League of Nations.

Dervishes certainly contributed to Lefke's economy. They went to cafes and kebab houses, rode in taxis, used the internet, bought provisions. They also worked in Shaykh Nazim's fields and orchards, which, after all, were in Lefke. Some dervishes brought with them drug, psychiatric, or personality problems: I heard that dervishes were blamed for bringing drugs to Lefke; and one dervish I knew had been a prodigious consumer of cannabis on a long-term stay in the dergah. The dergah works partly as an asylum. While I was there, one dervish was clearly psychotic and disturbed;⁴⁸⁶ another left behind an empty methadone packet; yet others seemed to have quite serious personality problems. One experienced dervish explained to me that the dergah was a microcosm of the world: through being there, a student was exposed to all kinds of experiences and mentalities. Others pointed out that people tended to come to the dergah when they were disturbed, or at their lowest ebb. On one of my flights to Cyprus, a woman was creating an extraordinary disturbance and seemed intoxicated. I later found out that she had a heroin problem and had come, with her husband, to visit Shaykh Nazim. A dervish asked her husband, "Do you think you should bring her when she's like this?" He answered, "When else should I bring her? This is when she needs his help the most."

The divide between the dervish community and the rest of Lefke can seem quite stark: over a distance of about half a mile, from the dergah to the town centre, the visitor sees dervishes in abundance; elsewhere in town, they almost might not exist. The distribution of dervishes seems to reflect their priorities: they have come to see Shaykh Nazim, they must have supplies, and many of them like to eat out. Actually, Shaykh Nazim provides food in his dergah, and visitors can live entirely off that: but others feel the need to eat more, or hanker after different foods. When I was there, dervishes' love of kebabs was a standing joke.

⁴⁸⁶ This is **not** the dervish mentioned in Chapter 6.4.

By the time I did my fieldwork, visitors to Lefke did not get the chance to spend much time with Shaykh Nazim. He was frail and spent much of his time indoors. He emerged every week, for the Friday congregational prayer (*Jum'ā*), and every afternoon, to be driven around the area. When he was outside his house, people crowded around for his blessing. People also sought an audience with him while they were in Lefke. Generally, he saw them just before they left, after they had had a chance to absorb, and develop through, the rest of the teaching. Not everybody did get to see him, and emotions could run quite high. At the end of my first stay in Lefke, my guide and I, and a French dervish whom we had befriended while waiting, were turned away by the man at the door, and told Shaykh Nazim could not see any more people that evening. My guide, an experienced dervish of great compassion and determination, led us in an intense prayer. We must have been standing there for around a minute when the same assistant called us in.

Shaykh Nazim's live-in assistants were a longstanding feature of the dergah, as were several members of his family. His daughter Rukiye acted as a teacher for women visitors, and led zikrs for them. Women were, in any case, allowed to spend the day in Shaykh Nazim's house, which had a spacious courtyard on the ground floor. Some women helped with the housework, in particular with food preparation, but I understood that this was not compulsory. Visiting men occupied the prayer rooms and the canteen, but were not allowed into the main part of the house, unless they were doing an errand or seeing Shaykh Nazim. The work days of the young men were mostly spent on the land, although this was not compulsory.

Many male dervishes stayed in the dergah. Some brought sleeping bags of their own, but, by 2012, so many sleeping bags had been donated that a dervish did not necessarily need to bring one. For complete immersion in the life of the Order, the dergah was the best place to stay. It was also held to be a blessed place. And it was free of charge. The floors, being carpeted, were not too uncomfortable.

Other male dervishes, and female dervishes, stayed in guesthouses. Some guesthouses were run by dervishes. I heard that Shaykh Nazim had advised dervishes to stay in these guesthouses, where his

influence could more easily reach them than in the local hotel. I stayed in a guesthouse on my last visit to Lefke, and found the conditions rather worrisome: two out of three toilets were out of order, and the other tended to flood; the gas cooker had an extra flame created by a hole in the middle, although I could not smell a gas leak.

Dervishes can spend more or less all their time in the dergah or on work parties, as I did on all but my last field trip. The rules in the dergah are of course relatively strict: long sleeves, no smoking, no alcohol or drugs. Dervishes are also supposed to be courteous and considerate, and many are, although in practice this depends on the individuals involved and the relationships between them. My 44-day stay in Lefke incorporated the end of Jumada 'l-Awwal, the fifth month of the Islamic calendar, the whole of Jumada 'l-Thani, and the first 7 days of Rajab, the seventh month and a month considered holy. As Rajab approached, the dergah was met by what I described at the time as a “wave of saints”: venerable dervishes, some or most of whom were from Syria. One of these dervishes was later described by Shaykh Hisham as a *quṭb*, one of the holiest contemporary saints; the dervish acting as a junior and assistant to the “saints” was himself, I later inferred, a deputy in the Order.

Some dervishes lived permanently in or around the dergah. Some had stalls or shops, in and around the dergah, selling goods of special interest to dervishes: traditional clothing; prayer equipment such as rosaries and mats; books and videos; objects that had been blessed by Shaykh Nazim; and foods considered characteristic of Cyprus and possibly blessed, such as olive oil and dates (I was warned that not all of the olive oil was necessarily from olives). Yet others found in the dergah a kind of peace and asylum. A brilliant healer who had been taking medication for serious mental illness (of which I saw no clinical features) told me that he intended to stay in the dergah “until Armageddon”; on my last visit, he was not there, and I was told he now lived with his family. Shaykh Nazim’s representative in the dergah, in the intuition of some dervishes, was his grandson, a teenager with autism. On occasion, he was obviously bearing messages from his grandfather, as when he gave me a blue guitar and told me to “play it as long as you like” (I had been wondering

about the role of music in my life); or when he instructed me to wake the other dervishes for pre-dawn prayers and tell them to fast that day. In general, he seemed to have something of his grandfather's insight and authority, and, despite his autism, was adept at communication.

A regular visitor to the dergah was a young man with a learning disability. On my last visit, we bumped into each other and started walking and talking:

Him: Are you married?

Me: [Embarrassed, because Shaykh Nazim advised me years ago to get married, and even drew my attention to two or three brilliant girls:] No.

Him: Why not? It is good to get married. You can be with a woman and fucky-fuck. Why you not be with a woman and fucky-fuck?

Me: [Several unconvincing rationales]

Him: [Sounding just like Shaykh Nazim:] Huh?

Me: [Exhaling deeply:] Because I am stupid!

Him: [Authoritatively:] Good! [Facial expression and pause as though to say: now you have started to learn something.]

The dialogue had, strangely, undone all my rationales for not getting married; and, in general, shown me how I tended to weave complicated explanations for avoiding the obvious. The young man's father, who was with us, was apologetic at the use of coarse language: but the young man was forcing me, I felt, to confront my animal nature, suppression of which had caused much harm to myself and others.

Other residents of, or regular visitors to, the dergah were the cats. Shaykh Nazim was especially fond of cats. The Prophet, also, had been fond of cats, and one of his close followers, who had transmitted more hadiths than anyone else, had been known as Abu Hurayra, "father of the kitten", for his love of cats. But, I was told, the cats in the dergah were not necessarily merely cats. An experienced dervish told me that some of the cats were jinns in cat form. If they were jinns,

however, they were good ones: only good jinns hung around the dergah. Bad ones could not bear to enter.

The community in and around the dergah formed a kind of teaching network. Everybody, good or evil, enlightened or mindless, was said to be in some way a representative of Shaykh Nazim: and a dervish learnt by interacting with or observing them. The key to successful interaction was *adab*, and also the affection that springs between people who share some familiarity. Such effects might be observed away from the dergah, but were felt to be especially heightened there, as though the dergah provided an intense course in self-discovery.

Shaykh Hisham taught people to make their devotions with the intention of being in the dergah, even if they could not physically be there. The prayer he recommended for this purpose is in Appendix 3.

Rābiṭa and murāqaba

It was widely understood in the Order that love of the Shaykh led to love of the Prophet, which led to love of God. Shaykh Hisham taught that beyond love came presence: being in the spiritual presence of the Shaykh led to the Prophet, and the Prophet led to God. Beyond presence came annihilation (*fanāʿ*),⁴⁸⁷ which proceeded in the same stages. Shaykh Hisham said that love, presence, and annihilation were reached through Sufi meditation, *murāqaba*, a discipline in which the dervish focuses on the Shaykh and builds a spiritual connection with him.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁷ I was surprised at Rodrigues' report (2018) that an "outside of the body" experience at the end of the *ḥaḍra* was described as *fanāʿ* with Allah: (1) I had understood *fanāʿ* to be a lasting relationship, not a temporary experience; (2) I had understood *fanāʿ* with God to be reached via *fanāʿ* with the Shaykh and with the Prophet. I did not come across similar ideas when doing the *ḥaḍra* in all-male groups in Cyprus. It is possible that Rodrigues is recording a local use and understanding, rather than one widespread in the order.

⁴⁸⁸ In Mirahmadi and Mirahmadi (2005).

Murāqaba, as a regular discipline to be done sitting in silence, was “not for beginners”.⁴⁸⁹ However, all dervishes were encouraged to build a spiritual connection with the Shaykh and to focus on him. Dervishes talked of a “heart-to-heart” connection or, more often, of *rābiṭa*. Shaykh Nazim taught that *rābiṭa* is the bond with the Sufi master.⁴⁹⁰ However, dervishes generally used *rābiṭa* in the sense identified by Michel Chodkiewicz (1990: 64): “the orientation of the heart of the disciple towards the master”.

Many followers of Shaykh Nazim aim to be constantly in his spiritual presence. Shaykh Nazim has compared the process to tuning into a radio station. Dervishes sometimes use photographs as prompts, to help them imagine what Shaykh Nazim would do, or connect with his spirit. For some dervishes, all actions are a form of *rābiṭa*: a way of relating to their Shaykh. This is, implicitly, a way of connecting to the Prophet, but the Shaykh is seen as the gateway to the Prophet and as his representative. One dervish, through his association with a Sufi from another order, had become accustomed to trying to connect directly with the Prophet: he received a message from Shaykh Nazim, “Imagine me at the Prophet’s right hand.”

Through the process of *rābiṭa* (in the sense that dervishes generally use the word), people are expected to receive inspirations from Shaykh Nazim, which are expected to become stronger and more reliable as the connection becomes stronger and as the soul is purified. Eventually, people are said to take on the attributes of the shaykh. Some dervishes, as they get older, start to resemble Shaykh Nazim even physically, which was described to me as a sign of a good connection. But people can also let imagination take over, and mistake egoistic impulses for intuitions. Shaykh Hisham said, “Some people say, Shaykh told me this, Shaykh told me that. People talk, they give talks, and they claim their hearts are in contact with Mawlana [Shaykh Nazim]. I am sorry to say this, but it’s [generally] rubbish.”

⁴⁸⁹ Shaykh Nazim and Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, in Mirahmadi and Mirahmadi (2005).

⁴⁹⁰ In Mirahmadi and Mirahmadi (2005).

Dervishes sought, at times of stress or trial, to intensify the spiritual connection with Shaykh Nazim. This was signified by asking him, in his physical absence, for *madad*, “help”.

Dreams

The Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters are understood to communicate with their followers in dreams, and many followers report seeing them, or other holy people (the Prophet Muhammad, Christ, the holy companions of the Prophet) in their dreams. To see a holy person in a dream is said to be a very good sign, as it means your spirit is linked to them and you will be together on the Day of Judgement. In dreams, the masters typically give personal instruction or inspiration.

Dreams that do not feature the masters can also be experienced as meaningful, although they may come from the ego or even from the Devil. Doing *wuḍūʿ*, ablutions (washing, at minimum, the hands, face, forearms, forehead, and feet) before going to sleep is said to reduce the chances of a misleading dream. Some dervishes seek the advice of their masters to interpret dreams: the dream-interpretation section on *eshaykh.com*, a Naqshbandi-Haqqani website, is the most popular part of the site, with thousands of anonymised questions and replies; and dervishes can search for dream interpretations according to theme. In general, however, dreams are private. One dervish, who had been extremely kind to me in Lefke, told me of a dream in which Shaykh Nazim took him by the hand in an ascent towards the heavens; but he gave me to understand that on no account should I tell anyone else of the dream.

Electronic media

So far as I know, Shaykh Nazim did not himself use a computer. But his talks were often video-recorded and circulated: initially on video cassette, then on DVD. Websites, in particular *Sufilive.com*, archived these talks. From 2009, he gave a daily talk that was broadcast live, and then archived, on *Saltanat.org*. In addition, the talks were live-broadcast into the dergah’s prayer room, on an old television, and into the “Naqshbandi cafe”, a short walk into town from the dergah.

These talks were usually after the mid-afternoon prayers. Dervishes staying in the dergah would typically come back from work around that time. Others made a point of being in the dergah or the cafe for the talks (this was just before wi-fi and smartphones became commonplace).

The internet broadcasts were, of course, intended mainly for people away from the dergah. Some dervishes emphasised the importance of watching them live, if possible, since then the *tajalli*, the manifestation, would be greater. Inasmuch as I grasped this concept at all, it seemed that, as with prayer times, the talk had a spiritual energy and relevance that would be more powerful if experienced at the time it was given.

Reading transcripts of Shaykh Nazim's talks

Shaykh Nazim only wrote one book in his life: *Her Müslümanın Bilmesi Gerekin: Din Dersleri* was published in 1958, in Turkish. It is a concise guide to the basics of Islamic belief and practice, and was written because, with the change in the Turkish alphabet from Arabic to Latin characters, Ottoman-era sources were becoming inaccessible to Turkish readers.⁴⁹¹ A second edition was issued in 2010, and an English translation, *To Be a Muslim*, in 2016.

However, many of his talks were transcribed. This practice goes back at least as far as 1980. Between 1980 and 1987, several books of talks were produced, in a series known as *Mercy Oceans*. From 1987 to 1998, Thyra (later Zero) Quensel, a Swedish woman who worked as Shaykh Nazim's secretary and driver, compiled several books. Since 2002, dervishes directed by Shaykh Hisham have produced many books of Shaykh Nazim's talks. Other dervishes, at various times, also produced books of his talks.

Shaykh Nazim was said never to give scripted talks. Instead, he acted as a kind of amanuensis for his masters, expressing what he felt they wanted to say.⁴⁹² Some books of his talks do not just

⁴⁹¹ Shaykh Mehmet Adil's introduction to Shaykh Nazim, *TBM*, 2016.

⁴⁹² On a visit to Indonesia in 2001, Shaykh Nazim claimed to be speaking on behalf of Abah Anom (Ahmad Sohibulwafa), a local Sufi shaykh who was present but in poor physical condition. "I receive this message from his

contain set-piece talks, but fragments of dialogue or advice: since he was said to be always in a state of connection with his masters, every word of his was considered to be valuable.

The books only represent a very small proportion of what Shaykh Nazim said, even as a public speaker, from 1980. Their contents naturally reflect the perceived interests of the community at the time, and in particular the concerns of the editors. Zero Quensel assured me that she was meticulous in transcription, and kept cassette tapes of everything she had transcribed.

Dervishes tended in particular to be fond of the *Mercy Oceans* series, and above all of *Mercy Oceans, Book 2*, which was, as Stjernholm notes (2011), sometimes recommended as a book for beginners in the Order. The *Liberating the Soul* series (2002–07) consisted largely of a reissuing, by US dervishes linked to Shaykh Hisham, of *Mercy Oceans* texts.

The talks broadcast on *Saltanat.com* and *Sufilive.org* were transcribed, translated into various languages, and archived on the websites. Various other websites, notably *Sufismus-online.de*, also contain transcripts of talks.

The free-to-view video recordings on the internet seemed to overshadow the books of Shaykh Nazim's talks. However, many dervishes still regarded the books as important study tools. When I told him that I was studying Sufi healing, a dervish highly regarded as a healer responded:

It is the sort of thing where you can study a great deal, and advance only an inch. I would recommend to you, read the books of Shaykh Nazim. As many as you can. Get your hands on them. Don't just read them, digest. You never know what healing will be opened up for you by that.

Being with masters other than Shaykh Nazim

By the time he essentially stopped travelling, in 2001, Shaykh Nazim had deputies in many countries. Even in places where he had not actually appointed a deputy, people were given

heart. And do not say that Shaykh Nazim is speaking, for it is Ahmad Sohibulwafa speaking through me, for I would personally be embarrassed to appear before you all. I shall therefore form my words based on what is taken from his heart." (Laffan 2006: 110)

permission or instruction by him to lead group zikrs: which, in effect, established and anchored the Naqshbandi-Haqqani community in that area. As the years passed, the order was increasingly held together by electronic communication. The website *eshaykh.com* allowed dervishes to consult senior dervishes, including masters of *fiqh* and Sufi masters, about personal problems.

Shaykh Nazim's most visible deputies were the Kabbani brothers, Shaykh Hisham and Shaykh Adnan. I heard more than once that Shaykh Hisham had responsibility for "the West" and Shaykh Adnan for "the East", but the distinction was not so clear-cut.⁴⁹³ For instance, Shaykh Hisham made high-profile visits to Indonesia, Malaysia, and Brunei; and Shaykh Adnan had students in Spain and South Africa. Shaykh Hisham was, however, far more prominent than Shaykh Adnan in Britain and the USA.

Several prominent deputies lived in Germany, including Shaykh Jamaluddin, Shaykh Hassan Dyck (who lived in western Germany, but also played a mentoring role in England's West Country), and Shaykh Eşref, who was based in Berlin and in "Sufiland", near Lake Constance. Unlike Shaykhs Jamaluddin and Hassan, Shaykh Eşref is of Turkish ancestry. Like Shaykh Nazim, he gave inspired talks, only the master he tried to connect his heart to was Shaykh Nazim. Sometimes, while speaking in German, he broke into Turkish. An interpreter was on hand to translate. German dervishes told me that, although this might give the impression that Shaykh Eşref's German was not first-rate, he was in fact skilled at wordplay.

Although I speak little German and less Turkish, an example of this wordplay became evident at the end of a talk in Berlin. Shaykh Eşref told the audience, if you want to be with the masters, "Move your *arsch!*" *Arsch* is German for arse, and was translated for me, amid laughter, as "backside". Someone turned around and said, "He means, *move* [fingers mime purposeful walking]:

⁴⁹³ Nugroho (2015) ranks Shaykh Hisham as an *Interkontinentalvertreter*, higher than Shaykh Adnan (a mere *Interregionalvertreter*); however, this was not at all the perception among the dervishes I spoke to. There is a rough correlation between extent of geographical and spiritual responsibility, but I did not come across anything as clear-cut as Nugroho's classification of *Interkontinentalvertreter*, *Interregionalvertreter*, *Regionalvertreter*, and *lokale Vertreter*.

march.” And indeed, in modern Turkish, *arş* means “military march”. But in Ottoman Turkish, and in Arabic, *‘arsh* means “throne”. “Move your throne” is a metaphor that requires little comment; but it may be relevant that, in the Koran, the Queen of Sheba is reconciled to King Solomon after seeing that her throne has been moved.⁴⁹⁴

In Britain, some dervishes were highly respected and well known, including the legendary “Green Shaykh”, a Palestinian who lived in east London before moving to Wales; and Zero Quensel, who led the community in Glastonbury, with help from Michael Rose, a Jewish Londoner. But Britain did not have obvious deputies, with clear-cut roles, in the same way that Germany did. An English dervish reflected that this reflected the character of the dervishes: “The Germans are sheep and we’re goats”.

I also heard rumours about holy people who kept a low profile. “Hidden saints” were certainly an accepted reality in Naqshbandi-Haqqani thought. Some saints could be more effective if not publicly identified; and it did not always help people to know of their own saintliness. I was introduced to a German dervish whose prayers, I was told, was always answered: which, I suppose, made him a saint; and he had no readily apparent formal role in the order. To the outward eye, he was a scruffy, likeable aristocrat with understated poise. I also heard of a saintly woman living in England’s Home Counties, but never got to meet her before she passed away.

In general, among the Naqshbandi-Haqqani dervishes, Shaykh Nazim’s deputies were non-controversial characters. The exception was Shaykh Hisham, to whom responses were polarised. Many dervishes clearly loved and admired him. The response when Shaykh Hisham addressed a crowd resembled, to some extent, that accorded to Shaykh Nazim himself. But I heard, and read, several dervishes accusing him of inconsiderate behaviour and factual exaggeration; he had long-running disputes with several dervishes in ostensibly quite senior positions. I heard that, for several years, he was not welcomed as a speaker to Peckham Mosque. He told the trustees at another

⁴⁹⁴ Koran, Chapter 27.

mosque to stop collecting cash during the Friday prayer, explaining that it interfered with the quality of the prayer, and the community would do better if people put their minds to fundraising in other ways. He also urged the trustees not to rent space to an Islamic school whose theology was very much at odds with the Naqshbandi-Haqqani view. But nothing changed. I heard one trustee mutter that it was all very well for Shaykh Hisham to say what he thought, but he didn't have to pay the running costs.

Although some, arguably most, of Shaykh Nazim's deputies are evidently charismatic characters who command respect and obedience, by their own account their charisma is not theirs. It comes from Shaykh Nazim, who, in turn, is given charisma by his masters, principally the Prophet. The deputies succeed as masters because they maintain a connection with Shaykh Nazim. Ismail Shirwani, one of Khalid Baghdadi's deputies, is said to have committed a grave error, later repented for, when he asked dervishes to make *rābiṭa* with him, while Khalid was still alive.⁴⁹⁵ Some dervishes gossiped that Shaykh Hisham had gone too far, when his picture was put next to Shaykh Nazim's on various webpages. However, Shaykh Hisham himself urged people not to make *rābiṭa* with him, and drew attention to Ismail Shirwani's error.

I saw a video, admittedly circulated by supporters of Shaykh Hisham, in which a clearly upset Shaykh Hisham was telling Shaykh Nazim of some of the hostility he faced. A kindly and amused Shaykh Nazim responded, "Shaykh Hisham... Shaykh Hisham! *Khurru 'alayh!*" ("Shit on them!": a description of the condition of the intellects of the people opposing Shaykh Hisham, rather than an instruction.)

More than any other deputy, Shaykh Hisham has acted as a gateway to Shaykh Nazim through his public appearances and publications. His own talks, collected in book form, act as commentaries on Shaykh Nazim's teachings; he has also written textbooks intended to elucidate Naqshbandi

⁴⁹⁵ Chodkiewicz 1990.

teachings and practice. Especially once Shaykh Nazim largely stopped travelling, Shaykh Hisham became, in many circumstances, the public face of the Order.

In contrast to Shaykhs Hisham and Adnan, Shaykh Nazim's sons kept a low profile. Shaykh Mehmet worked on his father's land in Lefke; ran a stationery shop in Tripoli, Lebanon (with initial financial help from the Kabbani family);⁴⁹⁶ and worked as a jeweller. Shaykh Bahauddin worked in a textile shop owned by the Kabbani family,⁴⁹⁷ before making a living as a banker. In around 2010, Shaykhs Mehmet and Bahauddin became public figures in the Order. During my 44-day stay in Lefke, both Shaykh Hisham and Shaykh Mehmet visited the dergah. Shaykh Mehmet took a very much more hands-on role than did Shaykh Hisham, and, despite his mild manner and laconic ways, exerted considerable authority: not merely through his position as Shaykh Nazim's son, but through his charisma and personality. A dervish notable for his quarrelsome behaviour commented that Shaykh Nazim was too gentle (one of only two instances I heard someone in the Order criticise Shaykh Nazim); Shaykh Mehmet had imposed necessary order.

Women, in general, could be identified as holy, but not as deputies of Shaykh Nazim: a distinction that typified the tendency of the Order towards distinct gender roles. I understood that, in her lifetime, Hajjah Amina had been held in very high regard by the generality of dervishes. She was often called Hajjah Anne: *Anne* is Turkish for mother, which in some ways represented her symbolic role in the organisation; as well as being, of course, a name familiar to European dervishes. She wrote several books, specialising in histories that were said to be compiled from Ottoman texts. Her most popular book among the dervishes was her biography of the Prophet Muhammad (1999, revised 2002); but she had also written accounts of the lives and missions of earlier prophets.⁴⁹⁸ She led zikrs for, and taught, women.

⁴⁹⁶ Habibis 1985.

⁴⁹⁷ Habibis 1985.

⁴⁹⁸ *Lore of Light*, 1993–95 and 2008–09.

Her older daughter, Hajjah Nazihe, had a similar role, as the wife of a travelling Sufi master. Like her mother, and her younger sister Rukiye, she led zikrs and taught women. She wrote a cookbook emphasising Naqshbandi-Haqqani ideas about healthy and traditional eating, and containing memories of her childhood.⁴⁹⁹

As *Sultānu 'l-Awliyā'*, Shaykh Nazim was held to be the head of all living saints, not just those who are identified as Naqshbandi-Haqqani. Some members of other orders strongly disagreed with this assessment. Their criticisms tended to be couched in theological terms, although they could also be understood in terms of local rivalries. I was aware of four longstanding poor relationships between the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order and other Sufi orders, which were as follows:

1. *Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi branches.* Draper reports that Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi followers of Zindapir in Birmingham wrote “literature against Shaikh Nazim”, although the deputy in charge of the group, Sufi Abdullah, appeared to have made no personal criticism of Shaykh Nazim.⁵⁰⁰ Draper observed that a prominent member of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi group had previously been a follower of Shaykh Nazim, creating a sense of rivalry and bad feeling. I also met two Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi dervishes from London who regarded Shaykh Nazim as a dangerous pretender and, reportedly, carried leaflets in their shop to warn people about him. I do not know which branch of the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi order they followed, but suspect they may also have been followers of Zindapir.
2. *Naqshbandi Sufis in Dagestan.* Galina Yemelianova (2003) reported on a longstanding debate, in Dagestan, on the spiritual validity of the Naqshbandi shaykhs of Dagestan. This debate was influenced by several factors. (i) Shaykh Sharafuddin, 38th on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain, was widely recognised as the leader of the Naqshbandi order in Dagestan, until the Caucasian war of 1877–78 triggered his migration to Turkey. (ii)

⁴⁹⁹ *Secrets of heavenly food*, 2009.

⁵⁰⁰ Draper 2002: 136.

Soviet rule drove Naqshbandi activity underground. (iii) Under Soviet rule, Naqshbandis infiltrated “all major political and power structures” in Dagestan. Although such activity is thought to have protected people from persecution, leaders who had worked for the Soviet state and, in particular, the KGB were stigmatised as collaborators in the era of *perestroika*. (iv) Islam in Dagestan has remained politicised in the post-Soviet era, in particular with the state’s concern to combat Wahhabi influence. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, Naqshbandi shaykhs without official backing were portrayed as false shaykhs. This included Shaykh Nazim, who was accused of forging his *silsila* and distorting Sufi teaching for his own political ends. However, some Dagestani Naqshbandis welcomed Shaykh Nazim, regarding him as a representative of the global Naqshbandi tradition and, in particular, of the *silsila* of Shaykh Sharafuddin.

3. *The Ahabash*. Members of the Association of Islamic Charitable Projects (AICP), based in Lebanon, are also known as the Ahabash, Abyssinians, in honour of Abdullah of Harar, who led the AICP from 1983 to his death in 2008. Their criticisms of Shaykh Nazim as “negating Islam” are on their website, *aicp.org*, and are based on tendentious and extensive interpretations of selected statements from the *Mercy Oceans* books. The Ahabash have had disputes with many other groups and scholars, particularly in the Levant.⁵⁰¹ The Naqshbandi-Haqqani website *sunnah.org* quotes what it claims are *fatwās* against the Ahabash from a range of scholars, including Ali Gomaa, the Mufti of Egypt (*fatwā* dated 1999), and Ahmad Umar Hashim, the president of Al-Azhar University (2001).
4. *The Murabitun*. Like the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, the Murabitun have been notable for attracting British-born converts to Islam.⁵⁰² Shaykh Abdalqadir invited Shaykh Nazim to his centre and, a Naqshbandi-Haqqani dervish told me, several of Abdalqadir’s followers “looked at Shaykh Nazim and decided to follow him instead”. At any rate, relations

⁵⁰¹ Kabha and Ehrlich 2006; Sirriyeh 1999.

⁵⁰² Köse 1996.

rapidly deteriorated.⁵⁰³ A polemical exchange between Gibril Haddad, a student of Shaykh Nazim who is also a scholar of Islam, and Umar Vadillo, a deputy of Shaykh Abdalqadir, is recorded on the website *livingislam.org*, which seems to be linked to Haddad.

In contrast, many Sufis from other orders seemed to accept Shaykh Nazim as a master. In his spiritual memoir, Muhyiddeen Shakoor describes how he became the student of a Rifa'i shaykh, before also becoming a student of Shaykh Nazim: which, the Rifa'i shaykh informed him, was a "promotion".⁵⁰⁴ In 2012, Habib Ali and Habib Omar, the most prominent teachers in the Ba Alawi Sufi order, pledged allegiance to Shaykh Nazim. I found that Shaykh Nazim was accepted as a master by shaykhs in other branches of the Naqshbandi order; in the Tijani and Darqawi orders; and reportedly in the Budshishi and Mevlevi orders, too.⁵⁰⁵ One of London's best-known Sufi shaykhs, a Sudanese man trained in the Sammani order, was reportedly sent to England in the 1970s by his teacher, who told him that the leading Sufi of the age was in London and was called Shaykh Nazim. This does not mean, of course, that every teacher in these orders acknowledged Shaykh Nazim as a master, let alone their master: but it means that he collaborated with, and to some extent was represented by, people formally outside the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order.

Although several masters in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order have been publicly identified, and are treated reverently by their followers, the transmission of *baraka* from Shaykh Nazim is not held to be restricted to the masters. People who have just come from Lefke are anticipated to bear blessings and messages. Within a community, relationships develop in which dervishes note each other's ability to transmit knowledge and good character: the model often being one of friendship rather than status. Dervishes offer each other advice, as in this little exchange:

Senior dervish: What are you doing these days? You are not getting married, you are not studying, you are not working. What are you doing with yourself?

⁵⁰³ Böttcher 2011.

⁵⁰⁴ Shakoor 1988: 163–73.

⁵⁰⁵ Haenni and Voix 2007; Salinas 2015.

Younger dervish: [Slightly tongue-in-cheek:] I'm doing nothing. I'm a good-for-nothing.

Senior dervish: You know, when you are nothing, you can be everything.

Younger dervish: [Still partly joking, but with genuine respect, kisses the older man's hand. Turns to me:] Did you hear that? Shaykh Nazim came into him when he said that!

Senior dervish: What did Shaykh Nazim always say? Don't look at the one who is speaking, look at the One behind the one who is speaking.

I have heard that each person who has been with Shaykh Nazim carries something from him, and acts as part of his teaching mechanism. This may be especially the case with the apparently (or officially) crazy ones.

Occasionally, when sitting with a dervish, I would encounter an eerie echo of something Shaykh Nazim had said to me, and be primed for further teaching. Such an instance occurred when a dervish asked me if I could do a psychiatric report (I had to explain that, regrettably, I was no longer licensed to practise), and then asked my name, showing incredulity exactly as Shaykh Nazim had when I gave him the answer. The following (edited) dialogue then ensued:

First dervish: Have you met—what's your name?

Me: Athar.

He's new here. Come a few times.

Second, senior dervish: What do you mean, new? He's been coming here for years.

Nah, he's new—[a]in['t] he?

Me: I've been coming here for 20 years.

And what have you learnt in all that time?

Me [laughing]: You said it!

Nothing. [Friendly and warm:] You [i.e. people in general] come here, and you're the same piece of shit that you were 20 years ago. When you came to the Shaykh, you were innocent [facial expression shows innocence and awe]. Then you start to claim things. You come here a long time, and you start to [hand gestures to indicate rising], and your ego says, I did that. Did he? Well, Shaytan said the same thing, and look what happened to him. Don't claim anything. Be like you were when you first met the Shaykh, and he gave you a little something. Happiness, or Paradise, or whatever.

Being in holy places

Weismann (2014), discussing the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, argues that postmodern globalisation has reduced the power of myths associated with holy places. In fact, arguably the reverse is true. Not only do Naqshbandi-Haqqanis continue to revere and use traditional holy places: new ones are always being revealed, to create a global psychogeography of holiness and refuge.

Rather as masters are said to be holy because of their contact with Shaykh Nazim—who, in turn, is held to be holy through his contact with his masters, and ultimately with the Prophet—places are identified as holy by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis because of their associations with holy people, and in particular with Naqshbandi masters.

Lefke, where Shaykh Nazim lives, is held to be blessed, as is the Hala Sultan *tekke*, where he grew up. Shaykh Nazim himself described Hala Sultan's shrine as the holiest place in Cyprus: dervishes are encouraged, when visiting Shaykh Nazim, to land at Larnaca airport, and visit Hala Sultan en route. Others come via Istanbul, where they may visit the relics of the Prophet in Topkapı Palace.

Damascus is also prominent in the collective Naqshbandi-Haqqani imagination, but not merely through its connection with Shaykh Nazim. Selected parties of dervishes do stay in Shaykh Nazim's house, and regard it as a blessed place. However, the holiest site in the immediate neighbourhood is Grandshaykh Abdullah's mosque. When I went there, the atmosphere and quality of light reminded me of the Ka'ba in Mecca. I was later told that it had been built to the same dimensions; and that, on the Day of Judgement, it would be the site of the scales used to weigh people's deeds. In traditions documented by Gibril Haddad, Jabal Qasyun, the mountain on which Grandshaykh Abdullah's mosque sits, is also the site of Adam's grave, and a *maqām* (spiritual home) of Christ and his mother.⁵⁰⁶

⁵⁰⁶ Gibril Haddad, *ESP*, 2016.

Near the peak of Jabal Qasyun is the Cave of Blood, said to be the place where Cain killed Abel. Senior dervishes told me that the cave had been about to swallow Cain, in horror, but was stopped from doing so by the Archangel Gabriel. I was shown the outlines of teeth and a tongue. I was also told that the cave weeps to this day at the crime. Water dripped from the ceiling; dervishes told me it had no known geological source. Spontaneously, I tasted it. It was warm and, if I remember correctly, slightly salty.

Very near the Cave of Blood is a mosque where, it is said, the 40 holiest living saints, the *abdāl*, pray every night. 33 of the *abdāl* are said to be men, and seven women. They are not physically seen to travel there: one of the attributes of the high saints, according to Naqshbandi-Haqqani teachings, is the ability to travel in a “spiritual body”. Sometimes, the spiritual body can take a form of the physical body. Shaykh Nazim was reported, one year, to be in Lebanon and on Hajj at the same time; and this unexpected event was reported from Peckham:

Dervish 1: I never saw Shaykh Nazim...

Dervish 2: [Friend, interrupting:] Oh yes you did...

Dervish 1: I correct myself: Yes, I did. Every time I say I didn't, this brother here corrects me. It was about 2 years ago, when Shaykh Mehmet came here [at the time, Shaykh Nazim had not left Cyprus for several years]. I was sitting in the corner [indicates], next to this brother here, when I saw this man walking down the length of the mosque, taking very short steps. I looked at him, and I realised, it's Shaykh Nazim! Then I wasn't sure—I'd never seen him before—so I alerted this brother here, and he said, yes, it's Shaykh Nazim. He was taking very short steps.

Me: He did at that time. He was very old and sick...

Dervish 1: And he was dressed just like an ordinary man, in a cap: no turban. I think that's why people didn't recognise him: he was dressed just like an ordinary man. But it was him.

Dervish 2: [Had seen Shaykh Nazim on several other occasions, and nods in confirmation:] It was him.

Dervish 1: Then we followed him. We went out of the front door, where he'd been walking. But he was gone.

This ability of the saints is said to go back at least as far as Bayazid Bistami, who was reportedly spotted praying his Friday prayers in 12,000 mosques simultaneously.⁵⁰⁷

Naqshbandi-Haqqanis teach that the Prophet made his miraculous night-journey to Jerusalem, and ascent through the heavens to the Divine presence, in his physical body, not merely a spiritual body. A footprint of the Prophet, from that journey, is said to be preserved in Qadam, on the outskirts of Damascus.

Shrines visited by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis in Damascus include the graves of Sayyida Zaynab, a granddaughter of the Prophet; Bilal, his muezzin; Abu Hurayra; Abu 'l-Darda, a well-known disciple of the Prophet; Ibn Arabi; Emir Abdel Kader, who is buried next to Ibn Arabi; and Khalid Baghdadi. The prophet Ezekiel is said to be buried in Damascus, and John the Baptist's head is in the Umayyad Mosque, where Christ will descend at the start of his second coming.

Shām in general is held in high regard by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis.⁵⁰⁸ The term equates roughly with the Levant, but is sometimes used to refer specifically to Damascus. Shaykh Nazim reportedly intended to migrate to Damascus shortly before Christ's second coming; but the signs of his advent were never completely fulfilled. In the interim, migration to Damascus was framed by some dervishes as a privilege and a wish (before civil war broke out), since they could partake of its blessings. However, few actually moved; and Shaykh Nazim warned that migration to Damascus was difficult, and not for everyone.

Jerusalem plays a much less substantial role than Damascus in Naqshbandi-Haqqani discourse, although some dervishes do go on pilgrimage there, and Shaykh Nazim reported having been in seclusion in Jerusalem in 1948.⁵⁰⁹ Much more feted, and central to discourse, are the pilgrimages to Mecca and Medina, in particular the Hajj pilgrimage. The Hajj is not merely a time of potential spiritual transformation, but a meeting of the saints. The Naqshbandi-Haqqani dervish who took

⁵⁰⁷ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *SSSR*, 2006: 226.

⁵⁰⁸ Gibril Haddad has published a book of traditions on the excellence of Syro-Palestine (*ESP*, 2016).

⁵⁰⁹ Shaykh Nazim, *P O Light*, 1995.

me on Hajj warned that it was often very difficult; not so much because of the risk of political oppression, illness, or injury, but because the key to Hajj was not to lose your temper. If someone avoided getting angry on Hajj, their pilgrimage had a good chance of being accepted. Years later, a dervish who had just made Hajj for the second time commented to me,

Last time I went on Hajj, I was very bad. I pushed people. I lost my temper. I got into all sorts of trouble. Someone even gave me a slap. This time, by Allah's will, I held it all together. I didn't push no-one.

Shaykh Mehmet says, when you go on Hajj, don't push. That is very important.

For Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, Mecca, Medina, and the surrounding areas are full of holy places. Behind each holy place is a person. The spiritual body of the Prophet is said to be in the Ka'ba; to kiss its black stone is to pledge allegiance to the Prophet, via the *sulṭānu 'l-Awliyā'* of the day. Mount Hira is important because the Prophet received his first Koranic revelation there. Arafat, where the pilgrims gather to pray on the most important day of Hajj, is where Adam and Eve first met, after they had been exiled from Paradise. Jeddah, the port city nearest to the holy cities, is itself a special place, because Eve was buried there (even though her tomb was demolished by the Saudi state in 1928).

This longstanding Saudi policy of demolishing holy sites meets a great deal of criticism from Naqshbandi-Haqqanis. Shaykh Nazim, an experienced Hajj guide, found ludicrous the Saudi argument that the changes promoted safety. The Wahhabi argument that the demolitions prevented *shirk* cut little ice among Naqshbandi-Haqqanis: *shirk* was to obey your ego and go against God's command. Naqshbandi-Haqqanis attributed the destruction to Wahhabi hypocrisy and envy of the Prophet: just as Satan had refused to bow down to Adam, so the Wahhabis refused to respect the Prophet and his loved ones and supporters. A dervish remarked,

Junayd—please let me know if I've got the wrong person—he really wanted to see the Devil, because he wanted to have a word with him. And he prayed, and the Devil appeared. And he said, “Why didn't you bow down to Adam?” And the Devil said, “I only bow down to God.” And Junayd had to stop and think, his brain was turning.

Because the Devil is very conniving [sic] in his thinking. Then Junayd said, “Idiot! You respect God so much, why didn’t you do what he ordered you to do?” And the Devil disappeared.⁵¹⁰

The Wahhabi-Salafi perspective was described to me as one that has existed throughout Islamic history, even though the labels of “Wahhabi” and “Salafi” are quite recent. A few dervishes pointed out that, in the time of the Prophet, some people calling themselves Muslims had set themselves apart from the generality of the community, and the spiritual teachers in it. Hypocrites had even set up a separatist and militant mosque in Medina, the Masjid al-Dirar, which the Prophet had burnt down. The spiritual descendants of these separatists had become the Kharijites, who had declared all other Muslims to be non-believers, and had initiated a terrorist campaign that led to the assassination of Ali. The Wahhabi-Salafis were spiritual and, according to one or two dervishes, initially often the physical descendants of the Kharijites.

Just as the Levant, in Naqshbandi-Haqqani psychogeography, is associated with good, Najd, the east of the Arabian peninsula (extending as far north as southern Iraq), is associated with evil. Naqshbandi-Haqqanis say that it was the heartland of the Kharijites and, later, of the Wahhabis; Shaykh Hisham draws attention to hadiths that the “horn of Satan” and strife would issue from Najd.⁵¹¹ An experienced dervish said that, even before the days of Islam, Najd had been the home of the people of Ad (mentioned in the Koran), who were known for their cruelty, for enslaving other people, and for exploiting trade monopolies.⁵¹²

Elements of Hajj consisted of trying to contact holy people, despite the damage done to Mecca and Medina and restrictions on Sufi activity there. It was evident that Medina has many Sufis, some of whom are semi-public. I was surprised to be introduced to contemporary *aṣḥāb al-ṣuffah*, the “people of the bench”, to whom the etymology of *Ṣūfī* has been linked. I understood that certain

⁵¹⁰ This story is found, differently worded, in Fariduddin Attar’s (died c 1230) *Tadhkiratu l-Awliyā’* (*Memorial of the Saints*, Attar 1990)

⁵¹¹ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *AA*, 2003.

⁵¹² The character, behaviour, and demise of the people of Ad are narrated in Hajjah Amina, *Lore 1*, 2008.

people were still able to identify the graves of certain holy people in the demolished graveyard of Baqi (the graves of the Prophet's daughter, Fatima, and grandson, Hasan, being exceptionally important).

Like Damascus, which takes visitors from Cain and Abel to the Day of Judgement, Mecca embodies the beginning and the end of human time. The first house of prayer there, the *Bayt al-ma'mūr*, was supposedly built by Adam; the angel who had tried to prevent Adam eating from the forbidden tree was turned into a white stone, and built into the Ka'ba; the stone later turned black from people's sins, and is the one that, to this day, pilgrims seek to kiss. At the time of Noah's flood, Adam's house of worship was taken up to heaven, leaving only the Black Stone behind; but the Ka'ba was rebuilt by Abraham and Ishmael.⁵¹³ Abraham's footprint is very near the Ka'ba;⁵¹⁴ Hagar and Ishmael are buried near the Ka'ba, as are the prophets Hud and Salih, mentioned in the Koran but not the Bible.⁵¹⁵

The Ka'ba was rebuilt in the time of the Prophet, leaving the Abrahamic foundation stones intact: which was symbolically appropriate, given Muhammad's later claim to be re-establishing the religion of Abraham. Muhammad had not yet manifested as a prophet, but, on account of his trustworthiness and insight, was asked to lay the black stone in place.⁵¹⁶ The Ka'ba has been damaged since the Prophet's lifetime,⁵¹⁷ but will remain until it is finally demolished, an action that will trigger the end of life on earth.

⁵¹³ Hajjah Amina, *Lore 1*, 2008.

⁵¹⁴ Abraham's footprint has been moved from its original place beside the Ka'ba (Lings 2004: 36).

⁵¹⁵ Hud is said to have been the son of Abdallah, son of Tanuh, son of Ad, son of Uz, son of Aram, son of Shem (Hajjah Amina, *Lore 1*, 2008; al-Badawi 2006). Salih is said to have been a later descendant of Shem (Hajjah Amina, *Lore 1*, 2008).

⁵¹⁶ Lings 1991; Hajjah Amina, *Muhammad*, 2002.

⁵¹⁷ Abdallah ibn Zubayr, a son of one of the Prophet's most highly regarded companions, and a grandson of Abu Bakr, claimed the Caliphate in defiance of the Umayyad Empire. In AD 683, he claimed sanctuary in Mecca, which was, nonetheless, assaulted by Umayyad forces. During the assault, the Ka'ba caught fire, and had to be rebuilt. The Black Stone, which had been split by the fire into three pieces, was held together with a band of silver (Wensinck and Jomier 2012). In 930, the Black Stone was removed by Qaramita (Carmathians, an Ismaili sect) based in Najd; it was only returned in 951, split into seven pieces (Madelung 2012a; Glassé 1988).

Pilgrimage has been framed as a symbolic journey back in time;⁵¹⁸ but it could equally as well, in the light of Naqshbandi-Haqqani narratives, be framed as a journey forward in time, to the end of life on earth and the Last Judgement. In fact, Naqshbandi-Haqqani discourse does not strongly support either perspective. Pilgrimage is a *ziyāra*, a way of visiting holy people and letting them help to purify the soul. These holy people are very much alive: pilgrimage is not about before or after, but about now; and eternity.

Naqshbandi-Haqqani discourse emphasises the universal mission of those they visit. Dervishes were happy that the shrine of Hala Sultan was being restored with the help of the (Greek) Cypriot government, and attributed this to Shaykh Nazim's universal appeal. My Hajj guide pointed out that the birds that flew around the Ka'ba never defiled it, or its precincts. A fellow pilgrim reported seeing an eagle circle the Ka'ba seven times, anticlockwise, just as humans would. I was told that, when Shaykh Nazim visited Peckham, an eagle used to perch on the front of the building, and fly away when he left.

Peckham Mosque was said to be holy through its association with Shaykh Nazim. Similarly, when I commented on the remarkable atmosphere in the Tottenham dergah, I was told that this was because Shaykh Nazim had stayed there for 40 days, and, as a result, had left one of his spiritual bodies there. Peckham Mosque was also said to be a *maqām* of Grandshaykh Abdullah; as was the dergah at El Bolsón, in Patagonia.⁵¹⁹ In general, the celebrated Naqshbandi-Haqqani dergahs tend to be places in the countryside linked to organic farming, like the dergahs at El Bolsón and Fenton, Michigan, or converted places of Christian worship, like the former church in Peckham and priory in Tottenham. Shaykh Nazim preferred his dervishes to convert existing, disused places of worship, rather than build new ones. The old buildings were suitable for worship, and had the blessings of the prayers of those who came before. In fact, Shaykh Nazim once commented that his dervishes had failed to uphold the holiness left by the nuns of Tottenham.

⁵¹⁸ Eliade 2005; Lings 2004.

⁵¹⁹ Salinas 2015.

This ecumenical attitude was exemplified by Naqshbandi-Haqqani attitudes to England's other great holy place, Glastonbury. A dervish who had accompanied Shaykh Nazim to Glastonbury Abbey told me that the Shaykh had looked at a list of the Abbey's former abbots, and identified some of them as saints. The oral tradition that Christ spent part of his youth in Glastonbury⁵²⁰ is wholeheartedly endorsed by Shaykh Nazim. Shaykh Nazim also supports the local belief that "Christ himself... with his own hands", built the first place of prayer at what became Glastonbury Abbey.⁵²¹ Naqshbandi-Haqqanis also identified a local stone as having connections with Christ:

Shaykh Nazim told us that [the stone] was brought from Jerusalem by Khidr. That is all he would say. When Shaykh A⁵²² came here, he noticed that the impression in it looked like the foot of Abraham at Maqam Ibrahim [by the Ka'ba]. He went to the side, did two *rak'as* [cycles of prayer], and came back and said it was the footprint of Jesus. He then called Shaykh Nazim, who said this is true. Then Shaykh Bukhari—he was the descendant of the great scholar, Bukhari⁵²³—not long before he died he visited the stone, and he went into a trance. And he could see a ladder of light going through the stone all the way down through the earth to Jerusalem, and all the way up to the heavens.

Christ's family are said to have ongoing connections with Britain. I was in Glastonbury when a Malaysian dervish arrived with a message from Shaykh Nazim that England was a blessed land, because it had so many descendants of the Virgin Mary, through the children she had after Jesus.⁵²⁴

Draper (2002) noted that the Naqshbandi-Haqqani connection with Christian narratives contrasted with the approach of Budshishi dervishes, who tended to connect with the magical side of Glastonbury. However, Glastonbury is not venerated by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis as a Christian site, but as a holy place. Ultimately, all holiness is under the authority of the Prophet Muhammad;

⁵²⁰ Dobson 2009; Treharne 1967. Christ's stay in Britain is traditionally linked with his family's role in the tin trade.

⁵²¹ Treharne 1967: 4, 34; Dobson 2009.

⁵²² A prominent Naqshbandi-Haqqani dervish and imam, in Kenya and London.

⁵²³ This Shaykh Bukhari may well have been Abdul-Aziz al-Bukhari, a Naqshbandi shaykh of Jerusalem who was a follower of Shaykh Nazim. An opponent of radical Islamists, he died in suspicious circumstances at the age of 61 (Bram 2014).

⁵²⁴ George Jowett (1968) drew on ancient and medieval sources to make a case for this scenario, but his work has not met with widespread assent among academic historians.

Shaykh Nazim, as the *Sultānu 'l-Awliyā'*, can recognise holiness, converse with its bearers, and support and learn from them. Shaykh Nazim said that, when he was in Switzerland, he always made a point of visiting St Nicholas.

Shaykh Nazim also encouraged dervishes to visit the shrine of St Barnabas, near Famagusta in Cyprus. In the Acts of the Apostles, Barnabas and Paul sail to Cyprus to preach the word of God, but are eventually expelled. Traditionally, Barnabas is said to have returned to Cyprus, where he remained until he was stoned to death. To Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, however, he is also the author of a gospel that provides, better than the canonical gospels, a true account of Christ's mission. In the words of Shaykh Nazim,

Barnabas was for Jesus like Abu Bakr was for Muhammad, may peace be on them. He was the youngest, but the most important one of all the disciples, because Jesus Christ knew that only his gospel would mention the reality of Jesus Christ and of the coming prophet. All the others disappeared and his gospel is still alive until today and is declaring the unity of God and the prophecy of the last Seal of Prophets [Muhammad]...

When the archbishop of Cyprus dreamt about the tree under which St Barnabas was buried and then found him there with his gospel, he was very happy and brought the gospel straight to Constantinople, where the Pope was at that time. In exchange of that gospel, which the church did not want publicised, the Archbishop got an independent church for Cyprus. That was the beginning of the Orthodox Church. The original Gospel of Barnabas is in the library of the Vatican.⁵²⁵

The Gospel of Barnabas attracted “considerable interest among the learned” in the early 18th century.⁵²⁶ It was known in two manuscripts: one in Italian, one in Spanish. The Italian manuscript was acquired by “Mr [Johan Jacob] CRAMER, Counsellor to the King of *Prussia*”, from “the Library

⁵²⁵ Shaykh Nazim, *P O Light*, 1995: 93. Shaykh Nazim is referring to the discovery of Barnabas' grave by Archbishop Anthemios in AD 478. The text found on the saint's chest is usually said to be the Gospel of Matthew—not Barnabas. Lullus (2015) argues that *Matthew* had not been written at the time Barnabas was buried, and that the book discovered may have been the Gospel of *Matthias*—which may have been another name for Barnabas.

⁵²⁶ Ragg and Ragg 2012: x.

of a person of great name and authority” in Amsterdam.⁵²⁷ In 1713, Cramer gave the manuscript to Prince Eugène of Savoy; with the rest of Eugène’s library, it passed in 1738 to the Hofbibliothek (now the Austrian National Library) in Vienna.⁵²⁸

A Tunisian manuscript, written in Spanish and dated *c* 1634, refers to “the Gospel of Barnabas where one can find the light.”⁵²⁹ However, the existence of *Barnabas* in Spanish first came to widespread scholarly attention in 1734, through George Sale, the pioneering translator of the Koran, who had been lent a manuscript by a “Reverend Dr Holme, Rector of Hedley in Hampshire”.⁵³⁰ In 1784, a Spanish manuscript described as “ancient” was in the possession of a Reverend Dr Monkhouse of Queen’s College, Oxford.⁵³¹ Later, Monkhouse was thought to have presented the manuscript to Queen’s College library, but “all attempts to discover it” there have been unsuccessful.⁵³² An incomplete Spanish *Barnabas* surfaced in Sydney in 1976.⁵³³

Ssle’s English-language Koran commentary presented fragments of the Spanish text,⁵³⁴ and a translation of part of a chapter.⁵³⁵ Monkhouse was said to have “a translation of a considerable part of the work into literal English”:⁵³⁶ with his help, Dr Joseph White included translations of chapters 96–97 and 216–22 of *Barnabas* in the notes to his Divinity Lecture Sermons preached at the University of Oxford.⁵³⁷ In 1907, a full English translation of the Italian manuscript, by Lonsdale and Laura Ragg, was published.⁵³⁸ White is generally assumed to have used, directly or indirectly,

⁵²⁷ Toland 2012: 14–15; Katz 2004: 138. The “person of great name and authority” may have been the Italian historian Gregorio Leti (Sox 1984).

⁵²⁸ Ragg and Ragg 2012.

⁵²⁹ Joosten 2010.

⁵³⁰ Sale, no date: “To the reader,” page ix.

⁵³¹ White 2015: xli.

⁵³² Ragg and Ragg 2012: xi.

⁵³³ Fletcher 1976; Joosten 2010.

⁵³⁴ Sale, no date: “Preliminary Discourse”, p 82–83; main text, p 106.

⁵³⁵ Sale, no date: main text, p 38. The material translated by Sale is in chapter 220 in the Ragg’s manuscript, and chapter 221 in the translation from the Spanish manuscript later presented by White.

⁵³⁶ White 2015: xli.

⁵³⁷ White 2015. The translations of Chapters 217 and 218 presented by White are incomplete.

⁵³⁸ Ragg and Ragg 2012.

the same manuscript as Sale;⁵³⁹ but curiously, the Raggs and Sale agree on points on which White diverges.⁵⁴⁰

The preface to the Spanish manuscript said that it had been translated from a document taken from the personal library of Pope Sixtus V (r 1585–90),⁵⁴¹ which reportedly contained nearly two dozen prohibited titles; Sixtus was a prodigious, if controversial, scholar who reorganised the Vatican library, and attempted to produce a revised version of the Vulgate.⁵⁴² John Toland, who came across the Italian manuscript in 1709, noted that a Gospel of Barnabas was named in various early indexes of scriptures: which did not mean that the Italian text was exactly the same document.⁵⁴³ Noting various anachronisms, apparent geographical and political inaccuracies, and phrases that were used by Dante, the Raggs dated the Italian text to the first half of the 14th century; or, perhaps, to a later date with deliberate archaisms.⁵⁴⁴ Their analysis strongly influenced subsequent scholarship.⁵⁴⁵ But, even if correct, it left open the question of the text's authorship and sources, especially since the Italian manuscript was on 16th-century paper, so was unlikely to be the original copy. Some writers speculated that the text might have Morisco origins;⁵⁴⁶ but Jan Joosten (2010) provided considerable evidence, on the basis of apparent mistranslations, that the Sydney manuscript was translated from Italian. Joosten showed textual parallels between the Italian manuscript and Middle-Italian gospel harmonies. Shlomo Pines, who identified the Raggs' analysis as "rather one-sided", argued for an

⁵³⁹ Joosten 2010.

⁵⁴⁰ Sale's translation includes phrases that are found in the Raggs' work, but omitted by White. In addition, Sale, and the Raggs, name the four angels who bear Christ to heaven as Gabriel, Michael, Rafael, and Uriel; White names them as Gabriel, Michael, Rafael, and Azrael.

⁵⁴¹ Sale, no date.

⁵⁴² Sox 1984.

⁵⁴³ Toland (2012: 7) found the Gospel of Barnabas listed in the roll of apocryphal books in the Decree of Gelasius; in the "*Index of the Scriptures*, which COTELERIUS has published from the 1789th manuscript of the *French King's* library"; and in the "206th manuscript of the BAROCCIAN collection in the Bodleian library."

⁵⁴⁴ Ragg and Ragg 2012: xlii–xliii.

⁵⁴⁵ Sox 1984.

⁵⁴⁶ Sox 1984.

Arabic influence on the document, and remarked that “the texts which appear to attest the Ebionite character of the Gospel are quite numerous”.⁵⁴⁷

Among Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, I found no doubt that Shaykh Nazim’s interpretation of *Barnabas* was correct. Dervish taxi drivers organise pilgrimages to St Barnabas’ shrine, and tell their passengers about the Gospel. The book is not necessarily widely read, but is held in high regard. A Naqshbandi-Haqqani publisher, Spohr Publications, has issued editions in English and in German; as well as an essay by “Raimondus Lullus”, which draws on textual analysis of *Barnabas* and early Christian texts to argue that *Barnabas* represents early Jewish-Christian thought: but of the Nazarene rather than Ebionite persuasion.⁵⁴⁸

Werbner (2003) noted that the Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi dervishes she studied saw themselves as sacralising Birmingham, following a pervasive symbolic theme, in their order, of taming the wilderness. I have occasionally seen similar themes among Naqshbandi-Haqqanis. Some of the senior dervishes in Peckham wanted to add a minaret to their mosque, a converted Victorian church, and had called in an architect with a research interest in mosque architecture. For some reason, the young imam asked me to join the meeting, where I expressed my opinion that a minaret would be architecturally unseemly, and like “farting in the face” of local people. The architect said that this comment had freed him to say that he felt exactly the same: if we wanted to honour Shaykh Nazim, we should give to charity, or restore a community garden. Some of the older dervishes seemed to feel, however, that the establishment of Islam required a minaret: the symbol seemed almost to be of Ottoman conquest, though not in a militaristic way.

In a subsequent conversation, a younger dervish commented that Shaykh Nazim had kept the stained-glass windows honouring Christ and the apostles; the young man saw his Islam as a continuation of what had happened in the building before. Most often, among Naqshbandi-

⁵⁴⁷ Pines 1966: 70–71.

⁵⁴⁸ Although erudite and cognisant of at least some recent research, the essay does not seem to have been subjected to academic peer review. As long ago as 1718, Toland (2012) used similar methods to argue that *Barnabas* represented the Nazarene tradition in Christianity.

Haqqani dervishes, I found a theme not of sacralising space, but becoming aware of space already made sacred by holy people, often people who are honoured by other religious communities. When new sacred space is created, through the building of a dergah, this not only sacralises space but uncovers a potential sacredness that was already there. A dervish commented to me that Lefke had waited almost all the history of mankind for its holiness to be expressed.

Being with objects Shaykh Nazim has blessed

Objects handled by Shaykh Nazim, or other holy people, are regarded as blessed. The Naqshbandi-Haqqanis possess a turban which is said to have been worn by Abd al-Qadir Jilani, and it is put on dervishes' heads for blessing. Likewise, hairs of the Prophet, possessed by the Order and encased in glass, are treated with great reverence: dervishes talk of making *ziyāra* to them, as they would to a living holy person or holy place.

As Chapter 6 will explore further, relics and blessed items are used extensively for healing.

Living in the world

Since Shaykh Nazim is “the Arranger”, dervishes often encounter him in their daily life. A computer glitch can be a sign that Shaykh Nazim wants you to reconsider what you are writing; a car accident can be a warning from Shaykh Nazim. Researchers have claimed that the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order only fully exists where Shaykh Nazim is present;⁵⁴⁹ but, for many of his dervishes, he is always present.

Even for dervishes who do not experience Shaykh Nazim in this capacity, his principles, or those taught by the Prophet, create a continuous capacity for connection. I was with a Naqshbandi-Haqqani teacher who felt that the description of the Prophet, let alone Shaykh Nazim, as *ḥādir* (ever-present) was a wild overstatement. Nonetheless, when I gave money to a madman whom the

⁵⁴⁹ Nielsen et al 2006; Böttcher 2006.

other dervishes felt to be begging in bad faith, the teacher approved. He pointed out that the madman could have been a saint in disguise.

Naqshbandi-Haqqani life can be conceived of as cyclical, with periods of being-in-the-world (*khalwat dar anjuman*) punctuated by short periods with the master (*khalwa*): a distinction that has in recent years been blurred, with the use of online *sohbets* and websites such as *eshaykh.com*. Francesco Piraino (2016) observed that internet discourse was much broader in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani than in other orders, and included topics that elsewhere would be regarded as unsuitable for religious discussion. This reflects the Naqshbandi-Haqqani teaching that the whole of life is under the educational supervision of the masters.

Dervishes are also taught that Shaykh Nazim can reach people without their being aware of it. Prince Charles is often claimed to be a follower of Shaykh Nazim, but this is not because of any physical meeting.⁵⁵⁰ Rather, as Shaykh Nazim remarked in a BBC radio interview,

Our feeling is very close to His Highness' Soul. My soul is guiding his soul in the spiritual world. Even though I have not met His Highness, my soul has been his guide within the spiritual world and will continue to be so here forever. Whether His Highness is aware of it or not, is not important.⁵⁵¹

⁵⁵⁰ Prince Charles spoke approvingly of Sufism in *Harmony* (2010), a book praised by Shaykh Nazim, and wrote introductions to books by an English Sufi, Martin Lings (2005, 2006). Atay noted rumours, but did not mention any further evidence, that Prince Charles was “interested” in Shaykh Nazim (Taştekin 2014).

⁵⁵¹ Shaykh Nazim, *SD*, 1998: 108.

Chapter 6: Healing in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order

Some days, although we cannot pray, a prayer
utters itself. So, a woman will lift
her head from the sieve of her hands and stare
at the minims sung by a tree, a sudden gift.

Some nights, although we are faithless, the truth
enters our hearts, that small familiar pain;
then a man will stand stock-still, hearing his youth
in the distant Latin chanting of a train.

Pray for us now. Grade 1 piano scales
console the lodger looking out across
a Midlands town. Then dusk, and someone calls
a child's name as though they named their loss.

Darkness outside. Inside, the radio's prayer—
Rockall. Malin. Dogger. Finisterre.

—Carol Ann Duffy, *Prayer*⁵⁵²

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter describes the concepts and process of illness and healing in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi order. It has five sections:

- 6.1 *The patient and the healer.* Understandings of the patient's mind and body, and how a healer can act.
- 6.2 *The art of suffering.* How adversity is used and addressed as part of healing.
- 6.3 *Healing.* Theories and techniques of healing used within the order.

⁵⁵² Duffy 1993: 52.

6.4 *Healing: extended vignettes.*

6.5 *Eschatological healing.* Placing concepts of healing in an eschatological and broadly teleological framework.

6.1 *The patient and the healer*

When I was seriously physically ill, a dervish healer much respected as a herbalist reminded me that illnesses of the spirit were far more serious than illnesses of the body: the body was only needed for this life, but the spirit lasted forever.

However, in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani model, all illnesses are portrayed, at least in part, as illnesses of the spirit. The body is not merely material, let alone atomistic. It houses a spirit and is influenced by spiritual energy, which is sometimes described as “light”. It has a *nasama*, or energy field, that is nourished by spiritual and by physical energy.⁵⁵³ Depletion of the *nasama* can cause physical or (neuro)psychiatric illness: “neurosis, depression, hysteria, psychosis, seizures, sleep terror, and insomnia. If this state of affairs is allowed to continue without treatment, the *nasama* becomes so weak that it is rendered incapable of defending itself... The patient at this stage suffers either from seizures, psychotic fits, or aggressive behaviour.”⁵⁵⁴

The *laṭāʿif* are said to act as portals for spiritual energy. Buehler (1998: 107) states that the concept can be traced back as far as Junayd (d 910); although he adds that term *laṭīfā* was used, in the ninth century, to describe a “generic subtle substance”, and later a subtle body, before being applied to describe localised subtle entities associated with the human body. Different Sufis have described different numbers, and characteristics, of *laṭāʿif*. Alauddawla Simnani (d 1336), a Central Asian Sufi, described seven *laṭāʿif*, relating to the physical frame (*qālab*), intellect (*ʿaql*), heart (*qalb*), spirit (*rūḥ*), “mystery” (*sirr*), arcanum (*khafī*), and super-arcanum (*akhfā*). Each *laṭīfā* corresponded to a colour, a spiritual type, a way of interpreting the Koran, a prophet, and a level of the cosmos.⁵⁵⁵

⁵⁵³ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *Principles 2*, 2013.

⁵⁵⁴ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *Principles 2*, 2013: 51.

⁵⁵⁵ Buehler 1998.

Muhammad Parsa (d 1420), a prominent successor of Bahauddin Naqshband,⁵⁵⁶ described the same *laṭāʿif*, and corresponding prophets, as Simnani.⁵⁵⁷ Buehler (1998) describes the following list of *laṭāʿif* as being typical of Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Sufis in the 19th and 20th centuries:

<i>Laṭīfa</i>	Prophet	Colour	Location
<i>Akhfā</i>	Muhammad	Green	Sternum
<i>Khafī</i>	Jesus	Black	Above right breast
<i>Sirr</i>	Moses	White	Above left breast
<i>Rūḥ</i>	Abraham Noah	Red	Below right breast
<i>Qalb</i>	Adam	Yellow	Below left breast
<i>Nafs</i> (Soul)	-	-	Middle of forehead
<i>Qālab</i>	Fire	-	Crown of head
	Air	-	
	Water	-	
	Earth	-	

The existence of substantial differences between descriptions of *laṭāʿif* implies inadequate transmission of knowledge—unlikely, given the range of differences and the availability of text—or differences of experience. Buehler notes that “the Mujaddidi system has a transitory, even

⁵⁵⁶ Kabbani (NSW, 1995) describes Muhammad Parsa as being, together with Alauddin Attar (through whom the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain passes), one of the most honourable successors of Bahauddin.

⁵⁵⁷ Buehler 1998.

experimental quality”, and quotes the Indian Naqshbandi Faqirullah Shikarpuri (d 1781): “The subtle centres envelop the entire body... Their appearance depends on the different capacities of those travelling on the path.”⁵⁵⁸

Buehler notes that “Naqshbandi shaykhs first teach newly initiated disciples about *laṭāʿif*;⁵⁵⁹ however, Vidich (2000) noted, as did I, that Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters rarely mention *laṭāʿif* to their students. Shaykh Hisham told Vidich that students will discover *laṭāʿif* through their spiritual practice: mentioning them beforehand can be a misleading distraction. This is certainly consistent with the Naqshbandi-Haqqani philosophy of wanting to remove all possible distractions that may be seized upon by the ego.

However, in books, Shaykh Hisham has written briefly about Naqshbandi-Haqqani views of the *laṭāʿif*. Since perception of the *laṭāʿif* is generally acknowledged to vary, it is perhaps hardly surprising that the Naqshbandi-Haqqani system is different from that recorded by Buehler. Shaykh Hisham describes one set of five *laṭāʿif*, and another set of seven. The set of five is as follows:⁵⁶⁰

<i>Laṭīfa</i>	Nature	Prophet	Who can enter	Colour
Heart (<i>qalb</i>)	Physical heart	Adam	Many beings, including Satan	Yellow
Secret (<i>sirr</i>)	Saving from ignorance	Noah	Saints	Red
Secret of secrets (<i>sirr al-sirr</i>)	Vicegerency and knowledge	Abraham and Moses	Naqshbandi saints	White
Hidden (<i>khaṭāʾ</i>)	Spiritual understanding	Jesus	Prophet Muhammad	Green

⁵⁵⁸ Buehler 1998: 110–11.

⁵⁵⁹ Buehler 1998: 105.

⁵⁶⁰ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995: 362; *AFM* 2, 2010: 94–95.

Most hidden (<i>akhfā</i>)	Divine presence	Muhammad	God alone	Black
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These five *latāʿif* closely resemble the upper five listed by Buehler. The names of the *latāʿif*, and the lists of associated prophets and colours, differ slightly. Notably, Shaykh Hisham describes who can enter each *latīfa*. The idea that the Prophet Muhammad presides over the *latīfa* of the Divine presence, where only God can enter, echoes Naqshbandi-Haqqani discourse around the Prophet’s ascent to the heavens, where he alone entered the Divine presence. The five lower *latāʿif* catalogued by Buehler are not mentioned at all by Shaykh Hisham. This may be because they are held not to exist, or to be unimportant; or simply not experienced that way by people on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani path; or not suitable to mention to the generality of students.

The five *latāʿif* above are said to be linked to the nine points controlled by the great *Uwaysī* saints: who are placed, topologically as well as metaphorically, over the heart. The nine points are used in an *Uwaysī* fashion: the saints inspire and intercede for people who have never heard of them.⁵⁶¹ Other people may be given knowledge of, and power to use, these nine points. Shaykh Hisham provides a deliberately allusive account, from Grandshaykh Abdullah, of the “conditions related to opening these nine points”:

The first station involves the power of imprisoning the ego. The key to the second state is zikr with *lā ilāha illa ʾLlāh* [No god but God]. The third state consists in [sic] witnessing the engraving of Allah’s name on the heart (*naqsh*)... The ninth stage is to return to your cave... The Cave is the Divine Presence. Here one utters the cherished prayer of the Prophet, “O Allah, You are my destination and Your Pleasure is what I seek.” The heart, as it cycles between the cessation and restoration of its pumping, is existing at the level of the Essence of the Divine Presence. Because that Divine Essence is the source of all created being, that heart will be at one with even the most minute creation in this universe. The heart which has reached the secrets of the nine points will be able to see everything, hear everything, know everything, taste everything, sense everything, “Until He will be the ears with which he hears, the eyes with which he sees, the tongue with which he speaks, the hand with which he

⁵⁶¹ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995: 11.

grasps, and the feet with which he walks. He will be Lordly [*Rabbāni*], he only need say to a thing Be! and it will be.”⁵⁶²

As Vidich notes, the saints in control of the nine points are said to be Jafar al-Sadiq, Bayazid Bistami, Abd al-Khaliq Ghujdawani, Bahauddin Naqshband, Khwaja Ahrar, Ahmad Sirhindi, Shaykh Sharafuddin, Grandshaykh Abdullah Dagestani, and Shaykh Nazim. The first six are arguably the greatest luminaries on the Golden Chain, after the Prophet and his companions, and are considered to have shaped the Naqshbandi order. The last three are saints who, in Naqshbandi-Haqqani writings, step out of the history books into living oral testimony: Shaykh Hisham’s hagiographical history of the Naqshbandi order, in which he described the nine points, contained interview material, from the 1990s, with followers of Shaykh Sharafuddin. Grandshaykh Abdullah is said to have passed knowledge of the nine points to Gurdjieff in Turkey, not long after the Russian Revolution. Gurdjieff was reportedly told to keep his meeting with Grandshaykh Abdullah secret. He did, however, popularise the enneagram, which, of course, has nine points.

The seven other *laṭāʿif* are mentioned in the context of physical health:

These are located above and below the heart, above and below the left breast, above and below the right breast, and one on the forehead. Every *laṭīfa* has a different energy colour, and every energy has a different effect on a specific disease. The two focal points above and below the heart are green. The points above and below the left breast are yellow, the ones above and below the right breast are black, and the one on the forehead is white.

In a healthy system, these *laṭāʿif* spin in synchronised rhythm... Each one of them is tuned to a specific frequency that helps the body to remain healthy. However, in a diseased system these vortices are not synchronised. The energy of the *laṭāʿif*... may be fast or slow, jerky or lopsided. Sometimes breaks in the entire energy pattern can be

⁵⁶² Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995: 363. The quote is from a Holy Hadith: “My intimate servants never cease to come nearer and nearer to Me through performing acts of loving worship beyond what I have commanded until I embrace them entirely in My Love. When I embrace them, I am the hearing by which they hear, the seeing by which they see, the hands with which they grasp, and the feet with which they walk. If they supplicate Me for all humanity, certainly I will respond. If they seek refuge with Me for all humanity, certainly I will grant it.” (Hixon and al-Jerrahi 2002: 144, in their translation of a Hadith collection assembled by Ibn Arabi; this particular hadith is also in Bukhari’s collection.)

observed in which a *latifa* may be fully or partially collapsed or inverted. These disturbances are related to dysfunction or pathology of the physical body in that area.⁵⁶³

Energy can be transmitted through these *latāʿif* by a spiritual healer. Such healers are also said to direct energy specifically at the cerebral cortex, from where it travels to the brainstem, and then to the rest of the body, including the heart, via the autonomic nervous system. Once healing energy has reached the heart, it is distributed around the body via the blood vessels. Shaykh Hisham commented that the process tends to drain the healer, so other possibilities are sought first.⁵⁶⁴ Spiritual energy is not just received from a healer, but taken in by means of zikr.

Discourse around the set of five *latāʿif* is related to knowledge; the set of seven are described in the context of health. Both are used through *taṣawwuf*. Purification of the soul leads to good health; is used in energy healing; and is a necessary precondition for the kind of extraordinary knowledge attributed to Sufi masters. The description of a *rabbānī*, lordly, person might be held to imply tremendous power; but such a person will have disciplined their ego, and will only act in accordance with the Prophet's instructions and God's will.

In Sufi orders in general, restrictions on food and sleep are used to weaken the ego. Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters say that someone with spiritual energy needs less food and sleep; but, in general, deprivation of food and sleep is not the Naqshbandi way.⁵⁶⁵ Instead, the spirit is made stronger than the ego by means of obedience to a master, and zikr, above all by the *tahajjud* prayer. Naqshbandi students are expected to be “knights” who can ride strong “horses”. A person who has not mastered his ego is like a person carrying a horse; a purified horse is like a Buraq, able to carry its owner to the heavens. As Vidich points out, the purification of the soul is often described, in Sufi discourse, in stages: a seven-stage model, from the soul that incites to evil (the *nafs al-ammāra*) to the purified soul, dates back at least a thousand years. The seven stages are listed in a few places in

⁵⁶³ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *Principles 2*, 2013: 53–54.

⁵⁶⁴ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *KDK*, 2005: 43.

⁵⁶⁵ Farrer (2009) does, however, report sleep deprivation on a *silat* training camp.

Naqshbandi-Haqqani books,⁵⁶⁶ but the terms are hardly ever used in everyday discourse—except for *nafs al-ammāra*, the aspect of the soul most dervishes are grappling with.

The *nafs al-ammāra* is described as having allies in its quest to dominate the human being: selfish desire (*hawā*), the material world (*dunyā*)—and the Devil. The Devil is said to dwell in the blood; after Grandshaykh Abdullah had a blood transfusion, he spent weeks doing zikr to purify the blood.⁵⁶⁷ Angels also dwell in the blood: holy people, and people of holy descent, have high numbers of angels.⁵⁶⁸ Angels mediate biological processes. Shaykh Hisham reported an incident in which his sister, afflicted with cancer, was healed by angels, one of whom touched 365 points in her body with a staff of light.⁵⁶⁹

Jinns other than the Devil can also affect the mind and body. Shaykh Nazim explained that the “smokeless fire” of which they are made is electricity.⁵⁷⁰ As might be expected, given their electrical nature and individual personalities, jinns are thought particularly likely to cause psychiatric and neurological problems. Jinns form families and communities of their own, on and above the earth: treating jinn-related ailments can therefore be regarded as a form of social medicine.

In general, most Naqshbandi-Haqqanis were anxious to avoid jinns, because they could cause no end of trouble. This even extended to not using the word “jinn”, in case it attracted their attention. A Turkish dervish talking about jinn-related ailments to a group of friends, in Peckham, referred to

⁵⁶⁶ A list is in the Appendix to Shaykh Nazim, *PSE*, 2006: 1. *Nafs al-ammāra* (Commanding Soul). 2. *Nafs al-lawwāma* (Self-reproachful Soul). 3. *Nafs al-mulhama* (Inspired Soul). 4. *Nafs al-muṭmaʿinna* (Serene Soul). 5. *Nafs al-rāḍiya* (Contented Soul). 6. *Nafs al-marḍiyya* (Soul found Pleasing). 7. *Nafs al-ṣafiyya* (Pure Soul). In an expository text on the degrees of the soul, Abd al-Khaliq al-Shabrawi (d 1947), who was a Khalwati shaykh as well as a member of the Naqshbandi and Shadhili orders, described the seventh stage as the *Nafs al-kāmila*: the Perfect Soul (al-Shabrawi 1997).

⁵⁶⁷ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *AFM I*, 2009.

⁵⁶⁸ Conner 2015.

⁵⁶⁹ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *Angels*, 1995.

⁵⁷⁰ The same view was expressed by a Somali healer interviewed by Tiilikainen (2012: 287–88): “A *jinni* is like living electricity, it can penetrate this wall, it can penetrate seas, mountains, everywhere, like electricity... We cannot see jinn because nobody can see electricity... In only a second they can circumnavigate the world. And they even have a very powerful mental recorder... They work just like the internet.”

“the other people”; a Yorkshireman who treated such disorders got jumpy when I used the word “jinn”, and asked me to stick to saying “j”.

Magic, for Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, is *sihr*: the deliberate use of jinns to harm people.⁵⁷¹ I found it difficult to believe, near the start of my fieldwork, that magic still existed these days; or, if it did, that it was widespread. But a senior dervish, who had taken an interest in my welfare, told me,

We know that the Prophet was the victim of witchcraft... What is the cause of witchcraft? Greed and envy. Tell me: have they decreased over time? Have they decreased since the time of the Prophet? Where you have greed and envy, you will find witchcraft.

Seeing me still doubtful, he introduced me to a Nigerian dervish, and, without briefing the man, said, “Tell him about witchcraft.” The Nigerian, who was studying in Cyprus, said that witchcraft was so prevalent in his home country that he did not even tell his mother when he planned to return home: if the news got out, people would prepare traps and spells for him, envious of his university education. He added that the part of Nigeria worst affected by witchcraft was Benin City, where girls would do magic on other girls they envied over boyfriends, or academic success.

Dervishes told me that witchcraft was done by a human striking a bargain with a jinn. This required a sacrifice. In Africa, this often meant murder, often of a child; “in Europe, it’s not so bad: they just require someone to be sent mad, or something like that.” The jinn might also, in the end, claim the life of the sorcerer, often years before that person would otherwise have died. That sounded irrational to me; my informant responded, “people are crazy”. They would sacrifice years of their lives for status, and what they regarded as success, or for a sense of relief from envy and rage.⁵⁷²

⁵⁷¹ Evans-Pritchard (1937) influentially distinguished between *sorcery*, the deliberate (and often studied) use of powers, and *witchcraft*, harm issuing from a person that was innate in them, and not consciously used. My informants used the terms *sihr*, *magic*, or *witchcraft*, in each case with essentially the same meaning as Evans-Pritchard’s *sorcery*.

⁵⁷² Similar motivations were described by Devisch (1993), in his study of murderous magic in the Congo.

One mechanism of witchcraft, to which I was alerted, involved the use of body parts, such as hair or sexual fluids, from the intended victim. The Nigerian told me that, with the aim of getting hold of such fluids, girls would have lesbian affairs with rivals they intended to destroy.

On a tour of the Far East, Shaykh Hisham warned that witchcraft was common; in a talk in Cyprus, Shaykh Mehmet remarked that witchcraft was overdiagnosed, and people should look for other causes of illness. Both statements could be true simultaneously; the difference in emphasis may, of course, reflect where the Shaykhs were when they were speaking: judging by Farrer's account (2009), very little in Malay life is not in some way touched by magic.

Good magic is also held to exist. This is partly because good jinns exist: Shaykh Nazim is said to have several who work for him. I was told that, in general, to work positively with jinns was only for very spiritually advanced people. King Solomon is said to have had the ability to make even bad jinns work for him, notably on building the temple in Jerusalem. Hajjah Amina recorded the tradition that Solomon commanded the jinns partly by means of a ring that had been lost by Adam when he fell from paradise, but was given to Solomon by the Archangel Gabriel. On one occasion, Solomon forgot to say the *basmala* when removing the ring to wash himself, and an evil jinn called Sakhir took Solomon's form and took the ring. Sakhir ruled for 40 days, doing black magic and working all kinds of evil.⁵⁷³

Although magic might be described as a Solomonic art, I did not hear about Shaykh Nazim taking instruction from the spirit of the Prophet Solomon. In general, knowledge of all kinds is traced ultimately to the Prophet Muhammad. Several medical modalities were said to be derived from Prophetic learning: aromatherapy was related to the healing fragrances of the prophets, and colour therapy to the healing energies of spiritual light. Even surgery had a Prophetic precedent, in the "heart surgery" undergone by the Prophet to make him free of sin, and fit for the ascent through

⁵⁷³ Hajjah Amina, *Lore 2*, 2009.

the heavens.⁵⁷⁴ Knowledge about medicine, and patients, is also received in “real time” from the Prophet, or when a master (presumably under the Prophet’s guidance) consults the *lawḥ-i mahfūz*, the heavenly tablet on which people’s destinies are written.⁵⁷⁵

By consulting the *lawḥ-i mahfūz*, Grandshaykh Abdullah is said to have devised treatments for disorders that had been deemed incurable.⁵⁷⁶ He is also said to have received knowledge of medicine directly from the Prophet. He was shot in the heart during the Ottoman defence of Gallipoli, and entered the spiritual presence of the Prophet:

[The Prophet said,] “I am coming to you to show you how a person dies and how the Angel of Death takes the soul.” He presented me with a vision in which I saw my soul leaving my body, cell by cell, beginning from the toes. As the life was withdrawing, I could see how many cells are in my body, and the function of every cell, and the cure for every sickness of each cell, and I heard the zikr of every cell.

As my soul was passing away, I experienced what a person feels when he dies. I was brought to see the different states of death: painful states of death, easy states of death, and the most blissful states of death.⁵⁷⁷

Shaykh Hisham recalled a similar experience, this time directed by Grandshaykh Abdullah. During what should have been a routine operation, his spirit left his body, and he was given a life review; Grandshaykh Abdullah told him, “Now, I am ordering you to keep everything right. Do not mess things up another time!”⁵⁷⁸ On his return, Shaykh Hisham recalled,

All the particles in your body are speaking... I heard everything at the same time, and every cell was saying something different. And you could hear all of their discourses without one overlapping the other... I was mad, but mad in the Sufi way, not as mentally sick people are. I was speaking about the knowledge of Sufis and their

⁵⁷⁴ Hajjah Amina (*Muhammad*, 2002: 104–05) records a tradition that, after his first “heart operation”, the Prophet was found “rubbing his eyes, as if he had just woken from a deep sleep... the traces of the operation were still visible as silken stitches.”

⁵⁷⁵ Hoffman’s Shaykh Izz (1995) claimed to be able to read the *lawḥ-i mahfūz*, and was correspondingly relaxed when travelling through gunfire.

⁵⁷⁶ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *Banquet*, 2008.

⁵⁷⁷ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *CINST*, 2004: 432–33. Bennett (1975) described a similar, though less far-reaching experience, under the tutelage of Gurdjieff.

⁵⁷⁸ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *PC 2*, 2006: 211.

teaching... no one understood except Shaykh Adnan, my brother. I was dressed in that state for forty days: not sleeping, sitting always with Mawlana Grandshaykh, knowing. After forty days, they [Naqshbandi Sufi masters] took that state away and threw it into the heart. When they put it in the heart, you come back to your normal state, but now you can speak through them.⁵⁷⁹

Shaykh Hisham's concept of being "mad in the Sufi way" could be regarded as *jadhb*, the madness associated with attraction to the divine. Good third-person accounts of *majdhūbs* (holy madmen) exist in the anthropological record,⁵⁸⁰ but Shaykh Hisham's admittedly brief account is useful as a first-person account, from someone who later became a renowned Sufi master; indeed, by his own account, the experience of madness seems to have been part of the journey to holiness.

A young man highly liked and respected in the community, including by me, reportedly started to behave disruptively during zikrs and in his personal life, telling women that they were supposed to marry him. He had just been through a divorce. Outside the Naqshbandi-Haqqani social milieu, he was able to hold down a fairly responsible job. He claimed, when acting oddly, to be speaking under inspiration from Grandshaykh Abdullah, and people wondered whether this might be true. However, Shaykh Mehmet told the local dervishes that the youngster was mentally ill, and should receive appropriate care.

A Syrian shaykh said that he received knowledge of a treatment for mental illness by spiritual means:

This knowledge is an opening [*fath*] from God. God has honoured us with the remedy, through love for the *umma* of Muhammad.

These psychiatric conditions [conditions of the *nafs*] have three categories. The first category relates to jinns and demons. There are people who say that a *majnūn* [madman] may be possessed by jinns, or Satan may have touched him with evil. The second category of psychiatric illness relates to someone who has experienced a

⁵⁷⁹ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *PC* 2, 2006: 212.

⁵⁸⁰ Examples include Hoffman 1995; Ewing 1998; Frembgén 1998.

sudden shock. In the *mukhaykh* [cerebellum?],⁵⁸¹ the levels of electricity, or nerve signals, vary according to external circumstances, such as shock, which can lead to illnesses. How do you treat this? The first method is to use Vitamin *Jim*.⁵⁸² Fresh cows' milk (not goat's milk), chicken liver. With use of these over a period of time, every day, after a month, the patient's intellect [ʿaql] will be restored to him. In addition to this, put headphones on him and play *Sūra al-Baqara*⁵⁸³ to him. In this way he will recover, with God's permission.

The third category is the most difficult. This is for someone who has completely lost his sanity [ʿaql]. With electric shock therapy, you can hit the brain cells with electricity, and you can either repair them or they can be destroyed. This third category cannot be cured, except through this treatment:

This treatment is very difficult, and can only be done by specialists from among the great, great people of spiritual learning [ʿulamāʾ].⁵⁸⁴ Take a small cup of yellow sulphur—its use is through openings from God—in the form of powder, [a cup] like this [demonstrated size]. Put it in a clean pan, with three cups of the same size of cows' milk. First the sulphur, then the cows' milk. Bring it to the boil until the cows' milk starts evaporating. Then stir it. Repeat the process with three further cups of cows' milk, then repeat that process. A third time, fourth time, fifth time, sixth time, and then a seventh time, using the same sulphur. Then you squeeze the juice of five lemons on the sulphur; stir it; and then you put it in the sun's shade, until it totally dries out. Then make it into a powder. Then put a cup of flower water on it,⁵⁸⁵ and put it in muslin. Then squeeze the contents. From that will come a kind of white milk. Then you dry this in the shade, under the sun's heat. That will become like a fatty substance. Then you take three heaped spoons of this extract, and pour on a kilo of honey. Mix it really well. Then you add Syrian rue⁵⁸⁶ ... if you come to the *zāwīya* in [a Levantine city], I'll show you. [Unclear whether recipe complete]

⁵⁸¹ I could not find *mukhaykh* in the Lane or Redhouse lexicons, and my interpreter and Arabic-language adviser were unfamiliar with the word. Wehr (1976: 896) gives *mikhakha* as “brain” and *mukhkhī* as “cerebral”. When the Syrian shaykh said “*mukhaykh*”, he pointed to the back of his head. I interjected, “Cerebellum!”, and he said, “Yes”.

⁵⁸² A–B–C–D correspond to *Alif–Bā–Jim–Dāl*: which would make Vitamin *Jim*, Vitamin C. However, the foods described sound more typical of Vitamin D.

⁵⁸³ The second *sūra* of the Koran.

⁵⁸⁴ Listening to the recording, I couldn't make out a word for “specialists”. But my Arabic is nothing like as good as my interpreter's.

⁵⁸⁵ “Flower water” as in “rosewater”. Listening to the recording, I wondered whether the Syrian in fact said “clear water”.

⁵⁸⁶ Arabic: *ħarmaħ*; Linnaean: *Peganum harmala*.

Many dervishes practised one or more healing techniques: herbalism, Reiki healing, Shiatsu, acupressure, cupping, massage, chiropractice, homoeopathy,⁵⁸⁷ yoga, and natural midwifery. Many more dervishes took a general interest in natural medicines. In general conversation over lunch in the Tottenham dergah, I heard for the first time about “acid” and “alkaline” foods, and apricot kernels as a treatment for cancer. A dervish of my acquaintance cured his breathing problems and insomnia by making a tea from crushed cloves, lavender, and other herbs; when I asked him where he came across the recipe, he said, “I didn’t!”

At times, this amounts almost to an alternative health service, as several dervishes in a community have one expertise or another. In general, healing is offered free of charge, or cheaply, at least to Naqshbandi-Haqqani acquaintances. I did observe one striking exception, when a healer widely respected in the community as a good (verging on holy) man charged a family on benefits, with a disabled child, £100 for medicines that should not, in my estimation, have cost more than £50 (when my mother, feeling sorry for the family, paid for them, he accepted the money, but said, “This is not a charity!”). More typical was a herbalist who saw people, on the whole, free of charge, but asked them to pay the costs of any medicines he made for them—rather like a prescription charge. He was the most respected healer among the dervishes living in London, and had been a research biochemist before developing a successful private practice as a herbalist in London and Surrey; and then developing a chronic illness.

His approach was eclectic and holistic. He understood illness to have spiritual dimensions, and did zikr while preparing his medicines. He also took a keen interest in nutrition, in scientific medicine, and in the teachings of holy people in general and Shaykh Nazim in particular. He keenly criticised the indiscriminate or ill-informed use of remedies that had been recommended by Shaykh Nazim or were well known from Hadith. For instance, cupping was intended to remove iron from the body: excess iron made bacterial infections and cancer more likely; in addition, iron was used to balance

⁵⁸⁷ The homoeopathic tradition among Naqshbandi-Haqqanis goes back at least as far as Grandshaykh Jamaluddin, 35th on the Golden Chain (see Appendix 2), who was a scientist, linguist, and “renowned homeopathic physician” (Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995: 311).

the body's electromagnetic field. Hence, some people needed cupping more than others; men generally needed it more than premenopausal women; and it should be done at certain sites of the body, at certain times of year, rather than as a nostrum.⁵⁸⁸ Likewise, although black-seed oil was described as a “treatment for all illness” (and with good reason: it improved metabolic efficiency, supported immune function, and was anti-inflammatory), it was not necessarily the most appropriate prescription for the individual patient: “The Prophet didn't always prescribe black-seed oil. People came to him with different problems, and he prescribed different things.”⁵⁸⁹

A book of Shaykh Nazim's thoughts on health, *Natural Medicines*, had been published in the late 1980s, and subsequently in several further editions. Zero Quensel, who compiled it, told me that she had sat with Shaykh Nazim as people asked his advice on health problems, and faithfully recorded what he recommended. The book arguably lacked a critical commentary. For instance, Zero quoted Shaykh Nazim as saying that he never gave permission for operations; a belief also articulated in *Wings of the Messenger* (1993), in which dervishes were described as seeing the psychic surgeon Stephen Turoff instead. Zero told me that she had not realised that Grandshaykh Abdullah Dagestani had had an eye operation not long before he died. The penny dropped, she told me, when she was in hospital in London, refusing an emergency operation, and Shaykh Nazim got a telephone message through to her: “Tell that foolish woman to have the operation!”

To use this medical textbook, as any other, it helped to have background knowledge. When I was ill with bronchitis, I consulted a dervish herbalist about using the bronchitis remedies in the book. He thought that one of them might well be helpful (and hadn't occurred to him); one was unsuitable for me, because I had a different kind of bronchitis; another might be useful for my chest, but not for my body as a whole. The remedies were suitable if you had the same kind of illness, and a similar constitution and overall condition, as the patient to whom the remedies were given.

⁵⁸⁸ James McConnell, a Naqshbandi-Haqqani healer, made similar points in *Hijama vs. Cupping* (2013)—except that he described cupping not as removing excess iron, but as removing dead blood cells from circulation (given the iron content of red blood cells, these two explanations could be compatible).

⁵⁸⁹ Black-seed oil is the oil of *Nigella sativa*. The seeds are also known as black cumin and (black) onion seeds.

One theme of *Natural Medicines* was the overuse of modern medicine, through superstition or commercial pressures. Shaykh Nazim warned against the overuse of antibiotics and vaccinations. On antenatal care, he said,

Nowadays most doctors are businessmen and make everything as a business. No need for that! When it is clear that a woman is pregnant, don't touch her there, don't go every month to be under control. In the old days we never had anyone in control. No-one! Only when the pains of birth came, we called a midwife who then said, "Bismi 'Lāhi 'l-Raḥmāni l-Raḥīm. Oh my Lord, let your servant come!" That was all.⁵⁹⁰

I am against every form of control which the doctors are doing. Ultrasound is a most dangerous thing to do for the fetus... It is not a cure.⁵⁹¹

Dervish responses to Shaykh Nazim's advice captured a range of perspectives: all claiming to follow Shaykh Nazim, but with opposing interpretations. A dervish healer told me that doses of antenatal ultrasound were now far higher than those used decades ago, and deemed as safe: perhaps, he suggested, the side-effects had not been properly studied by medical scientists.⁵⁹² Besides, antenatal procedures could trigger miscarriages, and false-positive reports of abnormality.⁵⁹³ He and his wife had avoided antenatal screening, and had had several healthy children.⁵⁹⁴

⁵⁹⁰ Shaykh Nazim, *Heilung*, 2004: 54; translated from a late-1990s edition of *Natural Medicines*.

⁵⁹¹ Shaykh Nazim, *NM*, 1995: 65–66.

⁵⁹² Ultrasonography is generally regarded as safe and useful. A small minority of researchers argue that the safety of modern ultrasound devices has not been properly assessed, or that evidence of harm has been disregarded (Salvesen and Lees 2009; Beech 1995; West J 2015). The NHS Choices website states that "there is too little evidence to draw firm conclusions about its long-term effects", and that, although there is "no clear evidence that souvenir scans are harmful to the fetus... they represent a potential risk to the developing baby that cannot be weighed against any necessary benefit." (NHS Choices 2010)

⁵⁹³ "Routine scans do not seem to be associated with reductions in adverse outcomes for babies or in health service use by mothers and babies" (Whitworth et al 2015): the main functional role of ultrasonography is to identify fetuses for abortion. The *Oxford Handbook of Clinical Specialties* remarks, "56 out of every 57 women under 37 years old who had a positive test [for Down's syndrome; such tests generally include ultrasonography] proved, after amniocentesis, not to have an affected fetus. Amniocentesis causes fetal losses (~0.86%)... Imagine an overjoyed expectant mother arriving in the clinic serenely happy in fulfilling her reproductive potential: the quintessence of health. She leaves only after being handed ethical conundrums of quite staggering proportions, involving death, disease, and human sacrifices, and a timetable for their resolution that would leave even the most fast-moving

After he left the room, another dervish healer, a friend of his, sat down opposite me and said,

You have to use your judgement... Have the ultrasound done. I would. When the Shaykh recommends something, you must use your own common sense. I remember when he was sick in Cyprus, I realised he should be taking antibiotics. And it was 3 o'clock in the morning. And I rushed to his house and banged at his door. 3 o'clock in the morning, and I was banging on his door, banging, banging. Finally they answered it and I said, I have to see the Shaykh. I rushed upstairs to tell him, "Shaykh, you have to take..." and I saw that he had a tablet in his hand and was just about to take it. "Antibiotics," he said. "Yes, I know."

A few months later, an eminent doctor (and dervish) told me,

When you get married, please don't put your wife, or wives, through an ultrasound scan when they are carrying a baby. After all, what will you do if it shows something?

Me: [Reflecting that I would not ask for a baby to be aborted because of anticipated disability, and hoping I would marry someone like-minded:] Nothing.

Dervish: We did some experiments with exposing DNA to ultrasound, and it damaged the DNA.

In general, dervishes regarded Shaykh Nazim as having better sources of knowledge than doctors did. He was in contact with his spiritual masters, and above all with the Prophet; in addition, as a Sufi master, he could read the *lawḥ-i maḥfūz*. Shaykh Eşref said that a Sufi master was a "destiny-counsellor". Shaykh Hisham quoted Grandshaykh Abdullah as saying that mutable destiny, as written on the *lawḥ-i maḥfūz*, could be changed. Fixed destiny, in general, could not, but God had given the authority to change it to "the nine saints who are at the highest level in the Divine

philosopher breathless and disorientated, and which may leave her forever bereft of one of Nature's most generous gifts: the fundamental belief in one's own wholeness." (Collier et al 2013: 12)

⁵⁹⁴ Peter Gøtzsche, Professor of Clinical Research Design and Analysis, University of Copenhagen: "When my wife was pregnant for the first time, my main role was to keep the professionals away from her, and I demonstrated time and again for them that the interventions they suggested were either useless or harmful, with reference to an evidence-based book." (Gøtzsche 2015: 35)

Presence, by permission from the Prophet, who is first to take that power from God.”⁵⁹⁵ These may well be the same nine saints who are said to operate the nine points on the chest.

Dervishes also told me that a Sufi master’s intentions were purer than a doctor’s. A doctor lost even the insight he had if he was motivated by money.⁵⁹⁶ Shaykh Nazim was quoted as saying:

Big corporations do not want people to be healthy, because thousands of factories work to produce medicines... They say to them that they have to take this and that as a check-up, or to prevent illnesses that could come. Everyone is being cheated to use tablets, or injections, or syrups... Once the idea has been established that life without medicine is not possible, people are even grateful.⁵⁹⁷

A respected healer, who took a keen interest in medical science, commented, “There is rationality, but it’s used to mask the truth. There’s a hadith, isn’t there, on eloquence, and how it can be misused...”⁵⁹⁸ He added that “doctors are like people carrying an umbrella painted with stars. They look up, and wonder why the sky isn’t changing.”

A common complaint among dervishes was that, within living memory, medicine had deteriorated.

A London dervish commented,

You would think that doctors would study all kinds of things—[including] anthropology. Because every person is different, every person reacts differently, every person is surrounded by different people and circumstances: and doctors need to be adaptable. But these days, very few doctors are.

I remember, when I went to the doctor in the 1980s, I was a child and had a sore throat. And the doctor said to my mum, give him ice cream. I remember thinking even at the time, this is good!... They gave the impression they cared about you as a person...

⁵⁹⁵ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995: 365–66.

⁵⁹⁶ “As much as a physician has a pure heart, he easily understands sickness, and prescribes a medicine. This is possible if he is beyond the love of money, only thinking of helping people and lightening suffering.” (Shaykh Nazim, *Bridge*, 2011: 91)

⁵⁹⁷ Shaykh Nazim, *NM*, 1995: 32.

⁵⁹⁸ He may have been referring to a hadith quoted by Shaykh Hisham (*Salafis*, 1997: 10): “What I fear most for my people is an eloquent hypocrite.”

Now, all this bureaucracy in the NHS... Sometimes, these days, you can't tell whether you're with a doctor or a sales representative...

It's rare to find an honest doctor. People talk about [the rarity of] honest lawyers, but it's also honest doctors... And people don't question [the institutions of] education or healthcare.

A Sufi master remarked,

Medicine is not what it was. Doctors have become too dependent on machines, to the point where they've become extensions of machines.

I had a pain down here [with his hand, he made a gesture that, I was taught, was classically indicative of an inguinal hernia]. One doctor said it might be a problem with my gut. Another doctor, an orthopaedic surgeon, thought it was a problem with my back. He started treating my back. I made the heart-connection with my Shaykh, and came to know I had a hernia. I saw five doctors, over several months, before they finally diagnosed a hernia.

Some attitudes to modern medicine were remarkably oppositional. A healer gave one of his patients some brisk advice:

[While taking a drug history:] Thyroxine narrows the arteries of the heart. Can they give you anything for that? Dust-bin!

[Regarding a lump near her shoulder:] Listen to me, lady. Do not have that operation. In a tumour, the poison is contained within the [capsule]. These butchers love to cut. And what happens then? You get cancer. The poison spreads through the body.⁵⁹⁹

Dervishes expressed particular scepticism about psychiatry. On one occasion, I was attending to a sick dervish in a dergah, when when he asked me what my job was. "Psychiatrist," I replied. "Oh

⁵⁹⁹ Shaykh Hisham, similarly, was recorded as saying that surgery can cause a tumour to "go wild and spread". But in the case above, I was not sure that the healer had established the tumour to be cancerous.

no!” he groaned. “Can’t you do something useful?” He later apologised and said that a close relative of his was a psychiatrist. Another dervish, on being told I was a psychiatrist, remarked.

You don’t want to be part of that satanic system, do you?... The doctors make it like a disease. They say you can’t get better, you need drugs. And the drugs just make you worse... If you cut your finger, how does it heal? Naturally. Everything heals naturally.

Me [trying not to cause offence]: I think the doctors, most doctors, mean really well, but it’s the knowledge base they have.

And where does that knowledge come from? These multinationals, they don’t want people to get better, because that way they can sell more drugs.

Shaykh Nazim expressed nuanced but profound concern about psychiatric practice:

According to the Holy Prophet, newborn babies are all born in perfect harmony with their Lord’s will—it is only the parents who influence them to oppose His Will. Despite this, the Essence is ever the same manifestation of Divine perfection—like indelible ink that can be covered but never removed. In the end, all of these coats of cheap paint will flake off and there will remain only the original unfaded colour. This is what is referred to in the Holy Qur’an as “Allah’s dye.”⁶⁰⁰

You may use your position as a psychiatrist in order to apply “paint-remover”. You are obliged, however, to quickly apply another layer, but a more acceptable one. Unfortunately, most psychiatrists have no “paint-remover” at all, and are only applying the new coat over the old one. Thus they estrange their patients even more from that original Divine coat, so that in the end there is even more to remove.⁶⁰¹

He also expressed severe doubts about psychiatric medications:

[In “depression”] our present life becomes a bridge between the past and the future, between two terrible visions: haunting memories and anxiety-filled anticipation of the future. Worrying about our future makes us crazy, and all that modern medical science can do about it is to offer people some dangerous drugs specially designed to cloud both memory and anticipation. These are terrible and dangerous methods, for when people regain their

⁶⁰⁰ A reference to Koran 2: 138.

⁶⁰¹ Shaykh Nazim, *M O Lovestream*, 1987: 37.

wits, their despair will become even more acute. Allah in His Wisdom created brain cells non-renewable. These dangerous drugs kill brain cells, and once they are killed they are never replaced.⁶⁰²

In general, however, Shaykh Nazim did not oppose modern medicine so much as seek to incorporate it into his worldview. He himself saw doctors, took pharmaceutical drugs, and had hospital treatment. A dervish herbalist commented,

There's got to be some mercy in this medical system, otherwise the *awliyā'* wouldn't allow it... These days, doctors only have 10 minutes to see everyone, there are so many people. Maybe modern medicine is what people need. There just isn't time to be with the patients 24 hours a day, to nanny them. Doctors just don't have time...

[With regard to psychiatry:] Modern drugs are designed not only for doctors who don't have the ability or the time, but for incapable patients too. The drugs seem like the natural way forward. They've never learnt to manage their emotions, so if you take them off the drugs...

Shaykh Hisham, who came from a medical family, went as far as declaring spiritual and scientific healing to be equivalent:

The difference between the spiritual healers and the physician healers is that the former is healing from inside-to-outside while the latter is healing from outside-to-inside. Each are [sic] doing good for their patients...⁶⁰³

This acceptance of science is reflected in Naqshbsndi-Haqqani discourse about the Prophet Idris (Enoch), who is portrayed as the first doctor and the first technologist.⁶⁰⁴ However, in Idris' persona, as in Shaykh Nazim's formulations, scientific understandings are secondary to spirituality. The ability to benefit from Shaykh Nazim's teachings is less a matter of technique than of intention. A Peckham dervish told me,

⁶⁰² Shaykh Nazim, *M O Lovestream*, 1987: 51–52.

⁶⁰³ Shaykh Hisham, *Principles 2*, 2013: 49.

⁶⁰⁴ Hajjah Amina, *Lore 1*, 2008.

Shaykh Nazim said, long, long ago, there was a man, a believer who lived on a mountain, all alone. These *Awliyā'* came to his area—they were rowing [mimes rowing a boat]—and he ran down, saying, please teach me.

So they taught him a prayer. And he went back up the mountain, and he rolled down the mountain—that was the only prayer he knew, rolling down the mountain—and he realised he'd forgotten the prayer [they taught him]! So he ran out to them, saying, "I've forgotten the prayer, please remind me." And they saw that he was walking on the water. So they said, "Stick to the prayer you know."

In general, dervishes believe that to disobey Shaykh Nazim means trouble. A phrase used to symbolise this is "As you like": a kind of inversion of "Thy Will be done." A dervish healer told me,

If Shaykh [Nazim] says to you, "As you like," you're in trouble. This actually happened to someone. He was ill, and Shaykh told him, go home, rest, and build up your strength. But that wasn't enough for him. He said he wanted to see a doctor. So Shaykh told him, see such and such a physician. And his *janāza* [funeral] was some years ago.

6.2 The art of suffering

Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters teach that, in this life, "only when the soul has come out as far as the throat and gurgling has begun is the door of repentance closed".⁶⁰⁵ Encouragement not to give up hope is sometimes expressed through a verse of Rumi's (which was, for instance, on display in Lefke):

Come, come, whoever you are.

Wanderer, worshipper, lover of leaving:

It doesn't matter.

Ours is not a caravan of despair.

Come, even if you have broken your vows a thousand times.

Come, yet again, come, come.

⁶⁰⁵ Shaykh Nazim, *MO* 2, 1980: 224.

The story most commonly told to illustrate God's response to repentance is that of Awli Abbas:

The Prophet was told by God that one of His friends had died, and he should go and bury him. To the Prophet's astonishment, the saint turned out to be Awli Abbas, a notorious highwayman; whose body had been thrown down a dry well. The Prophet and Abu Bakr gave Awli Abbas a proper funeral, at which the Prophet was aware of multitudes of angels. The Prophet then went to look for Awli Abbas' family.

"How did he live?" asked the Prophet.

"Messenger of God," said Awli Abbas' daughter, "what can I say? He was a highwayman. He robbed and he killed. That's why they threw him down the well."

"But I am being told that your father was a saint," said the Prophet. "Did he do anything good in his life?"

"Only once a year," said the woman. "Every month of Rajab, he would say, 'My God, I have given the rest of the year to myself. This month is Your month, and I am giving it to you.' So he used to lock himself up and pray for the whole month."

"What did he pray?"

"He once robbed a man who left behind a scrap of paper. My father read it and on the paper was a beautiful prayer. My father kissed it, kept it, and recited the prayer all through Rajab."⁶⁰⁶

Awli Abbas' legacy was that of a saint: the prayer attributed to him is still used to this day, and forms part of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Grand Transmitted Supplication (see Appendix 3).

When people do not wholeheartedly repent, illness is, Naqshbandi-Haqqanis told me, a "divine correction": it can change people's lifestyles and ways of thinking and experiencing the world. On one occasion, I did something wrong, and Shaykh Eşref said, "Ths time, you are forgiven. But, — if — you — ever — do — that — again — — watch out!" When I did lapse, I immediately

⁶⁰⁶ My retelling of a story that has been told many times by senior Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, each time with different details being emphasised. One version is in Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *PC 1*, 2005: 133–37.

developed an excruciating illness that would physically prevent me from doing that particular kind of wrong again. Doctors could not diagnose my (very evident) illness and were perplexed.

Illness is considered to be, above all, a divine correction for pride. Quoting Grandshaykh Abdullah (who, in turn, was said to be quoting a hadith), Shaykh Nazim warned, “He who says, ‘I am clever,’ must someday be stupid; who says, ‘I am rich,’ must someday become so poor that he is in need of everyone’s charity. Whoever says, ‘I know,’ must someday know nothing, not even how to feed himself—like a child only recently weaned.”⁶⁰⁷ Even a healer loses his ability if he starts to think healing comes from him. A dervish said that Shaykh Nazim told of a saint who was often asked by ill people to pray for them: and every time he did, they were cured. “One time, he was approached by a blind man who said, pray for me. And he thought, how on earth am I going to heal this person? Then God asked him, ‘Who do you think was healing before?’ His ego had got in, you see...”

Shaykh Nazim is said to create situations in which the ego ends up being tamed. One of the mildest of these is the *sohbet*, the talk Shaykh Nazim gives for a wide audience. Quite often, he will criticise certain attitudes or behaviours. I was at a *sohbet* once where the dervishes were cheering almost as though they were at a football match, as he criticised a certain kind of narrow-minded scholar. But the thought patterns he was describing sounded uncomfortably like ones I recognised in myself. Afterwards, I spoke to a senior dervish:

That is rare.⁶⁰⁸ Mostly, A will think B is bad, or B will think Mawlana is criticising A. It is rare for someone to realise that Shaykh Nazim is referring to him. It’s a good sign.

Some dervishes said that Shaykh Nazim’s *sohbets* were a “bombardment” for our egos. If we recognised a fault in ourselves, as he described it, it would one day be cured.

⁶⁰⁷ Shaykh Nazim, *MOPP*, 1983: 126.

⁶⁰⁸ But maybe not quite so rare. In an introduction to one of Shaykh Nazim’s books, Shafiq Morton observed that a *sohbet* “was a devastating critique of the Salafis but no less a serious warning directed at our very own *nafs*.” (Shaykh Nazim, *Adam*, 2013: xi)

Dervishes sometimes find Shaykh Nazim puzzling, at least for a time. He once strongly praised the “Moonlight Academy” in Edinburgh. Dervishes searched online for this estimable educational institution, only to conclude that Shaykh Nazim must have been talking symbolically. A Pakistani dervish from Luton was quite outraged when he heard Shaykh Nazim telling Asian people to “go back home”: he thought this echoed racist discourse. Then, he reflected, “this *is* my home.” Other people have said that, when Shaykh Nazim tells people to go back home, he means to their real homeland—the Divine presence.

Shaykh Nazim is known to “mirror” people, reflecting their irrationality back to them so they can see it. The first time we had a dialogue, I nearly lost my temper as he pretended to be both deaf and stupid. Ludwig Schlessmann interviewed W, a German dervish for whom the mirroring was more public:

When I visited Shaykh in Cyprus for the first time, I had difficulties with one brother, who felt me to be very intolerant and fanatical, like a fanatical Muslim, and really inhuman; that was my way of looking at things, religious-warlike, I don’t know. And with the argument with this brother, I felt my temper rise. And I went afterwards to the Shaykh, described the situation to him, and asked him, how can I get rid of my temper, yes, of this latent violence...

For me, one of the most loathsome appearances was Hitler’s... But Shaykh didn’t know that, I hadn’t told Shaykh that. And when we were sitting together in Cyprus, quite a big group, Shaykh said, out of the blue, “Take a good look at W from the front; if only he had a parting, if only his hair came a bit further down his forehead, and he had his beard this way, just the moustache, he would look like Hitler, wouldn’t he?” Everybody laughed, I laughed too but painfully... and that was that.

And a few days later, fully-packed mosque, in Cyprus, two journalists—I believe, from the national media, I believe from the BBC—and Shaykh Nazim went through the whole lot; I was standing at the other end of the mosque, somewhere there in the corner, and Shaykh went straight through the whole mosque, through the whole crowd, straight to me. That was the first and only time that I saw Shaykh’s face looking ugly: he contorted himself, raised his right hand, and said, “Heil Hitler!”... I was flooded with a wave of fury. And I was standing in

front of this little guy, and I wanted to put my hands on his throat, and to strangle this little guy. Yes, I was full of anger, full of murderous anger.

W turned on his heels and left the mosque, with his mind made up to leave the Order and never to return. He was waiting for a car, to go back to his hotel, when Shaykh Nazim came out of the mosque and offered him a lift. In the car, it hit W that the rage was not him: he had been led by his ego. He apologised to Shaykh Nazim, who laughed, took his hand, and said, “Sometimes, on this Way, we have to do this,” and advised W to visit the grave of Barnabas, “the disciple of Jesus who was stoned to death here, and, in the moment of his stoning, loved his murderer.”

...I clearly felt and knew that it is possible to love people, even when they are right there to kill you: in their aberration, to see through their aberration, to see through their programming, and love this other part of our humanity.

W added that he had many friends who were psychiatrists and psychologists, but did not know anyone else who could have changed his mentality so radically in less than an hour, “not communicated ‘intellectually’, but to let me know it.”⁶⁰⁹

Shaykh Nazim is said to pressurise the ego at its weakest point, to “flip” the dervish over:⁶¹⁰ the principle being that the dervish’s pride, self-image, and illusions crumble. This can be experienced as madness, fear, or crushing humiliation. One paradigm cited is that of Bayazid Bistami, who famously advised a scholar to stand in the street with a bag of walnuts, and shout that he would give a walnut to every child who slapped him.

In Lefke, was told that dervishes who are proud are often given cleaning jobs (it may be no accident that I emptied the bins, swept the bathroom area, and fed chickens from a dustbin while walking backwards). Shaykh Nazim’s grandson wrestled a couple of young men to the floor when they were walking in a cocky fashion. When one of them started fighting back, he showed, using body

⁶⁰⁹ Schlessmann 2003: 88–90.

⁶¹⁰ Vidich 2000.

language, that this was instruction, not a street fight. He also caught my eye, as though to show me that this lesson was also meant for me to understand.

Advanced dervishes may be given the chance to confront their ego through *khalwa*, seclusion. The German Shaykh Jamaluddin told Annabelle Böttcher, perhaps with a touch of ironic humour, that his first *khalwa* was “disillusioning”: he had expected enlightenment, but instead had to face himself.⁶¹¹ A dervish’s first seclusions are said to be rehearsals for later, true seclusions; but even these are said to be arduous. Some masters spend months at a time in seclusion. I was told that illness can sometimes be a form of seclusion.

The results of *khalwa* were described to Vidich (2000: 535) by a German dervish called Jamaluddin, who (from internal evidence) was almost certainly the same person interviewed by Böttcher:

My experience of seclusion was like digging a well [for]... the light of Allah. After one connects with that light in retreat[,] one feels deep refreshment and joy. Then even after the retreat, one can re-enter into the well and experience the same refreshing experience of light as one had during the retreat.

Sometimes, dervishes undergo really severe adverse events, or “tests”. These were described to me as “heart surgery”: they loosen the ego’s grip on the dervish, in an echo of the “heart surgery” done on the Prophet in infancy:

Dervish to me, after a traumatic event of which I was, at the time, unaware: Have you had your “heart operation” yet?

Me: Don’t think so. Nobody’s told me that I have.

Dervish: Have you been through something so painful you can’t imagine it? So painful you couldn’t bear even to think about it?

Me: [Pause, considers:] No. I’ve been through some pretty bad stuff, but nothing like that.

Dervish: That’s your “heart surgery”. When you have it, you’re “under anaesthetic”, so you don’t feel it at the time. Maybe you are under anaesthetic, so you don’t feel it now.

⁶¹¹ Böttcher 2011: 116–17. Raja Ashman, presumably jocularly, described a room used for seclusion (and exorcism) as the “screaming room” (Farrer 2009: 204).

Shaykh Hisham comments,

You want the [spiritual] secrets in this *tarīqa*? You have to walk on nails first... If you do not, and you want everything to be easy, you will receive candies. If you take the hard way, you receive diamonds. So choose which way you want.⁶¹²

One of the first things Shaykh Nazim said, after my arrival in Cyprus on my long stay, was, “We are teaching with *khayr wa sharr*”: good and evil. Dervishes warned me that “a rose is surrounded by thorns”, or even that some of the people around Shaykh Nazim were “snakes”. He himself commented that “every prophet and every saint has a circle of satans around them.”⁶¹³ Some dervishes told me that, just as the Prophet Muhammad had had to bear with more hypocrites than did any other prophet, so Shaykh Nazim had to cope with more hypocrites than did any other saint.

Shaykh Nazim’s tolerance of dubious characters near him was sometimes framed to me as an act of self-sacrifice or care: “He likes to keep the *shayṭāns* close”. It was also, however, regarded as a way of using evil for good. Dervishes told me this story:⁶¹⁴

Once, *Sayyidinā* [“our lord”: used from respect] Ali was walking towards the mosque, and he found this old man ahead of him. Now, Ali is the kindest of men, and he doesn’t want to hurt the old man’s feelings by walking ahead of him. So he walks behind the old man, and the old man gets slower and slower. Then Ali looks up, and realises he’s missed the prayer with the Prophet! And he realises that the old man is Satan. So he gets the “old man” and he wrestles him to the floor. They’re right outside the mosque.

And then the Prophet comes out, and he says, “O Ali, what are you doing?”

Ali answers, “Look, my Prophet! It’s the Devil and I’ve got him on the floor!”

The Prophet says, “O Ali, let him go. Without his testing, none of my nation would reach their stations in the Divine presence.”

⁶¹² Shaykh Hisham, *PC 1*, 2005: 119.

⁶¹³ Shaykh Nazim, *Truth*, 1997: 84.

⁶¹⁴ The story is told, with different wording, by Shaykh Nazim in *MO 2*, 1980: 186–88.

Merely handling some of the characters around Shaykh Nazim is said to be character-building. In addition, I was told that “rotten apples” are deliberately placed in positions of authority. Years ago, the Order was beset by “fake shaykhs”, who claimed to have authorisation from Shaykh Nazim but did not (this phenomenon seems to have diminished or ceased, as internet use has facilitated quick international communication). A dervish explained to me that the existence of “fake shaykhs” was one of the Order’s teaching methods: people were forced to use their minds.⁶¹⁵

Some of the characters who were labelled as difficult polarised opinion. Two of Shaykh Nazim’s carer-assistants were held in low regard by some (but by no means all) dervishes. Shaykh Hisham went as far as calling them Abu Lahab and Umm Lahab, after two relatives of the Prophet whose hellish tendencies are commemorated in *sūra* 111 of the Koran: concerned for Shaykh Nazim’s welfare, he campaigned for them to leave Shaykh Nazim’s house. Other dervishes responded that Shaykh Nazim “knew what he was doing”. After “Abu Lahab” died, his spiritual memoir was presented as an instructional text. An Irish dervish, who had spent a long time in Cyprus, remarked, gnomically, “I don’t think a lot of people got to know [Abu Lahab]’s role.”

The existence of characters perceived as difficult, or not entirely respectable, was considered part of the Order’s ecology. One of Shaykh Nazim’s experienced Cypriot assistants remarked that disciples who were in the mafia could commit acts of restorative justice out of the reach of the ordinary man. As could someone officially mad, in South London:

Dervish 1: Do you remember X? He scares me. [Half-joking:] I know I’m talking behind his back, but that’s the only place I can say it! He scares me.

Dervish 2: One of them three brothers?

Dervish 1: The big one [gestures].

Dervish 2: Them three brothers, they used to come round here, pushing people around.

⁶¹⁵ John Bennett recorded a motto of *La Prieuré*, where Gurdjieff taught from 1922 to 1924: “Always remember that you came here having already understood the necessity of contending with yourself, only with yourself, and therefore thank everyone who affords such opportunities.” (1976: Plate 11)

Dervish 1: They were a test.

Dervish 2: They were bullies, pushing people, testing people. Then, one day, this schizophrenic came from the Maudsley. From the Maudsley Hospital. And he thought, right, I'm having a go. Came after them with a stick. And they were scared!

Dervish 1: They were afraid.

Dervish 2: And everyone was saying, *al-hamdu li 'Llāh!* [All praise is to God; thank God] This is from Shaykh!

Dervish 1: [Half-joking:] Maybe it was Shaykh! It was Khidr! [We laugh.]

Masters said to me that they were “teaching a kindergarten and a university in the same room”: in which the advanced students and beginners can learn from each other. Dervishes are described as chains that clean each other of rust, by being rubbed together. The grotesque behaviour of others can be a mirror. A couple of dervishes told me, “You may say, how does Shaykh Nazim tolerate such people? The question is, how does he tolerate you?”

More than once, at the dergah in Lefke, I was told, “No harm can happen to you here”. That statement depended on the definition of harm: one of the dervishes who was saying this to me explained that he had been attacked by a psychotic dervish with an axe, but had only received a superficial wound, rather than the brain damage or life-threatening injury that should have resulted. A female dervish told me that sometimes serious violence broke out among the women there, such that she had been left with a fractured cheekbone from an unprovoked assault. Two young male dervishes told me with horror that they had been sexually assaulted (groped) by a man in the dergah. They did not feel able to report their experience because the alleged assailant seemed close to the dervish who, at that time, was taking responsibility for organising the dergah. The level of violence and mayhem can probably be fairly described as low for an asylum; and higher than in the average semi-rural place of worship.

Perhaps the concept of “no harm” is sustainable if one reflects that Shaykh Nazim is perceived as the “arranger” and the “surgeon”: so any adversity encountered will be part of long-term healing.

The dervish who had been hit with the axe said it had been good for his character. In general, the more God loves a dervish, the more suffering he will be sent.

Several times, in Lefke, I felt I was on the verge of losing my mind, or at least what I had come to think of as my mind. On each occasion, I was sustained by a timely and unexpected act of kindness: someone giving me an orange, a cup of tea, or a kind expression. Shaykh Hisham mentioned that, when he was in seclusion for 50 days, he was told that he could drink as much tea as he liked, as a way of making his experience bearable.⁶¹⁶

Vulnerable people told me that they felt accepted and supported by Shaykh Nazim: this was Shaykh Nazim as “Shaykh Baba”, a nurturing and forgiving father figure. A London single mother, who had had a very difficult childhood, had her family photo on the wall: with her, her four children, and Shaykh Nazim: who was no relative, and certainly not the father of the children, but the emotional support who kept her going, and set the pattern of her family life. Some of the people around Shaykh Nazim had psychiatric histories or learning disabilities, and were treated with love and respect. Dervishes almost universally commented on Shaykh Nazim’s warmth, as well as his insight into their personalities.

Some people, however, leave the Order in response to adverse or overtly horrific experience, or feel that it is not for them. A visitor to Lefke told me that what he felt to be the dervishes’ narrow-mindedness, and intolerance of dissent, reminded him of the Salafis he had repudiated. Another visitor felt that the violence and cruelty he became aware of would not be tolerated by a truly holy man. One dervish told me that he had become upset with a German master’s (supposed) misunderstanding of shamanism, and shaken by the hostility he felt from the other dervishes when he argued with the master. He moved town, leaving behind his girlfriend, who remained a follower.

⁶¹⁶ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *Fifty Days*, 2010.

A few spiritual memoirs have been written by people who considered themselves ex-followers of Shaykh Nazim. Kristiane Backer, an internationally known presenter of pop-music programmes, became a Muslim through Shaykh Nazim, and took *bayʿa* with him,

Whenever I needed company but didn't want to head out into the London nightlife, I visited the Sufis. In the last few months, Shaykh Nazim's group had become a kind of refuge for me, and a source of tranquillity and inspiration. The group prayer, the communal zikr, where we praised God, the shared meals—it all did me good.⁶¹⁷

This period ended when she took Bob Geldof (who was unimpressed) to meet Shaykh Nazim, and found, a few weeks later, that a Turkish newspaper had printed an article about Bob Geldof converting to Islam.

I called the Sufi group and vented my anger. This was a betrayal of trust, I told them—not only had one of them taken pictures of Bob without his agreement, they had also spread deliberate lies about his interest in Islam and his alleged conversion... I didn't know if the Shaykh had approved of what happened, but it didn't matter. Despite my complaints, the group wouldn't remove the entry from their website, and soon they had posted new reports that suggested even Prince Charles had converted.⁶¹⁸

The pseudonymous Ibn al-Rawandi became a Muslim through Shaykh Nazim, and took *bayʿa*, in 1985. He writes (2000: 19),

...it became plain to me that I was leading a double life. Some of my personal reservations about Islam, Sufism, and religion in general were not shared by other members of the group, liberal as they were in comparison with Muslims in general. This situation led to my gradual disillusionment, distancing, and “dropping out” of activities. About this time the Rushdie affair broke, and I was forced to decide whose side I was on. Needless to say, it was not the side of the Muslims.

Without close personal contact, it is difficult to know whether people consider themselves to no longer be followers of Shaykh Nazim. No physical register exists; no subscriptions need to be paid; no meetings have compulsory attendance. When I was in Oxford, many people became Muslim,

⁶¹⁷ Backer 2012: 161.

⁶¹⁸ Backer 2012: 163.

and took *bayʿa*, through the Naqshbandi-Haqqani zikr group. But the number of core attenders stayed at around seven to ten. Without asking around, I had no way of knowing whether people who had briefly attended were disillusioned, or had simply got other things to do on a Sunday evening.

The extent of repudiation is also difficult to gauge. Ibn al-Rawandi, whose *Islamic Mysticism* relies heavily on radical and revisionist criticism of Islam and “Sufism”, describes Shaykh Nazim as “self-deluded” and “not above dissembling and cheap tricks”; but he also remarks that “Shaykh Nazim is in many ways an endearing figure... if he has faults, they are those inherent to Islam and Sufism.”⁶¹⁹ Several years after leaving the Shaykh Nazim group in London, Kristiane Backer was Shaykh Eşref’s guest of honour in Berlin:

I told them about... our visit to the jewel of Bosnia, the famous Naqshbandi Sufi *tekija* [Bosnian for *tekke*]. And then I remembered that incredible feeling of love I had experienced in front of one of the tombs. The Shaykh was visibly moved. “Do you know who is buried there?” he asked me.

“No idea,” I responded.

“Sari Saltuk Baba was a great dervish, who is venerated as a saint by many. He moved some 800 years ago from Bukhara in Uzbekistan to the Balkans,” he told me. “He had special spiritual powers and was sent by his Turkic shaykh to open the hearts of the Western people.”

I was amazed. “So all these centuries later, he touched my heart,” I said.

“In the spiritual world, time and space are irrelevant,” agreed the Shaykh. “There are no coincidences and the fact that he kissed you awake means you have been given a task.”⁶²⁰

An experienced dervish pointed out that part of Naqshbandi-Haqqani training involves pushing people to the edge of their tolerance, so some do run away. They are said to have fallen victim to tricks of their egos, that can be overcome with zikr and repentance. Another experienced dervish remarked that all the people who left seemed to come back—eventually. Whether or not this

⁶¹⁹ Ibn al-Rawandi 2000: 186, 196.

⁶²⁰ Backer 2012: 368.

impression is accurate, it reflects the Naqshbandi-Haqqani teaching that people who think they have left remain under Shaykh Nazim's umbrella. Shaykh Mehmet comments,

Even towards those *murīds* who have abandoned him, Maulana [Shaykh Nazim] never stops loving or praying for or helping them, right up to their last breath. Only when such *murīds* are shown in *ākhirat* [the afterlife], to what extent their Shaykh had been kind and generous towards them, will they be filled with the deepest shame and regret, that they had doubted and avoided him, during their worldly lives.⁶²¹

One of the masters said, in my presence, "Once you have crossed our threshold, you are under our feet." He then, while talking about some wrong things I had done, rested his feet on my lower legs, in a brotherly fashion, as though to illustrate symbolically that, even while sinning, I had been under the masters' care. Many dervishes experience the masters' personal care as very real.

Dervishes who stick with the sometimes gruelling Naqshbandi-Haqqani training are said to develop good character. One theme of Naqshbandi-Haqqani discourse is that violent and hard characters become reformed, and do a great deal of good. I was told that one of Shaykh Nazim's followers in Cyprus had been a hitman in west-central Europe, but was now devoted to a prayerful, quiet life. In south London, a few of us got talking about a widely loved and respected old man:

Dervish 1: Do you know X? He used to be a real bad boy when he was younger.

Dervish 2: [Trying to speak well of an absent friend:] He's a real Peckham character...

Dervish 1: He was, you know. Even the blacks in Peckham were scared of him. When he was younger, you couldn't look him in the eye.

Dervish 2: He's like the mascot of Peckham. Everyone in Peckham knows him. When he's walking in the street, everyone comes up to him, says hello...

Dervish 1: And when he came to Islam, I was so glad for him. It just goes to show, you can't judge a book by its cover.

⁶²¹ Shaykh Mehmet, *The Thief and the Saint*. Transcript retrieved from www.sufiHub.com/?p=7690. Posted 16 October, 2012.

Through surrendering to God, rather than being dominated by their ego, people are said to develop the ability to be happy with whatever God sends; which includes being happy with others and with life in general.⁶²² “In all religions,” remarked Shaykh Eşref, “It is said, *Thy Will be done...* that is what makes people saints.” The paradigm of coping with illness is the Prophet Job, who lost all his descendants and possessions, had a disabling, disfiguring disease, and was abandoned by all except his faithful wife Rahma. “The more he suffered,” remarks Hajjah Amina, “the more patient he grew and the closer his heart drew to his Lord.”⁶²³ “Surrender must be inward and outward, like a dry leaf in the wind,” remarks Shaykh Nazim. “Even if it gets blown into a fire, nothing will you hear from it.”⁶²⁴

Even for people who do not reach such surrender, illness is held to be an expiation of sins, as is adversity in general. A dervish remarked that Safar, a month in which calamities are traditionally said to be sent, is “a blessed month: month of cleaning. If bad things happen, your sins get washed away.” For this reason, it is called Safar *al-khayr*: Safar the Good.

Such insight was reflected in a dialogue between three South London dervishes:

Dervish 1: [Concerned:] Let me know your test results, please.

Dervish 2: So what, if I have cancer? [Joking:] My sins are gonna be cleaned and I’m gonna die. Or they’re going to cut me open, take out a parasite, and [mimes something finishing].

Dervish 3: Can I have your car’s logbook? [Dervish 2 appreciates the joke, and they hug.] Or your tv licence?

Dervish 2: I don’t have a tv licence. I don’t watch tv. Haven’t watched [it] in 4 years. Why should I pay them to lie to me? Here’s a joke: a man goes to a hospital, and the nurse asks him, do you have any mental illness in your family? He answers, “Well, my uncle used to believe what he saw on tv!”

I have taken on too much anger, too many burdens, and now I am paying for it.

⁶²² This principle was summarized by al-Hujwiri (1996: 162): “When you are reconciled to Him in affliction, you see only the Author of affliction, and the affliction itself does not come; and if you are not reconciled to Him, affliction comes and your heart is filled with anguish.”

⁶²³ Hajjah Amina, *Lore 1*, 2008: 335.

⁶²⁴ Shaykh Nazim, *MO 2*, 1980: 82.

The knowledge that suffering is a purification, or correction, can help people to undergo suffering with relative equanimity. When I was ill, a dervish said to me,

There was this saint, and every day he was in pain. One morning, he woke up, and all his pains were gone. And he asked, O my Lord, have I done something to displease you? Because pain is a cleaning. Then his pain came back, and he did a prayer of *shukr* [thanks].

A paradox is inherent in this: illness can be good for people, to the point of being welcomed. Nonetheless, Shaykh Nazim emphasises the seeking of health, as part of the surrender to God:

When [a person] has lost his health, he is going to be [a] burden on himself and on others, also... If a person loses his health, he can't do anything, can't work and can't pray, can't stand by his servanthood... Therefore, as all grandshaykhs have said, and also my Grandshaykh was saying (now, also, I am hearing it from him), that the most important thing for mankind to learn and to keep and to act on, is knowledge for keeping their health.⁶²⁵

The masters are said to take on burdens on behalf of others: not for selfish reasons, but as part of their duty of care. The first time I met Shaykh Eşref, he answered all my questions in rapid succession (without my having to ask them). I felt unburdened. “This is Athar,” he said to the people sitting with us. “This is *tutar*,” he said, using a Turkish word for something that holds on to or catches something (or someone), and pointing to himself.⁶²⁶ “Athar, *tutar* [he and I mimed a game of catch]. He throws his burdens and I catch. They end up in the dustbin.”

Shaykh Hisham wrote that, when he wanted to enter the Divine presence, Bayazid Bistami was told, “My price is that you have to go back and become a refuse heap, a place where My servants throw their garbage.” Shaykh Hisham comments, “This means, ‘Carry the burdens [including the sins] of My servants.’ If you carry people’s burdens, making no discrimination between them, you can never say, ‘This one is white; that one is black; this one is yellow; that one is red; or this or

⁶²⁵ Shaykh Nazim, *Eye*, 2007: 38–39.

⁶²⁶ Redhouse (1978: 1250) has the adjective *tutar*: “that seizes, catches, holds, or upholds.”

that.' No! All are human beings. Once you accept this fact and go and become a carrier of people's burdens, Allah says, 'I will open My Divine Presence to you.'⁶²⁷

This carrying of burdens is said to extend to illness. Khalid Baghdadi died during a plague in Damascus. He is said to have prayed that the plague be taken from all the people and put on him. The day after he died, "It was as if a miracle had happened in Damascus, the plague immediately stopped and there were no further deaths."⁶²⁸

6.3 Healing

The Naqshbandi-Haqqani order can therefore be viewed as a comprehensive healing service. Primarily, souls are being healed; but bodies are also healed, as servants (or aspects) of the soul. Since they are under Shaykh Nazim's care, people are being healed all the time, whether they know it or not.

People are said to come to Shaykh Nazim when they have found no answers elsewhere. The point before they meet him (or spend a little time in his spiritual presence, for instance at a Naqshbandi-Haqqani zikr) is said to be their lowest point. From then on, their lives start to improve; although this might require that they be turned upside down.

A London shaykh commented that to fit new dervishes into a mould was wrong: "You are contaminating what God has given them." Shaykh Nazim quoted a hadith, "The paths to God are as numerous as human breaths."⁶²⁹ Every dervish is given a highly individualised set of challenges and prescriptions to set them on the path to the divine presence. Dervishes' ability to benefit from the Shaykh's transmissions and arrangements varies. A London shaykh remarked that a person had read a book of Shaykh Nazim's and wept: "What sins have I committed, that this person should be on the planet Earth and I should not have known about him?" But, the shaykh continued, this

⁶²⁷ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *PC 1*, 2005: 27

⁶²⁸ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *NSW*, 1995: 281.

⁶²⁹ Shaykh Nazim on the back cover of Hixon (1993).

person was like “dry wood”: once aware of Shaykh Nazim, he was ready to learn. Other dervishes needed to be “dried out” first.

In some ways, people seem to get what they come for. I recall waiting by the exit door as people emerged from their departure meeting with Shaykh Nazim. A dervish who had come all the way from Yorkshire to ask Shaykh Nazim a question on *fiqh* emerged beaming, feeling that his problem had been solved. Someone else, who had confided in me about a specific problem, came out with that problem addressed. A dervish whom my travel companion and I had labelled as “spiritual” emerged in a trance, passing on a message to someone standing there: “You will attain.”

Some of the healing in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order is the kind of healing that might be conventionally classified as medical. Like *taṣawwuf* as a whole, it is said to be based on the examples and teaching of the Prophet. Medical techniques can be broadly classified as prayer (including energy-healing), physical treatments, and social and political activities.

A. Prayer

The basic forms of Naqshbandi-Haqqani prayer can be labelled, broadly, as *namāz*, *zikr*, and *duʿā*: the last being a “call” to God, a prayer in which God is addressed. *Zikr* can be done constantly or spontaneously, or in the form of a *wird* or *wazīfā*; these options are not mutually exclusive.

The daily *wird* is often done just after the dawn prayer, or between the mid-afternoon and night prayers. Depending on which version the student uses, it can take anything between about 10 and 50 minutes. The weekly *zikr*, the *Khatmu ʿl-Khwājagān*, is generally done on a Thursday night—which, because days begin at sunset, is the beginning of Friday. Because family and work commitments, or travelling long distances at night, can make Thursday evening *zikrs* difficult to attend, the weekly *zikr* is sometimes held on a Friday afternoon after the congregational prayer, or on a Saturday. People are encouraged to increase their *zikr* in the Islamic months of Rajab (God’s month), Shibān (the Prophet’s month), and Ramadan. There are special *zikrs* for holy days, such as

Ashura and Arafat.⁶³⁰ The Prophet's birthday, in the month of Rabi 'l-Awwal, is commemorated with prayer, feasting, song, and charity; the night of his conception, the Night of Desires, is also commemorated.

The Naqshbandi-Haqqani *awrād* are in Appendix 3. Every *wird* is, to an extent, a *wazīfā*. The standard daily *wird* will be adjusted according to the seeker's commitment and capacity; the *Khatm* can also be varied: such that, at Feltham, the *Khatm* was hardly ever exactly the same for two consecutive weeks. The variations seemed to reflect, at least in part, the capacities and circumstances of the group. A London shaykh commented that silent zikr is recommended in the *Khatm*, because it tends to prevent ostentation, which is "absolutely forbidden in the Naqshbandi Way". However, loud zikr was generally used, as it was more supportive to "young" dervishes.

Shaykh Nazim has, like Naqshbandi and other Sufi masters before him, adapted the *awrād* to meet the perceived needs and potential of his disciples. His most striking innovation has been the adoption of techniques usually associated with other orders: whirling, associated with the Mevlevi order; and the energetic, loud *ḥaḍra*: in which dervishes, standing in a circle, chant and dance. Historically, the Naqshbandi *Khatm* has been done without musical instruments; but the Naqshbandi-Haqqani *Khatm* was sometimes enlivened by a drum; in Cyprus, I attended a *Khatm* which was accompanied by a solo (and renowned, I was told) violinist.

Dervishes assert that Shaykh Nazim is perfectly qualified to do this: he trained in the Mevlevi and Qadiri orders (Qadiris use the *ḥaḍra*), and received the "secret" of other Sufi orders through the Golden Chain: Ahmad Sirhindi, for instance, was a master in the Naqshbandi, Qadiri, Chishti, and Suhrawardi orders. Moreover, the Naqshbandi order is said to be the "mother *ṭarīqa*", and to start

⁶³⁰ Ashura is the 10th day of the month of Muharram. Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters say that, on Ashura, Adam was forgiven; Moses was given the Ten Commandments; the Red Sea parted; Jonah was released from the whale; Jacob was reunited with Joseph; Job was healed; Solomon was restored to his throne; Abraham was released from Nimrod's fire; Christ ascended to the heavens; and the Prophet's grandson, Husayn, was martyred. Arafat is the 9th day of the month of Dhu 'l-Hijjah, and is the most important day of the Hajj, when pilgrims gather on the plain where Adam and Eve are said to have been reunited.

where the other orders end: so a Naqshbandi master can have an overview of the techniques used by other orders.

All recommended prayers are said to be good for the mind and body, not least because they build up spiritual energy. But some prayers are especially associated with healing, and are recited at times of illness. These prayers include the following:

☞ The opening *sūra* of the Koran (*Fātiḥa*)

The *Fātiḥa* is arguably the most characteristic Naqshbandi-Haqqani prayer. It is recited once in each cycle of *namāz*, twice in every daily *zīkr*, and several times in the *Khatm*. It also tends to be recited whenever a dervish makes a prayer request. Sometimes, for instance, a dervish will stand outside the mosque, chatting, and mention something he needs prayers for, and his companion will smile, nod, say “*Fātiḥa*”, and signal that his friend can join in.

The *Fātiḥa* is considered to be a very powerful prayer. In one of the first English-language lectures of Shaykh Nazim’s to be transcribed, he commented on the importance of the *Fātiḥa* and the mercy it is said to bring:

Our Grandshaykh says, “*Fātiḥa*, the first *sūra* of Quran, came [to the Prophet] twice, once in Mecca, and once in Medina. What is the reason that Allah sent this *sūra* twice?”

“It is because *Fātiḥa* is the most important *sūra* in Quran. According to tradition all Holy books are contained in Quran, and all meanings of Quran are contained in *Fātiḥa*. Therefore, if a man reads *sūra Fātiḥa*, it is as if he had read all Holy books and Quran also!...

“Allah sent *Fātiḥa* first in Mecca. Along with it came endless *Rahma* (mercy). Gabr[i]el, bringing *Fātiḥa* to Muhammad (peace be upon him), said, ‘O, Muhammad! Allah Almighty gives you his salaams and says to you, *Good tidings for Fātiḥa; if anyone from your umma (nation) reads Fātiḥa even once, in his life, it will be enough, and more, for that servant!*’

“He who reads **Fātiḥa** will take enough *Raḥma* [mercy] from one reading to last his whole life. Even if he is an unbeliever, one reading will bring him to *Īmān* [faith], perhaps at the last moment of his life. This is because faith is original, inborn with people. Unbelief is a temporary condition added later. **Fātiḥa** will bring faith even to a doer of bad things.

“The second time **Fātiḥa** came was in Medina... The second *Raḥma* for **Fātiḥa** was so big and so powerful that the angels who brought the first *Raḥma* were unable to carry it. Allah said to Muhammad (peace be upon him) the second time, *O my Prophet! I am sending to you, from My mercy oceans of Fātiḥa, only one wave; one wave only from the mercy oceans in My Divine Presence! If you knew the whole mercy oceans belonging to Fātiḥa, you would not order your nation to worship, pray, or anything else; for that mercy from Fātiḥa would be enough! But no one knows the wideness of My mercy oceans!*⁶³¹

This extraordinary statement of the salvific power of the *Fātiḥa* may reflect, at least in part, a hadith collected by Ibn Arabi, and reported on the authority of Abu Bakr, the archetypal Naqshbandi:

By My Loving Power, by My Majesty, by My Overflowing Generosity, by My Nobility! Concerning those who cry out “*bismi ‘Lāhi ‘l-Raḥmāni ‘l-Raḥīm*, in the Name of Allah Most Compassionate, Most Merciful,” and then recite once the Opening Chapter of Holy Quran, *Sūra Fātiḥa*, be you witness, O [Archangel] Israfil, I have already forgiven these persons. I have accepted their acts of goodness and separated them from their acts of negation. I will not place the Fire upon their tongues. I will protect them from the Divine Chastening experienced after death by those who lead lives of negation. I will save them from great terror on the Day of Resurrection. I promise they will meet Me directly in the blessed company of all prophets and saints.⁶³²

☞ The six Koranic verses of healing

These are as follows:

Wa yashfi ṣudūra qawmin mu’minīn

⁶³¹ Shaykh Nazim, *MO 1*, 1980: 57–58 (italics added to signify embedded quotes).

⁶³² Hixon and al-Jerrahi 2002: 44.

And [God] will heal the hearts of believing people (9: 14).⁶³³

Yā ayyuha 'l-nāsu qad jā'atkum maw'izātun min rabbikum wa shifā'un li mā fi 'l-ṣudūri wa hudan wa raḥmatun li 'l-mu'minīn.

O mankind, a warning from your Lord has come to you, and a healing for what is in the mind, and a guidance and a mercy for the believers (10: 57).

Yakhruju min buṭūnihā sharābun mukhtalifun alwānuhū fihī shifā'un li 'l-nās

From within [bees'] bodies issues a drink of many colours, in which is healing for mankind (16: 69).

Wa nunazzilu mina 'l-Qur'āni mā huwa shifā'un wa raḥmatun li 'l-mu'minīn

And we sent down, in the Koran, what is a healing and a mercy to the believers (17: 82).

Wa idhā mariḍtu fa huwa yashfīn

And when I am ill, it is He who cures me (Koran 26: 80).

Qul huwa li 'l-ladhīna āmanū hudan wa shifā'un.

Say: it [i.e., the Koran] is a guidance and healing for people who believe (41: 44).

Koranic commentary is beyond the scope of this dissertation. But it is readily evident that themes of these verses are found in Naqshbandi-Haqqani healing: in the use of the Koran, and by implication (in Naqshbandi-Haqqani practice) a teacher and *taṣawwuf*; the linking of healing to guidance; the use of natural medicines; the emphasis on the mind (the Koranic use of *ṣudūr*, chest, is interesting in the light of Naqshbandi understandings of *laṭā'if*); and the ultimate reliance on God.

⁶³³ *Ṣudūr* means “chests”, but can legitimately be translated as “mind” or “heart” (Lane 1984; Redhouse 1978).

☞ Other Koranic verses

Yā Sīn, the 36th *sūra* of the Koran, is traditionally recited over dead and dying people. The 58th verse is used for healing:

Salām! Qawlan min Rabbi 'l-Raḥīm

Peace! A word from a merciful Lord

The “Verse of the Throne”, 2: 255, is widely used for protection:

Allāhu lā ilāha illā huwa 'l-Ḥayyu 'l-Qayyūm. Lā ta'kḥudhuhū sinatun wa lā nawm. Lahū mā fī 'l-samāwāti wa mā fī 'l-arḍ. Man dha 'l-ladhī yashfa'ū 'indahū illā bi idhnihi. Ya'lamu mā bayna aydihim wa mā khalfahum wa lā yuḥīṭūna bi shay'in min 'ilmihī illā bi mā shā'. Wasi'a kursiyuhū 'l-samāwāti wa 'l-arḍ. Wa lā ya'ūduhū ḥifzuhumā. Wa hūwa 'l-ʿAlīyyu 'l-ʿAzīm.

God. There is no god but He,⁶³⁴ the Living, the Existing. No reduction in consciousness seizes Him, nor sleep.⁶³⁵

To Him is all that is in the heavens and the earth. Who intercedes with Him, save by His leave? He knows what is before them and what is after them; and they encompass nothing of His knowledge, save as He wills. And His Throne encompasses the heavens and the earth;⁶³⁶ and the safeguarding of them burdens Him not; and He is the Most High, the Magnificent.

To call on God by His Greatest Name is said to be especially powerful. Various Koranic verses and other prayers are said to include this name, although there is no obvious textual similarity between them. A dervish healer, highlighting a Koranic prayer, told me, “Maybe the *ism-i a'zam* [Ottoman

⁶³⁴ Dervishes told me that the verse of the Throne is powerful partly because it contains the syllable *hū*, often used to refer to God, several times. *Hū* is usually translated as “He” (although God has no gender); Shaykh Hisham translates *hū* as “He, the Absolute Unknown One” (Shaykh Hisham, *Guidebook*, 2004: 180).

⁶³⁵ *Sinatun* is generally (Arberry 1964; Pickthall 1994; Yusuf Ali 1987) given as “slumber”; Redhouse’s Ottoman lexicon (1978: 1081) has “drowsiness”. Trying to draw a distinction between *sinatun* and *nawm*, I have used “reduction in consciousness”.

⁶³⁶ *Kursī* is generally translated as “throne”. The word *kursī* is only used twice in the Koran: once in this verse, and once when referring to the prophet-king Solomon being temporarily usurped by an evil jinn (Koran 38: 34). The word usually used for “throne” is *ʿarsh*. Hajjah Amina (*Muhammad*, 2002: 2) draws a distinction between the *ʿarsh*, the Throne, and the *kursī*, “the Divine Court (the upper Heaven supporting the Divine Throne, the *ʿArsh*)”.

Turkish: “Greatest Name”] for you is _____”:⁶³⁷ implying that the Greatest Name may be different for different people.

The Name is said to be contained in the Koranic verses 2: 163 and 3: 1–2, if they are recited together:

Wa ilāhukum ilāhun wāḥidun; lā ilāha illā huwa ‘l-Raḥmānu al-Raḥīm. Alif Lām Mīm. Allāh: lā ilāha illā huwa ‘l-Hayyu ‘l-Qayyūm.

And your God is one God alone; no god but He, the Infinitely Caring, the Eternally Loving. A L M.⁶³⁸ God: no god but He, the Living, the Existing.⁶³⁹

The Greatest Name is also said to be in the prayer which the Prophet Jonah recited inside the whale (Koran 21: 87):

Lā ilāha illā Anta subḥānaka innī kuntu mina ‘l-zālimīn

No God except You, Glory to You; truly I was of the unjust.⁶⁴⁰

To recite Jonah’s prayer 40 times during an illness is said to bring a cure; or, the status of martyrdom (complete self-sacrifice to God) if the illness proves fatal.

To read *sūra* 112 (*Sincerity*) three times is said to be the equivalent, in terms of blessing, to reciting the whole Koran: so it is another way of reciting God’s greatest name.⁶⁴¹ The Greatest Name is also

⁶³⁷ *Ismu ‘l* is Arabic grammar; *ism-i* is Persian, and hence Ottoman Turkish and Urdu.

⁶³⁸ The Koran contains letters, the *muqatta‘āt*, which are meant to be pronounced but not to form part of a word: the Arabic letters *Alif, Lām, Mīm* are translated here as A, L, M (their English equivalents). Understanding of the *muqatta‘āt* is said to be bestowed by Divine grace.

⁶³⁹ *Qayyūm* has a range of meanings that are difficult to encapsulate in one word. They include: existing, uncaused, independent, sustaining all others, enduring, eternal (Bayrak 2000; al-Ghazali 1995).

⁶⁴⁰ *Innī*, translated here as “truly”, has connotations of certainty (Lane 1984: 109) and insight. The root *z-l-m* refers to “acting wrongfully, unjustly, injuriously, or tyrannically”, and has connotations of “misplacing”, “transgressing”, darkness, and depriving people of their rights (Lane 1984: 1920–23; Isutzu 2002).

⁶⁴¹ It may seem inconsistent, or paradoxical, that three recitations are equivalent to reciting the Koran, and a hundred can be recited daily in lieu of one-thirtieth of the Koran. A Naqshbandi-Haqqani teacher said that such paradoxes hint at God’s mercy being infinite.

said to be contained in the divine names *Yā Hayy*, *Yā Qayyūm*,⁶⁴² if they are recited together; and in the *basmala*.

☞ Prayers for the Prophet (*ṣalawāt*)

The point of a *wird*, I was told, is that certain prayers, said in certain combinations, have predictable and useful effects on the soul. However, prayers for the Prophet, *ṣalawāt*, can be recited as often as the dervish likes, to only good effect. Shaykh Hisham has published a book of *ṣalawāt* (2012), in which he describes the sometimes immense spiritual and psychological gains made available through these prayers. A book of *ṣalawāt* widely used by Sufis in various orders, *Dalāʾilu ʾI-khayrāt*, is used in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani daily zikr. A translation of *Dalāʾilu ʾI-khayrāt* by a Naqshbandi-Haqqani dervish, Andrey (Hassan) Rosowsky, was published in an Arabic-English edition (2006); Shaykh Hisham published an edition in which the Arabic was both translated and transliterated (2011).

Ṣalawāt specifically used for healing include the following:

Allāhumma ṣalli ʿalā Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa ʿalā āli Sayyidinā Muḥammadin bi ʿadadi kulli dāʾin wa dawāʾin wa bārik wa sallim ʿalayhi wa ʿalayhim kathīran kathīrā; wa ʾI-hamdu li ʾLlāhi rabbi ʾl-ʿālamīn

O God, bless our lord Muhammad and the family of our lord Muhammad, to the number of every illness and cure; and bless and safeguard⁶⁴³ him and them numberless times; and all praise is to God, Lord of all the worlds.⁶⁴⁴

Allāhumma ṣalli ʿalā Sayyidinā Muḥammadin ṭibbi ʾI-qulūbi wa dawāʾihā wa ʿāfiyyati ʾI-abdāni wa shifāʾihā wa nūri ʾI-abṣāri wa ḍiyāʾihā wa ʿalā ālihi wa ṣaḥbihi wa sallim.

O God, bless our lord Muhammad—the medicine of hearts and their cure, and the health of bodies and their remedy, and the light of vision and its brilliant lamp—and his family and disciples; and keep them safe.⁶⁴⁵

⁶⁴² O Living, O Eternal One. These words are, of course, found in a Koranic extract above.

⁶⁴³ The difference between *ṣalli* and *bārik*, verbs both translated as “bless”, is discussed in Appendix 3.

⁶⁴⁴ Shaykh Hisham, *Salawat*, 2012: 30; translation slightly changed.

Allāhumma ṣalli ʿalā Sayyidinā Muḥammadin ṣalātan tunjīnā bihā min jamīʿi ʿl-aḥwālī wa ʿl-āfātī wa taqḍī lanā bihā jamīʿi ʿl-ḥājātī wa tuṭahhiruna bihā min jamīʿi ʿl-sayyiʿāti wa tarfaʿunā bihā ʿindaka aʿlā ʿl-darajātī wa tuballighunā bihā aqṣā ʿl-ghāyātī min jamīʿi ʿl-khayrāti fi ʿl-ḥayātī wa baʿd al-mamātī yā Arḥama ʿl-Rāḥimīn yā Allāh.

O God, bless our lord Muhammad with blessings of deliverance from every state and affliction, and through them fulfil our every need, and through them purify us from all sin, and through them raise us to the highest [spiritual] stations, in Your presence, and through them make us reach the furthest degrees in all that is good in life and after death; O most Merciful of the merciful, O God.⁶⁴⁶

As illustrated by the first two *ṣalawāt* above, these prayers often request God to bless the Prophet’s family, as well as the Prophet himself. A widespread respect for the Prophet’s family exists in the order. Two dervishes (who themselves were said to be of Prophetic ancestry) remarked that such descent is associated with generosity, and an inability to tolerate cruelty—and a tendency towards sins of excess, rather than meanness. They also said that the Prophet’s descendants are found more or less worldwide, and people who are of Prophetic descent are often unaware of it; I heard that the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order in particular tends to attract people of Prophetic descent. The Prophet’s family is not necessarily restricted to his blood relatives: dervishes told me that Salman the Persian, second on the Naqshbandi Golden Chain, was counted among the Prophet’s family.⁶⁴⁷

Another Naqshbandi-Haqqani practice is to ask God to heal for the sake of the Prophet, or to ask the Prophet to intercede with God:

⁶⁴⁵ Shaykh Hisham, *Banquet*, 2008: 241–42. I have retained the translation of *ḍiyāʿ* as “brilliant lamp”; Lane (1984: 1809) remarks that *ḍiyāʿ* is more or less a synonym for *nūr*, light, but more intensive: in the Koran, the sun is termed *ḍiyāʿ* and the moon *nūr*. The prayer contains several other near-synonyms, whose shades of meaning I have tried to reflect.

⁶⁴⁶ Shaykh Hisham, *Salawat*, 2012: 12; translation slightly changed. The prayer of deliverance, like some other non-Koranic prayers, has different versions. Some versions omit *yā Arḥama ʿl-Rāḥimīn, yā Allāh*; others add another traditional prayer, *Hasban Allāh wa niʿma ʿl-Wakil; niʿma ʿl-Mawlā, wa niʿma ʿl-Naṣīr* (God is enough for us, and the best of Guardians; the best Protector, and the best Helper).

⁶⁴⁷ A tradition supporting this assertion is recorded in the Prophet’s traditional biography (Lings 1991: 217).

The first thing a patient must do is say, “I am Your servant. I have become weaker through this illness. I know it is as a result of my bad actions, my sins. Please give me Your Forgiveness for the sake of your most beloved and precious servant.”⁶⁴⁸

Allāhumma innī asʿaluka wa atawajjahu ilayka bi nabiyika Muḥammad, Nabiyi ʿI-raḥma; yā Muḥammad... [or yā Sayyidi...]

O God, truly I am asking of you and turning to you through your Prophet Muhammad, the Prophet of Mercy; O Muhammad... [or O My Master...]

☞ Other prayers

The following prayer was attributed by Shaykh Hisham to Hasan, the Prophet’s grandson. Shaykh Hisham commented, “Whoever does *wuḍūʿ*, prays four cycles of prayer and says this prayer, God will accept it from him whether or not he has any afflictions.”⁶⁴⁹

Yā wadūd, yā wadūd! Yā dha ʿI-ʿarshi al-majīd! Yā faʿālu limā turīd! Asʿaluka bi ʿizzika ʿI-ladhī lā yurām, wa bi mulkika ʿI-ladhī lā yudām, wa bi nūrika ʿI-ladhī malaʿa arkāna ʿarshika an takfiyanī sharra hādha ʿI-liṣṣ. Yā mughīthu, aghīthnī! Yā mughīthu, aghīthnī! Yā mughīthu, aghīthnī!

O Measurelessly Loving, O Infinitely Loving! O Lord of the Majestic Throne! O Accomplisher of what You desire! I ask You by means of Your Might that is not exceeded, and by means of Your Dominion that is not outlasted, and by means of Your Light that fills the pillars of Your Throne, that you defend me from the evil of this robber. O Rescuer, rescue me! O Rescuer, rescue me! O Rescuer, rescue me!

☞ The Naqshbandi-Haqqani talisman

This is printed, transliterated, and translated in Appendix 3. It asks God directly for help, as well as the Prophet; the first four caliphs; the Prophet’s grandsons, Hasan and Husayn; John the Baptist; Jesus; Khidr; the Mahdi, a deliverer of mankind whose mission is said to lead into Christ’s second coming; and the Mahdi’s seven deputies.

⁶⁴⁸ Shaykh Nazim, *Pure Hearts*, 1998: 76.

⁶⁴⁹ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *HV*, 2013: 65–66; translation of prayer and commentary slightly altered.

As well as being recited, prayers can be worn and displayed. This is particularly prevalent with the Naqshbandi-Haqqani talisman, which is put, as a sticker, on people's cars and houses; and, most commonly, worn around the neck or in a chest pocket, sewn into a leather pouch. This amulet was described to me by English dervishes as a "dog tag", a way for Shaykh Nazim to communicate with me.

The Naqshbandi-Haqqani talisman, and *ṣalawāt*, are said to be particularly useful against jinns, as are the last two *sūras* of the Koran. I understood, from fragments of conversation, that the talisman repelled bad jinns and attracted good ones.

In general, bad jinns are kept away if people keep to what are seen as good habits: the lifestyle broadly understood to be the *sunna*. A dervish commented,

People say they don't believe in *ṣiḥr*—black magic. But if you listen to [the wrong kind of] music, you're allowing *shayṭāns* into your life. That's *ṣiḥr*. Or if you come home, don't enter with your right foot, don't say *bismi 'Llāhi 'l-Raḥmāni 'l-Raḥīm*, you're inviting devils in. That's *ṣiḥr*.

Jinns are said to be more active at night. So specific precautions against them include not going out unnecessarily at night, and not unnecessarily doing housework involving water at night (jinns, being made of electricity, might be injured by the water and seek revenge). A human being can be affected through their hair. I was told that it is wise for women to cover their hair or, if this is not possible, to avoid letting it hang loose. Some dervishes had a practice of burying hair, when it was cut, to prevent jinns from getting at it.

I had not been brought up to think of humans and jinns as intersecting communities. A dervish experienced in treating jinn-related ailments told me this was just as well: if I did not think too much about them, they would probably not bother me. He told me that he himself had been asked to exorcise a jinn from a girl. He had done so by using the jinn's secret name, that he had been told by a woman of partly jinn descent (who, like him, lived in Yorkshire). In revenge, the jinn had

made his wife suspicious that, when absent from home healing the girl, he was having an affair. The jinn had also harmed his business. He therefore, in Lefke, sought help from a senior colleague, a respected shaykh from Syria:

The two required an interpreter, who told me that the Syrian asked him to translate literally, no matter how odd the words were. His efforts to paraphrase did more harm than good: the exorcists seemed to share an idiom with which the interpreter was unfamiliar.

The troubled exorcist told the Syrian shaykh the jinn's secret name, while the interpreter, as ordered, stopped up his own ears. A short time later, the Syrian told the younger exorcist that he had wrestled and subdued the jinn, who was now in the corner of the room. He gave the younger man a *wazīfá*, and said he would give him a ring so the jinn would serve him. He also told the young man that he should heat up certain spices and other substances and fumigate his home and place of work, saying another specific prayer as he did so.

In Lefke, I was invited to an exorcism, by the same senior dervish who had persuaded me of the persistence of magical practice. To my surprise, the exorcism was held in a room, opposite the prayer room, that most people usually never entered. I entered, a bit late, to see the patient, a young woman, seated near her parents and sister. Two senior dervishes, both of whom I recognised as generous-hearted people who had taken great interest in my wellbeing, were acting as exorcists. On the side, venerable dervishes prayed silently, beads in hand. I sat by the door, on the floor, next to two other junior dervishes. I felt initially rather like we were the audience at the theatre; then, we came to seem more like medical students, witnessing and playing minor parts in an operation.

The young woman occasionally spoke with the voice of the jinn, which seemed to have a different character from her own. The exorcists talked to the jinn, prayed aloud, and threatened the jinn with water ("I will burn you [unless you behave]"). The dervishes seated to the side actually seemed more senior: one of the exorcists had been acting as their assistant. I suspected they had overall responsibility for the procedure; for all I knew, their prayers could be having more impact than the actions of the exorcists. But they said little. Not knowing what to do, but wanting to be helpful, I prayed while I watched. I did not see or feel a jinn, but, on reflection, did not know what a jinn was supposed to look or feel like.

Towards the end of the procedure, one of the exorcists hit the young woman on her lower legs, to drive the jinn out. This could have been construed as an ethical dilemma for me, but seemed fairly straightforward at the time. I was a junior dervish, of little status and less emic knowledge; nobody (except perhaps the jinn) seemed to be badly hurt; nobody seemed to be doing anything consciously cruel; if I had made a fuss, I would have upset many people without changing the procedure. Later, one of my fellow junior dervishes remarked that the hitting was “barbaric: that’s not how you do an exorcism”. But neither of us was experienced enough to know.⁶⁵⁰

Later, I spoke with one of the exorcists about something that had bothered me: if, as I had been told, bad jinn were unable to enter the dergah, why would an exorcism be necessary in it? I do not remember his answer clearly, but it was something about jinns creating patterns of thinking and being that needed to be removed. He pointed out something I had failed to take note of: the “possession” had ended when the young woman was shown a picture of Shaykh Nazim.

In one extraordinary episode, in the early 1990s, several dervishes in the order were medically treated by a jinn. Word spread that Hajjah Amina had been successfully treated for gallstones by the psychic surgeon Stephen Turoff, and that Shaykh Nazim recommended him (one dervish I spoke to, years later, doubted that Shaykh Nazim ever had approved of Turoff, and felt the belief had been created through wishful thinking or misleading gossip). Turoff, at the time, was channelling an entity who claimed to be Abraham Joseph Kahn, an Austrian doctor who had been in practice towards the end of the 19th century. Turoff himself commented that the entity was “a very evolved soul” who “came in disguise” as Dr Kahn.⁶⁵¹ At one point, the entity claimed to be “using Dr Kahn’s body like Dr Kahn uses Stephen’s body”, and changed appearance to resemble traditional descriptions of the Prophet Muhammad.⁶⁵² Zero Quensel’s book about “Kahn”, *Wings of the Messenger*, sold, she told me, better than any of her books on Shaykh Nazim, but she threw away her remaining copies when, after speaking to a Naqshbandi-Haqqani imam, she was drawn to the conclusions that: (a) “Dr Kahn” was a jinn; (b) “Dr Kahn” was not the spiritual teacher she had

⁶⁵⁰ Subsequent reading (Zarcone and Hobart 2017; Pinto 2016; Flueckiger 2006; and others) persuaded me that the use of some physical force against a jinn is quite usual.

⁶⁵¹ Kahn and Quensel 1993: 21.

⁶⁵² Kahn and Quensel 1993: 87.

intended to portray him as. She continued to feel, however, that Stephen Turoff was a kind man who did valuable work.⁶⁵³

Sufi masters are said to be, on the whole, much better than junior dervishes at detecting jinns. They also can reportedly read a person's energy field, the *nasama*, and transmit spiritual energy for healing.⁶⁵⁴ Shaykh Hisham describes the transmission of spiritual energy as follows:

Depending on the illness, the healer activates the appropriate *latifa* needed to cure that sickness. In turn, the *latifa* produces more of its energy colour which itself attracts from the universal [spiritual] energy source more of the same light. The result of this positive feedback loop is a tremendous outpouring of shimmering globes of light which descend from the cosmic energy source onto the person of the healer.

...The healer is energised to the point where he radiates heat... through his hands and... light from his forehead. As a scientist shoots a laser, the spiritual healer emits the light and energy that he receives from the universal force. The healer massages the affected areas and the combination of heat from the hand and light from the forehead immediately begins the healing process.⁶⁵⁵

However, the process depends on the patient as well as the healer. Shaykh Nazim comments, "Real healing is to be able to send rays of power through your hands to the body of the patient who must be ready to receive the healing. Mostly people are closed and it is impossible even for prophets to reach them. A closed socket cannot transport electricity. On a patient like that you must try to crack open a weak point of their shell from where you can enter."⁶⁵⁶ Shaykh Hisham writes that he prescribes a zikr consisting of various "names of God", as part of energy-healing. This zikr attracts spiritual energy and generates heat in the patient's body. The healing process, which overall may last for several days or weeks, consists of cycles of healer-patient energy transmission and zikr.⁶⁵⁷

⁶⁵³ Turoff's healing practice is sympathetically documented by Solomon (2004).

⁶⁵⁴ This may have happened during one of my visits to the Tottenham dergah.

⁶⁵⁵ Shaykh Hisham, *Principles 2*, 2013: 54.

⁶⁵⁶ Shaykh Nazim, *Pure Hearts*, 1998: 75.

⁶⁵⁷ Shaykh Hisham, *Principles 2*, 2013.

The transmission of spiritual energy is not limited to the masters. A new dervish excitedly informed me, by text message,

X can heal with her hand! She did it to me last night. There was a ball of energy in her hand, of immense force, it had sound and movement, but could not be seen. Also met a woman who hears Sheikh Nazim and can see him (he told her to tell X what to do to me). Feel very well.

I came across several dervishes who practised Reiki healing. Naqshbandi-Haqqani dervishes in general have a practice of laying hands on sick people. Once, I was chatting with a dervish respected for healing, who said, as we shook hands with a mutual friend, “Did you feel the heat in his hands? He’s got healing in them!”

No healing process which involves the human body can be entirely non-naturalistic. Nonetheless, many events around Shaykh Nazim are commonly regarded as miracles. Shaykh Nazim is said to hide his miracles, from modesty; and also because he does not want dervishes to get attached to, or distracted by, the miracle. The first time I saw him, he emphasised very strongly that he wanted to be learnt from, not venerated.

Nonetheless, evident miracles may sometimes be unavoidable. Shaykh Hisham documented an incident in which a young man with severe gunshot injuries had reportedly been saved by “Grandshaykh coming to me [in his spiritual body] and doing surgery on me.”⁶⁵⁸ When I arrived in Lefke in 2010, several dervishes excitedly told me about a miracle that, they said, had recently taken place. An Argentine dervish had been working on a construction project, probably the new *tekke* on the mountain, and got a chip of stone in his eye:

There was blood everywhere. His eyeball was [the dervish relating the incident mimed something being severely disrupted]. Shaykh Nazim said, take him to the hospital. So the ambulance came, and he went to the hospital. But they couldn’t do nothing. So when they came back, Shaykh Nazim took a look at him, and spat in his eye, and the eye was back to normal.

⁶⁵⁸ Shaykh Hisham, *NSW*, 1995: 365.

Another well-known incident had occurred in about 2000, when Shaykh Nazim had reportedly brought back a child from the dead, after he had drowned (or choked to death); as he grew up, the boy was widely regarded as a spiritual teacher.

In 2010, in a case extensively covered by the international media, 33 Chilean miners were trapped underground; for 17 days, they had nothing to eat or drink. Remarkably, they all survived, and escaped after 69 days. I heard from Naqshbandi-Haqqanis that the miners had received spiritual support from Shaykh Nazim while underground. They had recited *lā ilāha illa 'Llāh, Muḥammad al-Rasūlu 'Llāh* while underground, and had emerged wearing the Naqshbandi-Haqqani amulet. Television broadcasts, I was told, had artfully not shown this; but, after their release, two of the miners came to Lefke, to thank Shaykh Nazim, and their meeting was broadcast.

Shaykh Nazim was also interviewed on television about the miners' escape; one of the interviewers mentioned a similar incident: "There was a Turkish person from Turkmenistan, who was always being tortured by the Chinese authorities. Each time they electrocuted him, there would be an electrical blackout in the place, and this man would see you. We heard he came here to see you too later, after he escaped." Shaykh Nazim replied, "Yes, he came, he is still here. You may interview him if you wish."⁶⁵⁹

One incident is of note, even though I only heard it from one source, because that source was a medical academic:

Shaykh Nazim is a master in all the *tariqas*: Shadhili, Mevlevi, Qadiri, he is a master in them all. Do you know the Rifa'i *tariqa*? They are famous for being able to pass knives through themselves and they will not hurt themselves. It is not just that they will not hurt themselves: you cannot see a wound. This healing is by permission of their spiritual master. They can even remove the head of one of them, and, by the permission of their master, they can put the head back on and the man will not die.

⁶⁵⁹ *More revelations about the Chilean miners: 22nd December 2010.* From www.sufiHub.com/?p=4028

Once, some dervishes tried beheading one of them, but they did it without their master being present. They did it without permission of their master. This was a very big mistake. They were not being supported. So they put the head back on, and the man was dead! What could they do? They called Shaykh Nazim, and he came. He said a prayer, reattached the head, and the man survived.

Shaykh Nazim says that he can heal only with permission: presumably, from God, via his spiritual masters. On one occasion, I heard that the Prophet had acted directly:

The fingers on one of my hands swelled up, then the other. Finally, I was doing all my work with only two fingers on my left hand. Then they swelled up too. This one was like a frog [gestures massive swelling]. This finger had a branch [of infected tissue] growing from it. [The general practitioner] gave me antibiotics, then double-dose, then antibiotics and anti-fungals. Nothing worked. Then I went to see the new doctor, and she said I would have to have my fingers amputated. I thought, I'm not having that! And I went home.

I was sitting on the sofa—I wasn't sleepy—and I saw him. I saw his beautiful face... I saw him like I see you now, except for the amount of light coming from him... he was bathed in light. So many rays of light were coming from him towards me. And he raised his hand like that [shows her right hand, raised, palm facing outward]: Guru Nanak is shown like that [this dervish was brought up in a Sikh family]. And he was beaming. And I thought... the only possible meaning is, I'm going to be healed.

I had seen the dervish's hands when they were infected—they were as bad as described—and when they were healed.

The Prophet is also said to have saved Grandshaykh Abdullah's life after Abdullah was shot in the heart in Gallipoli. More precisely, he insisted that Abdullah's spirit return to his body: "O my son, you were destined to die here, but we still need you on this earth in both your spiritual and physical form." On returning to his body, Grandshaykh Abdullah realised that it had been lying there for seven days.⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁶⁰ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *CINST*, 2004: 432–33.

Healing can be passed on through objects intermediate between the healer and the patient. Shaykh Nazim blesses people with his stick: one dervish, unable to consult him in private at the end of a long stay, was rapped on the forehead with the stick: which, another dervish commented, meant enlightenment. Scraps of Shaykh Nazim's clothing are used for blessing. In one well-known account, at the end of a period of seclusion at the shrine of Shaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani in Baghdad, Shaykh Nazim gave his cloak to the caretaker. Years later, he was in Lahore, at the shrine of Ali Hujwiri, when he was shown a cloak that had come from Abd al-Qadir Jilani's shrine, and healed anyone who wore it. He recognised it as the one he had donated.

B. Physical healing

Shaykh Nazim emphasises healthy lifestyles and diet. These are framed as following the Sunna of the Prophet. Shaykh Nazim notes that, among the Prophet and his companions in Medina, a skilled visiting doctor had no work to do.⁶⁶¹

The Sunna lifestyle is perhaps best expressed in the Lefke dergah, where Shaykh Nazim is the overall director, and dervishes have limited other work or educational commitments. The rhythm of the day is set by the prayer times, which, in turn, reflect the movements of the sun. Dervishes get up before dawn to wash and pray, and continue to pray until sunrise. Many then go back to sleep until they are woken at around 8:30 am. Other, hardier dervishes follow the more strongly recommended path, have a bite to eat, pray, and go out to work.

Between breakfast (which ends at 9:30 or so for the stragglers) and noon, work is relatively intense. Dervishes generally walk to work, in the fresh air, and do physical work outdoors: shovelling grain, planting tomatoes, picking oranges. After noon prayers, men doing heavy work will get lunch. The afternoon's work tends to be less intense. Dervishes come back to the dergah for afternoon prayers, and Shaykh Nazim's *sohbet*, and then relax, pray, and chat until sunset prayers. Dinner, the second meal of the day, follows sunset prayers. Then night prayers, tea, conversation, and bed.

⁶⁶¹ Shaykh Nazim, *NM*, 1995: 27–28.

The food served in the dergah reflects Shaykh Nazim's views on health. The food is, in general, light;⁶⁶² the gaps between meals are supposed to help the body eliminate toxins. Breakfast tends to consist of lentil soup with bread. Dinner is typically soup, bread, and rice with stew. Waste is abhorred. Some dervishes reflected that Shaykh Nazim was able to turn more or less any ingredient into palatable food;⁶⁶³ surplus food from one day tended to end up in the next day's soup.

Bread is baked daily, on site. On Friday, the Sabbath, the baker makes an extra load of special bread (such as "pizza bread" or olive bread) for lunch. A store of stale, hard bread is kept in the canteen. It is considered to go better with soup than fresh bread does; but, for me (and I think I may have been in a very small minority), it provided a tasty snack between meals. Stale bread was described to me as a medicine; even the small amounts of mould were healthy ("After all, what is penicillin?").

In contrast to stale bread, old tea is said to be a poison. Fresh tea is, literally, on tap at all times, kept in the samovar and topped up by the dervish responsible. Grandshaykh Abdullah is said to have drunk more tea than water;⁶⁶⁴ and the use of tea may partly reflect the Order's recent roots in the Caucasus. But it is generally regarded as a healthy drink: not just for the body, but as a way of taking the edge off the ego's ravings. Tea also served as a drink for dervishes to bond over, especially when British-Pakistani dervishes got together, after night prayers, to brew a giant pan of milky tea, over which many dervishes (from various backgrounds) chatted.

In Lefke, dervishes work six days a week; but the work is social, varied, and challenging, so does not feel too arduous. Dervishes are also, of course, free to drop out at any time, though I imagine it might be difficult to remain popular and keep skiving from work parties. One dervish used to turn up late, leave early, and, to all outward appearances, was barely noticed. I found that, when staying

⁶⁶² In *Natural Medicines* (1995: 28), Shaykh Nazim quotes hadiths supporting this kind of diet: "We never eat until we are hungry and we don't eat too much"; "We should leave one-third for food, one-third for drink and one-third for air in the stomach."

⁶⁶³ Felpete and de Felpete 2010.

⁶⁶⁴ Hajjah Naziha, *Heavenly Food*, 2009: 151.

in a guesthouse, as opposed to in the *dergah*, I was only asked to work on the land when I approached Shaykh Mehmet, who (I realised in hindsight) wanted to teach me something. In general, pilgrimages are given priority over work, but a visiting dervish typically spends only one day touring the various pilgrimage sites of Northern Cyprus: St Barnabas, of course, often together with the Lala Mustafa Paşa mosque in Famagusta; the graves of seven disciples of the Prophet (*Ṣaḥāba*) on the coast near Girne; and, if permission exists, the graves of forty disciples near the village of Akıncılar, not far from Ercan Airport.⁶⁶⁵

Shaykh Nazim recommends a division of the day into three lots of eight hours: for sleep, prayer (including family life), and work.⁶⁶⁶ Shaykh Nazim strongly discourages nightlife, as being bad for body and soul. Zikr should take up at least two hours a day: it improves the health and decreases the need for sleep. I got the strong impression that dervishes, in particular senior dervishes, tended to be self-employed. Several *dergahs* were based in the countryside, and the dervishes who ran them were, at least in part, farmers.

Industrial techniques were not altogether frowned on by Shaykh Nazim: he used a small, old tractor, rather than a horse and cart. In general, however, his farming aimed at labour-intensive, seasonal, organic, integrated food production. Ingredients from the Order's farms are used in the *dergah's* food; tea leaves and orange peel from the kitchen are used to feed chickens. Honey and olive oil are sold locally, and oranges are exported.

A dervish widely respected as a healer reflected that industrial farming had taken foods honoured in the Koran and the Bible, and made them poisonous. Bread, thanks to the Chorleywood process and other advances, was insubstantial, held together with emulsifier, and difficult to digest; salt was refined sodium chloride, a toxin; olive oil had much of the goodness refined out of it. Milk, even

⁶⁶⁵ The Ömeriye mosque in Nicosia, just south of the ceasefire line, is said to be a *maqām* (spiritual home) of Khidr; I even heard that people can meet him by praying morning prayers consistently in a certain part of the mosque. However, I was not aware of this mosque being a widely attended place of pilgrimage.

⁶⁶⁶ This structure is similar to that recommended by Jeremy Taylor in *Holy Dying* (1651), on the authority of St Ambrose (McNeill 1977).

when organic, was pasteurised, which denatured health-giving proteins; and homogenised, which broke up fats into molecules small enough to slip into the bloodstream and cause allergies. Water was problematic:

Dervish healer: Shaykh Nazim always said, don't drink bottled water, but when I was in Manchester in 2004, he said, English people, don't drink tap water any more... He said, they've changed it.

Other dervish: But isn't the plastic in the bottles a problem?

Dervish healer: Not as much as the aluminium in the tap water.

Argentine dervishes remarked that Shaykh Nazim didn't like people to use bottled water, so tap water could be drunk if it wasn't too bad; or, a filter could be used. The same dervishes, who ran a dergah in Patagonia, had managed to grow a heritage variety of wheat:

Last year we found, thanks to a patient, an old wheat seed which was brought in sacks by the first Welsh immigrants that arrived in Patagonia... [It] is nowadays known as Jones wheat or Trevelyn⁶⁶⁷ wheat. It is a hard, red wheat, ideal for making bread, it was the same wheat used by the ancient people, the armies during millenniums in Europe till demand or stupidity substituted it for [the] soft, white wheat we have nowadays. Jones wheat... persists only in Patagonia and in the south of India, it disappeared in the rest of the world. In the sixties the great... transnational corporations... bought seeds from little farmers around the world, that still used old seeds[,] and burnt them.⁶⁶⁸

Shaykh Nazim emphasised the importance of eating organic food, when possible, and cooking from basic ingredients. He advised people to buy food from health food shops, saying that any extra cost would be offset by their needing, and wasting, less food; or, even better, to grow their own food. I heard that Shaykh Nazim, when younger, had done a lot of cooking in the dergah.

In *Natural Medicines*, Shaykh Nazim emphasises the use of food as medicine. Such attitudes have spread through the Order, not just through his example and instruction but through the expertise

⁶⁶⁷ Should probably be "Trevelin".

⁶⁶⁸ Felpete and de Felpete 2010: 23.

of various dervishes. Certain foods are widely and characteristically used medicinally: olive oil for skin complaints; a pinch of salt before and after meals, to promote digestion; a breakfast of seven dates, with milk, is said to be useful against black magic.⁶⁶⁹ Honey is used as an antibacterial and antiviral medicine, and to promote wound healing; it is also taken with morning tea (often on a separate spoon, rather than being stirred into the tea) to improve circulation, and counteract any tendency to constipation.

Food is not only healthy because of its material content, but because of its spiritual content. Indeed, one dervish told me, “[The healing is] in the *bismi ‘Llahi ‘l-Rahmani ‘l-Rahim*. If you treat people, you can tell them... but people don’t want to know, do they?” Another, who practised modern medicine at a high level, remarked, “If you have been told the healing power is in a melon, and you mishear and ask, ‘Is it in a lemon?’ and the shaykh says yes, the healing power goes to the lemon.” A London shaykh told me that soup is “the food of saints: it kills the ego”.

I was told that a weak *nasama* can be caused by bad diet, or by eating food that comes from oppression. The food of humble people, cooked with prayer, is said to carry “light” and “power”; the food of arrogant people carries “darkness”. Food should be cooked by people who have *wuḍūʿ*? ideally, people pray as they cook. In general, home-made food is spiritually more nourishing than factory food. Dervishes could bless their own food by saying the *basmala* before they began, and, ideally, before every morsel. Meat in the UK was, I was told, not halal even when it was labelled as halal, but could be made suitable for consumption by praying over it (one dervish said that Shaykh Nazim had recommended saying *astaghfiru ‘Llāh*, “I ask God for forgiveness”, 27 times); this did not, of course, apply to pork.

⁶⁶⁹ Shaykh Hisham, *Recipe for protection against black magic and negative energy*, 5 August 2012. Transcript retrieved from *Sufilive.com*.

Dergah food is said to be especially blessed. Sometimes, the masters will bless food for their followers.⁶⁷⁰ A characteristic technique of Shaykh Eşref's was to take a small sip from a cup of coffee and pass it on. More commonly, water was used for healing. During zikrs at Feltham, people left bottles of water open, for blessing. When Shaykh Hisham visited Feltham, people made a point of bringing bottles of water for him to blow into. He was said to be blowing zikr into the water. The water was then drunk for healing. I was told that, when half the water had been finished, it could be topped up, and the added water would take on the same healing properties.

I was told that Zamzam water could be similarly diluted. Despite recent plumbing arrangements, it is said to be naturally healing, having been blessed from the start. The water at the shrine of Abd al-Khaliq Ghujdawani is also used for healing; and a couple of dervishes told me of their suspicion that the water at the Peckham Mosque was blessed. Being in a holy place is said to be good for health: it is like being in the presence of the person who made it holy. More naturalistically, certain environments are recommended for certain illnesses: pine forests for chronic lung disease, the seaside for nervous exhaustion. Physical exercises recommended by Shaykh Nazim tend to take place in the fresh air, and have practical spin-offs: gardening, walking, making love, archery, swimming, and horse-riding.

Fasting is viewed as a physical detoxification, in particular for the liver and digestive system, as well as a spiritual support and, specifically, a way to tame the ego. Dervishes fast from dawn to sunset; those who are not strong enough may fast until one of the other prayer times. As well as the month-long fast of Ramadan, Naqshbandi-Haqqanis are encouraged to fast on six days of the following month, Shawwal, and on other holy days: the days after the Night of Desires, the Night of Ascension, and the Night of Destiny; and the days of Arafat and Ashura. On group pilgrimage in Damascus, we approached the Night of Destiny; several of us were not in good health, or not used to fasting; or wondered whether we had to fast, since we were travelling. Shaykh Eşref announced,

⁶⁷⁰ Vidich (2000) described Shaykh Nazim visibly blessing food in Lefke at mealtimes, in the days when he was fully mobile.

Tomorrow is a holy day. Those of you who can fast, can fast. Those of you who can only fast half a day, can fast until noon. The rest can do a German fast: *one hour* with nothing to eat.—But you can drink.⁶⁷¹

Other lifestyle measures emphasised by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis are, in themselves, unremarkable: tooth-brushing and avoidance of smoking. However, the discourse around them is distinctive. Tooth-brushing is said to increase the quality of prayer. In Lefke, many dervishes brush their teeth before every prayer. Some Naqshbandi-Haqqanis who wear turbans tuck a *miswāk* (tooth-cleaning stick) into their turbans. The *miswāk* was described to me as an “organic toothbrush”; Shaykh Eşref said that it “releases juices that kill bacteria in the mouth and in the stomach. Most illnesses come from the mouth or the stomach.”⁶⁷² The last phrase was a typical example of Shaykh Eşref’s wordplay: earlier, he had used the “mouth” to symbolise egotistical or unnecessary speech, and the “stomach” to represent the ego and its drives.

Shaykh Nazim disapproves of smoking because, he says, to deliberately damage your health is forbidden. He also remarked that smoking is bad for spiritual development: he said that it created a little hole in will-power through which a snake could crawl. On Hajj, my Naqshbandi-Haqqani guide was horrified that the (Salafi-leaning) leaders of the larger party to which we were joined smoked on the coach journeys in and between the holy cities. As he told them, to no avail, some people had lung problems such as asthma (he himself was coughing quite badly), and could not tolerate cigarette smoke. Smoking in the holy cities was hugely disrespectful. Moreover, the Prophet could not stand cigarette smoke, and would not come, in spirit, if people were smoking. So the joy and connection of people’s prayers would be disrupted.

To some extent, however, a homeostatic process kicks in. Just as following the Sunna creates health, sin leads to ill health—which is a purification.

⁶⁷¹ I thought the “German fast” bordered on being facetious until I became seriously ill, and found that a “German fast” in a frail person had the same effect as a whole-day fast on a strong person.

⁶⁷² For a scientific account of the *miswāk*, see Chaurasia et al (2013).

C. *Social and political healing*

A concept widely used by Shaykh Nazim is *salṭanat*: the sultanate. It refers not only to a divinely appointed king ruling in accordance with divine laws, but to the rule of the conscience (or “mind”, in Shaykh Nazim’s terminology) over the ego. Shaykh Nazim’s considerable social and political activity is said to be intended to create conditions conducive to an inward (and perhaps, eventually, outward) *salṭanat*.

The Naqshbandi-Haqqani order is not structured like a typical activist organisation. Annabelle Böttcher (2011: 106–07) felt that it was run with a “lack of care and [with] incompetence”, and was likely to fall apart, as it expanded, through lack of organisational skill. Shaykh Nazim’s defence against such accusations was as follows:

Among the signs that a Sufi *ṭarīqa* has lost its connections to the roots, that it has been severed from the Source of Divine Wisdom[,] is that the *ṭarīqa* begins to occupy its followers in various outward activities. These generally serve to distract from the realisation that no one is receiving any real spiritual guidance; no one is progressing towards his destination of inner peace and spiritual stations.

People who are seeking to fulfil some social, psychological, or economic need may feel satisfied with membership in such organisations, as they are often highly co-ordinated and provide the appearance of material and emotional stability and security. But the true spiritual seeker will never feel satisfied with membership in such a group, as all *ṭarīqas* that become official and formalised are no longer real Sufi paths: the spiritual has been sacrificed for the temporal.

Sometimes the followers of our Way express the wish that things should be more organised; but our organisation is a higher organisation, not like man-made ways. The difference is like that of a forest existing naturally on the mountainside with its trees growing at irregular intervals, and of a forest planted by men, with all the trees standing uniformly spaced in neat and straight rows. Although to man’s eye the natural forest may seem chaotic, the ecological balance and subtle organisation is real—perhaps much more so than in the planted forest.⁶⁷³

⁶⁷³ Shaykh Nazim, *MOPP*, 1983: 59.

In practice, the Order is strongly organised around Shaykh Nazim's charisma. Local groups nominally come under the jurisdiction of one or more intermediate masters, but quite often are hardly visited by a master from one year to the next: so, in practice, have a high degree of bureaucratic autonomy.⁶⁷⁴ Organisations under the umbrella of the Order can be minimally staffed and have a short shelf-life. The Sufi Muslim Council, intended to influence politics in the UK, had perhaps one full-time employee, and lasted from 2006 to 2010;⁶⁷⁵ *The Muslim Magazine* ran to a few issues in the late 1990s; *SpiritTheMag* ran to one, online issue in 2006. However, the aims which these organisations are intended to serve are often long-lasting.

A strong trend in Naqshbandi-Haqqani political and social activity is the attempt to secure sacred space. Healing Hearts, a small Glastonbury-based charity, established mosques, as well as schools, wells, and food supplies, in the Sahel. After the fall of the Soviet state, Shaykh Nazim and Shaykh Hisham worked to ensure the restoration and safeguarding of shrines in Central Asia. Even in Cyprus, Shaykh Nazim was credited by his followers with helping to restore the shrine of Hala Sultan; and the existence of a flourishing *dergah* at all in Cyprus is notable, given that by the 1940s, the only remaining active *tekke* in Cyprus was the Mevlevi *tekke* in Nicosia (Lefkoşa), which had only one resident.⁶⁷⁶

The restoration and revitalisation of holy places is depicted as allowing local people to have increased access to spirituality. It was also described to me as establishing a line of defence against Wahhabi-Salafi beliefs: if people had holy places and Sufi practices, they were less likely to fall victim, as the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis saw it, to Salafi ways and Salafi-funded organisations.

A prominent ally of Shaykh Nazim's was Turgut Özal, who organised the restoration of Bahauddin Naqshband's shrine in Bukhara.⁶⁷⁷ A more controversial character, especially in light of his human

⁶⁷⁴ Nielsen 2003.

⁶⁷⁵ Stjernholm 2011.

⁶⁷⁶ Nevzat and Hatay 2009.

⁶⁷⁷ Annemarie Schimmel's introduction to Buehler (1998).

rights record,⁶⁷⁸ was Islam Karimov, the long-time President of the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic (1990–91) and Uzbekistan (1991–2016). However, Karimov had a policy of warding off what he felt to be the threat of Wahhabi-Salafi revolutionary politics: and this involved restoring shrines and supporting Sufi groups. Indeed, Karimov may well have been one of the most pro-Sufi rulers of his time.⁶⁷⁹

In Naqshbandi-Haqqani discourse, the “enemy”, if there is one, is the Wahhabi ideology. Tayfun Atay (1999, 2012) documented that, in some respects, Naqshbandi-Haqqani identity was constructed in opposition to Wahhabi identity. This should not be overstated: most group discussions among dervishes end without a mention of Wahhabis or Salafis. And it is not a blanket condemnation: several dervishes have been Salafis, and still have Salafi friends and acquaintances; you hear sentences like, “He’s a bit Salafi, but I like him, he’s a good bloke”; and some people who are officially Wahhabi have reportedly joined Naqshbandi-Haqqanis for zikrs.

Nonetheless, Wahhabism, as a movement, is viewed as a great threat to humanity. Naqshbandi-Haqqanis identify it with the Antichrist. Ron Geaves observed that, in Britain, Shaykh Hisham had been crucial in stemming the advance of Salafi belief. Salafis had appealed to young Muslims in the 1990s by presenting an Islam that was seemingly intercultural, text-based, and rational, whereas Sufi practices brought by migrants to Britain could be portrayed as superstitious remnants of South Asian rural cultures. By leading an international, intercultural *ṭarīqa*, Shaykh Nazim and Shaykh Hisham represented an alternative form of Islam that did not depend on migrant roots and saints.⁶⁸⁰ Simon Stjernholm (2010, 2011) argued that the Sufi Muslim Council, although short-lived,

⁶⁷⁸ Murray 2006.

⁶⁷⁹ O’Dell 2017.

⁶⁸⁰ Geaves 2014; Geaves and Gabriel 2014; Stjernholm 2011.

helped to create a unified Sufi identity and action in a way that had not previously been achieved in the UK.⁶⁸¹

Moreover, like Wahhabi-Salafi Islam, Shaykh Hisham's Islam could be textually articulated, as in the *Encyclopedia of Islamic Doctrine* (1997). Together with scholars such as Nuh Ha Mim Keller and Abdal Hakim Murad, Shaykh Hisham helped to define a "Traditional Islam", based on Sufi teachings and *madhhabs* of *fiqh*, that depicted Wahhabi and Salafi approaches as unhelpfully novel and poorly grounded.⁶⁸²

Shaykh Nazim was qualified in *fiqh* (some sources describe him as the Grand Mufti of Cyprus), but did not write any books on the subject, except for the introductory *Her Müslümanın Bilmesi Gereken: Din Dersleri*. He did, however, often comment on issues related to everyday living, in ways that could be construed as commentaries on *fiqh*. He argued, for instance, that, contrary to Salafi consensus, instrumental music was not forbidden. Music that aroused the ego should be avoided; other music might be helpful or even necessary.⁶⁸³

In general, Shaykh Nazim advised people living in the West to follow Hanafi *fiqh*: he regarded the Hanafi *madhhab* as the most flexible, and the most suited to modern times. This advice was also consistent with the longstanding association between the Naqshbandi order and the Hanafi *madhhab*. Grandshaykh Abdullah had followed the Shafi'i *madhhab*, reportedly because he had been brought up in it. Shaykh Nazim was sometimes said to incorporate Shafi'i practices into Hanafi *fiqh*, for instance in choosing to pray certain *namāz* prayers. However, a scholar from Yorkshire, who had travelled all the way to Cyprus to consult Shaykh Nazim, said that this was not the case: Shaykh Nazim was using "minority rulings" within the Hanafi *madhhab*, and, as a master of *fiqh*, was entitled to do so.

⁶⁸¹ The extent of the SMC's success is difficult to gauge. It attracted little academic attention, other than Stjernholm's, and outcomes are difficult to measure. Sedgwick (2015) describes it as a failure, on the basis of its short lifespan and perceived closeness to the state, but does not study it in the same depth as Stjernholm does.

⁶⁸² Geaves 2014; Geaves and Gabriel 2014; Stjernholm 2011. Zeleke (2014) interviewed Ethiopian Orthodox Christians who sought healing from Sufi saints, but regarded Wahhabis and Pentecostal Christians as misguided.

⁶⁸³ Shaykh Nazim, *MO I*, 1980.

Shaykh Hisham, who had studied *fiqh* at a college allied to the Al-Azhar University in Cairo, wrote and publicised a *fatwā*, legal ruling, forbidding domestic violence. Shaykh Gibril Haddad, a Naqshbandi-Haqqani scholar, wrote extensively on *fiqh*; he edited and introduced a *fatwā* against suicide bombing, in the wake of the London atrocities of July 2005.⁶⁸⁴ Naqshbandi-Haqqani scholars sought to expose what they saw as the shallow roots and inadequate reasoning of Wahhabi-Salafi scholarship;⁶⁸⁵ in 2010, Shaykh Nazim gave a series of *sohbets* titled *O You Salafi Scholars!* in which he humorously characterised Salafi scholarship as “square-headed”, and obsessed with the concepts of *kufri*, *bidʿa*, *ḥarām*, and *shirk* (which can be briefly glossed as “disbelief”, “innovation”, “forbidden”, and “polytheism”).

When Shaykh Hisham arrived in the USA, Muslim migrants there tended to be professionals with modernist and Salafi sympathies, which were reflected on the boards of Muslim organisations. In 1999, at a meeting organised by the State Department, where several Muslim groups were represented, Shaykh Hisham claimed that 80% of America’s mosques were “run by the extremist ideology”, although “not acting as a militant movement”. Most Muslims were “peace-loving and tolerant”, and differed in their understanding of religion from the “extremists” running their mosques; but young people, in particular university students, were being influenced by extremism.⁶⁸⁶

The result, perhaps predictably, was uproar. American Muslim organisations issued a joint statement urging Shaykh Hisham to “promptly and publicly retract his statements.”⁶⁸⁷ Shaykh Hisham explained his remarks in several forums, including the *Middle East Quarterly*:

In Arabic, my native language, *extremism* and *terrorism* have very different meanings and cannot be used interchangeably... Extremism is an unwillingness to accept any viewpoint but one’s own. It is un-Islamic... The

⁶⁸⁴ Gibril Haddad, *Civilians*, 2006.

⁶⁸⁵ Examples of Gibril Haddad’s work in this direction include *The Four Imams and their schools* (2007) and *Albani and his friends* (2009).

⁶⁸⁶ I obtained a transcript of the talk from <http://members.fortunecity.com/amirm/Extremism.html>

⁶⁸⁷ Curtiss 1999.

Prophet Muhammad specifically stated, “Do not go to the extreme in your religion.” Extremist ideas are not violent in themselves but they do on occasion lead to violent acts.

The majority of Muslims are not extremists... Muslims as a whole are a peaceful people simply pursuing their lives and do not constitute a threat to anyone.⁶⁸⁸

Organisationally, Shaykh Hisham remained a somewhat marginal figure in US Islam⁶⁸⁹ until the collapse of the World Trade Centre’s twin towers. Then, he was, in the words of a *New York Times* report, “cast as the Muslim who dared to blow the whistle on his brethren.” Within a few weeks of the atrocity, he briefed the staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Uzbekistan; represented Muslims at the closing news conference for the World Conference on Religion and Peace, a United Nations nongovernmental organization; and made many appearances on network television.⁶⁹⁰ Later, he spoke at a foreign-policy conference on “How to minimise the role of Wahhabism”.⁶⁹¹

Shortly after his 1999 intervention, Shaykh Hisham had said, “we have saved the Muslims from danger by separating them from any ideology that might later be called extremist.” The same process was recommended, years later, by Shaykh Bahauddin, who likened extremists to a *jubba*, a cloak:

Nasrudin’s next-door neighbour heard a loud noise coming from Nasrudin’s house. He asked Nasrudin what it was.

“It’s all right,” said Nasrudin. “It was just my *jubba* falling downstairs.”

“But that was quite a loud noise!”

“Yes; you see, I was in it at the time.”

⁶⁸⁸ Pipes 2000.

⁶⁸⁹ Weismann (2014) remarked that Shaykh Hisham was “boycotted and slandered”.

⁶⁹⁰ Goodstein 2001.

⁶⁹¹ Baran 2004; Malik 2018.

Shaykh Hisham's actions seemed to give him influence in the US administration. Naqshbandi-Haqqanis told me that President George W Bush took Shaykh Hisham seriously, and that Shaykh Hisham had helped him understand that the "war on terror" should not be a war on Islam.⁶⁹² Shaykh Hisham was quoted as saying that, to his surprise, when he hugged President Bush, it was like hugging a saint. I saw photos of Shaykh Hisham with President Bush. They seemed to have a good rapport.

The Iraq War caused yet more controversy, as Shaykh Nazim referred to "St George Bush" and "St Tony Blair", and seemed to regard the war as a necessary evil, seemingly with a view to future, as yet generally unseen, historical developments.⁶⁹³ My fieldwork formally began a few years later. To the very limited extent that dervishes discussed the Iraq War in my presence, it tended to be with disapproval and disgust. However, a dervish did tell me that Shaykh Nazim liked George W Bush, "because he says what he's going to do, and he does it. Other people, they say one thing, and they do another. They're just as bad with what they do, but they pretend they're innocent."

In general, dervishes disliked military interventions in the Middle East, although Turkish dervishes tended, naturally, to approve of Turkish success in the region. Distinctive discourses around world affairs included a nostalgia for the Ottoman Empire, and anticipation of the advent of the Mahdi.

Shaykh Nazim often spoke in favour of the Ottoman Empire. One of his oldest students mentioned that Shaykh Nazim had asked him to correct the widespread poor impression of the Ottoman Empire, through educating people about it. For Shaykh Nazim, a legitimate government should be

⁶⁹² President Bush's rhetoric was, at times, strikingly pro-Islam. Shortly after the Twin Towers atrocity, he said, "The faith of terror is not the true faith of Islam. Islam is peace. The terrorists are traitors to their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself. I also want to speak tonight directly to Muslims around the world. We respect your faith. It's practiced freely by many millions of Americans, and by millions more in countries that America counts as friends. Its teachings are good and peaceful. And those who commit evil in the name of Allah blaspheme the name of Allah." (West L 2015)

⁶⁹³ *Sohbets* about the war have been archived on saltanat.org and sufismus-online.de.

led by a king: he cited the Koranic narrative in which the Israelites, seeking a leader, were given King Saul.

Shaykh Nazim argued that democracy was not what it seemed to be: illegitimate power often went unchecked. He also argued that nations who got rid of their kings seldom experienced peace as a result. He expressed happiness that the British monarchy remained, and hoped that Prince Charles would be able to take more power into his own hands. What people wanted was not necessarily what was right: for Shaykh Nazim, democracy resembled the rule of the ego.

Shaykh Nazim also, however, spoke witheringly of tyrants. His political thought therefore seems to have resembled that of Plato, in *The Republic*, where democracy comes in between enlightened government and tyranny. For Shaykh Nazim as for Plato, the nature of a government reflected its people. He told a story about the subjugation of Iraq by Hajjaj, the tyrannical Umayyad politician:

“O people!” said the tyrant. “Am I a good ruler or a bad ruler?”

“You’re a good ruler,” said the people.

“You lie!” said the tyrant, and executed them.

“O people!” said the tyrant to the next group of people. “Am I a good ruler or a bad ruler?”

“A bad one!” said the people, seeing what had happened to their predecessors.

“You lie!” said the tyrant, and executed them.

So, throughout the day, the prominent people of the town were executed, some for saying the tyrant was good, others for saying he was bad.

The last people to be summoned were the scholars. They were joined by a skipping, laughing *majdhūb*, who said he was looking forward to the feast, after so much sacrifice.

“O people!” said the tyrant, “Am I a good ruler or a bad ruler?”

“I will speak for them,” said the madman. The scholars were so stunned that they didn’t say anything. After all, had any previous reply been useful?

“You are neither a good ruler nor a bad ruler,” said the madman. “You are the ruler we deserve. You are sent to us in accordance with our own attributes.”

“That’s the first truthful answer I’ve heard all day,” said the tyrant, and set them all free.⁶⁹⁴

In general, the world would only be set right when the Mahdi appeared. A holy man and a descendant of the Prophet, he would battle the Antichrist. He and his followers would be praying in the Umayyad Mosque in Damascus, when Christ would descend on one of the minarets. Christ would then kill the Antichrist, and inaugurate a reign of world peace and plenty, a golden age without pollution or technology.

Shaykh Nazim has advised his followers not to rebel against the states they live in: he opposed, for instance, much of the “Arab Spring” of 2011–13. In general, he has opposed war (with the exception of the 1992–95 defensive war by the Bosnian state;⁶⁹⁵ and, seemingly, the Iraq War): he even encouraged Sri Lankan Muslims, during the protracted civil war, not to carry weapons.⁶⁹⁶ The Lefke dergah was visited by young men, from a European postindustrial town, who were disillusioned with the society around them and its perceived prejudices. One or two spoke of doing *jihād*, seeming to conflate it with urban rioting; though, as far as I could tell, they had no extremist connections or plans. After a few days, Shaykh Nazim gave a *sobbet* that had a powerful impact on the demeanour and discourse of the new arrivals:

We are doing *jihād*! [Cheers]

And there will be no guns! [Even louder cheers]

There will be no violence! [Cheers]

There will be no suicide! [Cheers]

And there will be no bombing! [Cheers]

⁶⁹⁴ My wording of a story told by Shaykh Nazim (in, for instance, *M O Lovestream*, 1987: 19–22).

⁶⁹⁵ Shaykh Nazim added, however, that “the trouble in Bosnia is not going to be solved with weapons. It will be solved through Divine Help.” (*P O Light*, 1995: 105)

⁶⁹⁶ “Muslims must be peaceful and we are citizens of a government and officially it is forbidden to carry weapons... Mostly weapons bring worst results for people.” (*P O Love*, 1993: 33)

There will be no suicide bombing! [Cheers]

The *jihād* will be against the *nafs al-ammāra*, the ego that incites to evil! [Loudest cheers yet]

Before they left Cyprus, he gave them concrete plans for constructive action that were very far from political violence.

After the September 11 attacks, Shaykh Nazim was photographed wielding a sword:⁶⁹⁷ to show, dervishes told me, that this was not the time for military *jihād* (which was, some said, fought with swords and prayers, not modern technology);⁶⁹⁸ that real *jihād* was fought bravely on the battlefield, not against innocent people; and that the essence of *jihād* was to use the sword of truth against the ego. More than once, I heard Naqshbandi-Haqqanis relate how Ali had laid down his sword in the midst of single combat, when his ego had been aroused.

Shaykh Nazim and Shaykh Hisham spoke out countless times against terrorism and suicide bombing; in Tottenham, the regular imam would not, it seemed, complete a Friday sermon without condemning suicide bombing. Shaykh Bahauddin said that murderous extremists were not Muslims.⁶⁹⁹ The overall attitude among the dervishes was summed up fairly well by a dialogue I had in Peckham:

Dervish: What is the first verse of the Koran?

Me: *Bismi 'Llāhi 'l-Raḥmāni 'l-Raḥīm.*

Dervish: What does it mean?

Me: In the name of God, the infinitely Merciful, the intimately Nurturing.

⁶⁹⁷ Dervishes noted that the sword was heavy. A middle-aged man commented that he couldn't have lifted the sword: Shaykh Nazim, then 79, was able to lift it through his spiritual power.

⁶⁹⁸ Some Samurai warriors are said to have believed that the use of firearms, as opposed to the sword, "diminished human stature" (Perrin 1979: 32; Totman 1980).

⁶⁹⁹ He mentioned a hadith predicting the emergence of people who would dress in black, use the Prophet's flag, and claim to be from him—but were not.

Dervish: [Smiles:] Good. Now, how do [extremists] behave? Are they Muslim? Have they read the first verse of the Koran?

“Political Islam” has tended to engender a cultural, superficially Arabised homogeneity: “Th[e] quest for a ‘pure’ Islam entails also an impoverishment of its content, which has to be thoroughly explicit and not linked with inherited cultural habitus or collateral knowledge (literature, oral traditions, customs). Islam has to be thought of as a ‘mere’ religion (which is, incidentally, also a prerequisite for secularisation).”⁷⁰⁰ In contrast, Naqshbandi-Haqqanis pride themselves on their cultural heterogeneity and their use and support of the arts. Shaykh Nazim has tended to encourage his students to preserve local cultures and crafts, such as saddlemaking and herbal medicine: towards the end of his life, he wrote *sohbets* using characters from Turkish puppet theatre.⁷⁰¹ Most revealing, perhaps, is the Naqshbandi-Haqqani attitude to instrumental music. Rightly or wrongly, dervishes believed that Shaykh Nazim had catalysed Yusuf Islam’s return to music. The Shaykhs Hassan Dyck and Bahauddin had their own music groups. Chico, a singer and actor briefly famous in the UK, gave public performances endorsing Shaykh Hisham (and, through him, Shaykh Nazim).⁷⁰²

The Order therefore represents a “political Islam” very different from the revolutionary, Salafi-inspired Islam that has often attracted that label.⁷⁰³ But, in its generally diplomatic way, the Order probably has more influence than many overtly political groups. In addition to visiting him, statesmen are known to seek Shaykh Nazim’s advice: in one memorable interview, he advised Pervez Musharraf to give up front-line politics and look after poor people (Musharraf ran for election, and ended up under house arrest). Shaykh Hisham is said to have mediated in a political crisis in Indonesia.

⁷⁰⁰ Roy 2004: 25.

⁷⁰¹ Shaykh Nazim used the traditional characters Hacivat and Karagöz. “In the shadow theatre, the running joke is that Karagöz speaks Turkish while his sparring partner Hacivat speaks Ottoman.” (Lewis 1999: 8)

⁷⁰² Morris (2016) noted that many British Muslim musicians were members of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, or moved in its social milieu.

⁷⁰³ Malik 2018.

The *saltanat* described by Shaykh Nazim was one in which central government was strong, but interfered little in people's lives. People would have their own land, and be able to produce their own food: communities would be largely self-sufficient, and waste would be minimised. He felt that this would be conducive to spiritual and physical health.

To a limited extent, this ideal was replicated in and around the dergah in Lefke, which was, to some extent, a self-supporting and self-regulating community. In the Order in general, informal support networks, notably around health provision and organic farms, created the potential for a little added resilience against economic and social adversity. Shaykh Nazim pointed out, more than once, that economic crises were not fundamentally economic but spiritual: they were created by greed and lack of insight.

Shaykh Nazim regarded women's rights as being human rights: based around spirituality, rather than full participation in the modern economy. He argued that the modern, unisex world exploited women:

I have never seen such cruelty as in the 20th century, especially coming from men. Men also work outside, then they come home, sit down and relax. At the same time, women come home from work, and have to continue to work at home... Then when these women have children, they don't even know their mothers properly, because except for a few hours, they are put in nurseries...⁷⁰⁴ We are fighting for women's rights by opposing the idea that women should carry a double load. In Islam the husband must try to help his wife as much as he possibly can in household duties, even though he may work all day.⁷⁰⁵

Annabelle Böttcher noted that leadership positions in the Order (which, of course, are not the same as influence) are largely held by men. She described Shaykh Nazim as having "an especially woman-hostile position", and as giving women "little chance in the struggle against the ego." Böttcher explained that women are not encouraged to formally go into *khalwa* until they are relatively free of other responsibilities; and quoted Shaykh Nazim as saying that women are easily

⁷⁰⁴ Shaykh Nazim, *NM*, 1995: 44.

⁷⁰⁵ Shaykh Nazim, *MOPP*, 1983: 111–12.

fooled by their ego. He also is quoted as saying that the ego is like a wild horse, and easily throws off a woman or an old man.⁷⁰⁶

However, the last statement is clearly figurative, since old men are not thought to be innately deficient in ego control. Shaykh Nazim implied that, for women, working from home could amount to a kind of seclusion.⁷⁰⁷ And, although Shaykh Nazim is quoted as saying that women are more easily fooled by their egos, he is also quoted by Böttcher as saying that they “arrive more quickly at peace”;⁷⁰⁸ which might seem to imply that women have a spiritual advantage over men.

Shaykh Nazim commented that “spiritually, [women] have exactly the same duties as men... The hadith to search for knowledge wherever you can, even if it means going to China, applies in the same way to women as to men”;⁷⁰⁹ and that women “are stronger than men in worshipping and they will easily reach a connection to their heavenly stations. Now it is possible for men to reach a connection in forty days, but we may do the same for women in forty hours! Then you [men] will look up [to the heavens] and wonder, ‘Where are they!’”⁷¹⁰

While arguing for a gendered society, Shaykh Nazim remarked that, ideally, women should be paid a double wage to do housework. He did not, of course, have the financial or political clout to arrange this. However, the Order did distribute very large sums of money. The cost of maintaining dergahs, and feeding people, was not negligible; and, of course, political and social activities cost extra. In addition, Shaykh Nazim gave frequent and sizeable donations to people in need. Someone who had spent many years alongside him told me that, for every person who donated, 99 would ask for money—and Shaykh Nazim would always give, even when people seemed obviously exploitative or frivolous. Vidich remarked that, in Cyprus, “Even those who were nonreligious or anti-Sufi often

⁷⁰⁶ Böttcher 2011: 120.

⁷⁰⁷ Shaykh Nazim, *MOPP*, 1983.

⁷⁰⁸ Böttcher 2011: 120.

⁷⁰⁹ Shaykh Nazim, *NM*, 1995: 45.

⁷¹⁰ Shaykh Nazim, *New Day*, 2014: 14.

expressed their appreciation for Shaykh Nazim's generosity and assistance that he had provided for either their friends or relatives."⁷¹¹

Naqshbandi-Haqqanis run rehabilitation programmes for street children in Indonesia;⁷¹² the leaders of the two largest Los Angeles gangs, the Bloods and the Crypts, became followers of Shaykh Nazim⁷¹³ (and, according to rumour, declared a truce). Farrer (2009: 216) observed that people came to the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order with "spoiled identities": new members included "gangsters, heroin addicts, drug dealers, alcoholics, sex-workers, wife-beaters, politicians... a Scottish lord, a Welsh prince, several long-term unemployed from the UK, and others suffering from some form of mental illness." The ability to support stigmatised and desperate people to turn their lives around is said to reflect Shaykh Nazim's spirituality. It is also an expression of the order's ethos of universality.

The ongoing supply of resources is depicted as a divine gift:⁷¹⁴ dervishes, including myself, observed the strange phenomenon of cooking-pots that did not seem to empty, although people were being served from them. In a parallel narrative, a dervish told me that Shaykh Nazim remarked on the need to attract rich people, to be able to do good on their behalf: "A rich person is always in debt to a poor person." Many dervishes gave their charitable donations to Shaykh Nazim, including the *zakāt* (annual tithe, a wealth tax of 2.5%), on the grounds that the donations would be best redirected and most blessed that way.

Charity is not just a social and personal obligation, but a way of removing illness. A dervish remarked,

⁷¹¹ Vidich 2000: 389.

⁷¹² Nugroho 2015.

⁷¹³ Farrer 2009.

⁷¹⁴ As Gilson (1982) pointed out, the *baraka* of a Sufi can be demonstrated by the flow of provisions, even if their source can be naturalistically traced.

You shouldn't take money for medicine, but there was one time when a *Ṣaḥāba*⁷¹⁵ was travelling, and a man said [mimes arrogance], "This is my town!" The man's son was ill, and the *Ṣaḥāba* said, I will treat him if you can give me some food and water. Because that was what he needed.

The man was rich, and, you know, money talks. He must have been able to afford all the best doctors. But none of them could help his son. So he went back to the *Ṣaḥāba* and said, "Please, can you help me?" The *Ṣaḥāba* said, I was going to do it before for nothing, but now I want payment from you. He read *Fātiḥa*, and the son was cured. Just think—all them doctors couldn't do anything; and just one *Fātiḥa* and the boy was cured.

The *Ṣaḥāba* went back to the Prophet, and said he had taken the money, and the Prophet said, "Well done. You did a good thing." —Because it was his money that was making his son ill, his greed. The taking of the money was needed so that his son could be well. People wonder why things are going wrong, why their lives aren't working out: it's because of the money they're hoarding. That's what *zakāt* is for: it takes the greed out of your money.

The Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters encourage dervishes always to donate to beggars (Grandshaykh Abdullah is said to have given a watch, that was a gift from a king, to a beggar, when he ran out of change). A dervish narrated,

Where Shaykh Hisham comes from, may Allah bless him, there used to be a beggar. And people would come up to the beggar and ask him, "Please pray for us." And the beggar would pray for them, but he would say, you have to give me a certain amount of money. And that money was different for each person... That was the money they needed to give away to clean themselves. Anyone who paid him the amount of money he asked for, the prayer was answered. He was one of the hidden *awliyā*?

Some of the money donated to the Order goes towards the expenses of some of the shaykhs. Böttcher reported that a "very successful Asian lawyer" called Shaykh Nazim every day, received his advice and blessings, and, in return, paid the "exorbitant bills for the [Naqshbandi-]Haqqani elite's stays in luxury hotels."⁷¹⁶ This sounds like an exchange of wealth for *baraka*, of the kind outlined

⁷¹⁵ In common with other English-speaking dervishes, he used the plural *ṣaḥāba*, rather than the "correct" Arabic (and Ottoman Turkish) *ṣaḥābī*, for "male disciple".

⁷¹⁶ Böttcher 2011: 98. Farrer (2009: 36) referred to the "first-class-jet-set lifestyles" of leading Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters.

by Crapanzano, although we do not know the motivations and perspectives of the donor, or, indeed, the recipient. Shaykh Nazim is spoken of by the dervishes as generous, rather than as someone taking part in an exchange. As with Zindapir,⁷¹⁷ his followers do not publicly object to his acquisition of a good car or of land; some point out that he lives an abstemious life, taking only “one plate of soup a day” from the world. A dervish asserted that criticisms of Sufi masters’ wealth were driven by “jealousy”:

If someone else has got something, be happy for them. There might be a reason they have it. Do you know Muhammad Ali, the boxer? He was on the *Parkinson* chat show, years ago, and [Michael] Parkinson asked him, you say you’re humble, but you have a Rolls-Royce. He said, “I have two Rolls-Royces!” Then he explained, “You people go to pray in church, which has lots of material in it, lots of show, you don’t go to a hut to listen to a wise man. I have these Rolls-Royces to grab your attention.” And the audience applauded.

Böttcher also wrote that, because “Shaykhs in the [Naqshbandi-]Haqqani order get no financial benefits”, they are often penniless and financially supported by their working wives.⁷¹⁸ I did not ask people about their source of income—and people were hardly likely to divulge potentially embarrassing information about their personal finances—but this was not the impression I gained. Among the senior shaykhs, Shaykhs Nazim, Hisham, Mehmet, and Bahauddin were clearly not dependent on their wives for income; of the shaykhs in Britain whose financial affairs I knew something about, two had their own businesses; one was a pensioner; and the other was a full-time imam.

Böttcher remarked, in addition, that shaykhs in the order received help from dervishes with a variety of tasks, which are framed as “training exercises”.⁷¹⁹ This is true. But dervishes can be seen, at least by themselves, as benefiting from these exercises; or as operating in the “Good Faith

⁷¹⁷ Werbner 2003.

⁷¹⁸ Böttcher 2011: 130.

⁷¹⁹ Böttcher 2011: 132.

economy” described by Werbner (1998), in which people help a Sufi master with his projects because they feel it is a worthwhile task, or because they like him.

Böttcher notes that the regulation of financial affairs in the Order seems “informal and somewhat chaotic”.⁷²⁰ Informality is certainly a characteristic of donations, whether directly to the masters or to dervishes or mosques claiming to raise money for good causes. Chaos is, to an extent, in the eye of the beholder, since the individuals who receive money seem to have a fair idea of what they want to do with it. Shaykh Nazim was effective at providing instant help to people in desperate circumstances, in ways that more formal organisations might have been unable to match. The lightness of infrastructure seemed to provide flexibility and speed.

I heard rumours, perhaps supported by remarks made by Shaykh Nazim and Shaykh Hisham, that some of the money donated for the Tottenham dergah had been misappropriated. As with the “fake shaykhs”, not everybody claiming to represent a good cause was acting in good faith; indeed, not all dervishes were supportive of Shaykh Nazim. This was starkly illustrated by a second-hand anecdote I heard from a London dervish.

Shaykh Nazim was giving his talk [in Tottenham], like he usually does. Suddenly he stopped, and his expression [mimes change of expression from gentle to severe]. And he said, “Someone in this room wants to finish me. I know who you are. I know what you are thinking. It won’t work. You had better leave now.” And someone turned round, and walked out of the room.

Similarly, Naqshbandi-Haqqani communications, or communications purporting to be Naqshbandi-Haqqani, might not always reflect Shaykh Nazim’s views. The *Saltanat* website was run from Shaykh Nazim’s house, and was as near as the Order got to an authorised website. *Sufilive* was clearly under the aegis of Shaykh Hisham: the regard in which it was held tended to reflect the regard in which dervishes held Shaykh Hisham. Other people ran websites that, they claimed, were authorised. But this did not necessarily mean that they were following Shaykh Nazim’s advice:

⁷²⁰ Böttcher 2011: 132.

Dervish: Mawlana, you gave me permission some time ago to build a [Sufi] mosque in X. And I am doing it and I am raising money for it. But Z came along and he is also building a mosque there. And he is making life very difficult for me. Please, can you give me permission to continue, so that I can tell the people I have authorisation?

Shaykh Nazim: Have you thought of building a mosque in Y [a neighbouring city]?

Dervish: But all the people will say that I have been collecting for X and now it is not here. Please give me permission to build this mosque in X.

Shaykh Nazim: [Hints at various ways this conundrum could be overcome]

Dervish: [Pleads to be allowed to continue in X]

Shaykh Nazim: [Sighs:] All right. [Kindly:] As you like.

I did not ask Shaykh Nazim his motivations; but it seemed to me that he was giving people orders they could follow, when they were not able to use the orders they should follow (this particular drama also seemed, I speculated, to be partly for my benefit). I also noted that a dervish who claimed authorisation for his website, and whose teachings seemed to me to be bizarre, nonetheless attracted an admiring audience: a reminder that the ecology of an order is complex, and not based on the limited preconceptions of an observer.

Werbner (2003) remarks that an influential Sufi order can be seen as a kind of alternative government. The Sufi tells, or advises, politicians what to do; he owns land; he receives, and distributes, large amounts of money; he advises people on their personal lives, sometimes even advising them on whom to marry or what job to do. To this could be added, in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, the provision of religious education and healthcare.

In addition, in much Naqshbandi-Haqqani discourse, the Order really does represent, and take part in, the world's governance. The administration of the world is seen to be done not merely by material means but by spirituality. The highest saints are distributors of mercy and power to the rest of humanity. In *Mercy Oceans, Book One*, Shaykh Nazim describes "four great saints" who

have “the task of governing and looking after the whole world”. These saints are called *quṭbs*, which, Shaykh Nazim says, is from the Arabic word for the pole star.

The top saint, the *Quṭb al-Aqṭāb*, is also the *Sulṭānu 'l-Awliyā'*? he is responsible for the other *quṭbs*, and his spiritual body is in the Ka'ba. The other *quṭbs* are the *Quṭb al-Bilād*, who “is in control of all countries”; the *Quṭb al-Irshād*, who “sends everyone to their destinies”; and the *Quṭb al-Mutaṣarrif*, who is the “treasurer”.⁷²¹ These tasks might seem to overlap, and the demarcation of roles is not described in detail. Hujwiri describes a hierarchy consisting of, in ascending order, 300 *Akhyār*, 40 *Abdāl* (the saints believed by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis to congregate spiritually every night in Damascus), seven *Abrār*, four *Awtād*, three *Nuqabā*, and one called the *Quṭb* or *Ghawth*.⁷²² This matches Shaykh Nazim’s description if we assume (and this can only be an assumption) that Hujwiri’s *Quṭb* is Shaykh Nazim’s *Quṭb al-Aqṭāb*, and Shaykh Nazim is using the word *Quṭb* to describe the *Nuqabā*.

In general, lists of the saints seem to vary. Shaykh Hisham lists six *quṭbs*, distinguishing the most senior, the *Ghawth*, from the *Quṭb al-Aqṭāb*.⁷²³ Werbner’s Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi informant describes three saints above the *Ghawth*: in ascending order, the *Khalīfā*, the *Iman* (*sic*: almost certainly meant to be *Imām*), and the *Qayyūm*.⁷²⁴ Even more than with the *laṭā'if*, it is difficult to know whether the lists differ because of experience, variations in classification, or error. Moreover, different people will perceive different Sufis as the highest saints.

In any case, the underlying concept seems to be the same: in Hujwiri’s words, “the saints of God are the overseers of His kingdom and the overseers of the universe, which God has committed

⁷²¹ Shaykh Nazim, *MO I*, 1980: 6, 16. During the period of my fieldwork, Shaykh Hisham was rumoured to be the *Quṭb al-Mutaṣarrif*.

⁷²² al-Hujwiri 1996: 214.

⁷²³ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, *Fifty Days*, 2010.

⁷²⁴ Werbner 2003: 201.

absolutely to their charge”.⁷²⁵ For Shaykh Nazim’s followers, of course, he is the highest saint in the hierarchy. One follower, an experienced dervish, described him as follows:

Without Shaykh [Nazim], everything in the universe, the whole creation, would collapse. Animals, people—even that wall over there. He gives the frequency that sustains it all. The light is his. And then these *shayāṭīn* [devils] come in, asking, how can one man have all that power? But he does. And he is humble. Can you imagine, with all that power, which of us would be humble?

6.4 Healing: extended vignettes

A: Me being healed

In 2001, I was chatting to a Caribbean dervish friend who had come back from Cyprus:

Shaykh Nazim let me massage his legs, and, brother, they were like iron! Not like yours or mine—he’s strong. They were like iron... and his message to you is, brother, look after your health. Keep fit: take exercise; and look after your health.

But he doesn’t know me. We’ve never met. How can he give a message to me?

He knows you, brother [laughs]. He said, “Tell Athar, look after his health.” I hadn’t told him about you or nothing.

In the following decade, I did almost anything but look after my health. I exercised, but rarely consistently or with conviction; my emotional health was neglected, if not discarded; I overworked and overworried.

Unsurprisingly, therefore, I fell ill. My first serious illness was an episode of pneumonia. Discharged after three days in hospital, I felt seriously unwell. I was visited at home by an old friend who was

⁷²⁵ al-Hujwiri 1996: 228.

also a Naqshbandi-Haqqani teacher. He prescribed a homoeopathic medicine to counteract the radiation of the CT scan I had received. Immediately on taking it, I started coughing up sticky phlegm from the inside of the lungs; this seemed to clear out the remaining infection and left me feeling much better. The dervish explained that he had given the medicine for the illness, as well, but hadn't told me, in case it put psychological pressure on me and stopped the medicine from working.

After my second visit to Cyprus, I got a serious chest infection, partly through misguided excess in following the dervish exercises I had read about. For two days, I sat on a sofa or lay in bed, hardly able to move, swathed in many layers of wool and several quilts to conserve the heat my body was conspicuously failing to generate.

My illness was almost certainly viral—it had started as a common cold, before my behaviour aggravated it—so I did not think seeing the doctor would help; in fact, the doctor would almost certainly send me to hospital, and, based on my experience of the cold and lack of food at my local hospital, I would almost certainly die there.

On the third day, I felt I had improved slightly, and was taken by my mother and her friend to the doctor, who prescribed an antibiotic. On my return, I was seriously unwell and slightly delirious; I read about the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain and alighted on a picture of Grandshaykh Abdullah Dagestani. The picture haunted me: I dropped to my knees, on a prayer mat that had been blessed by Shaykh Nazim, and asked Grandshaykh to ask God to cure me. I had never done such a thing before.

That night, I dreamt of Grandshaykh Abdullah. In a witty, gentle, and measurelessly concise way, he told me that there was no need to go to extremes; that what I thought of as important was nothing more than childlike obsession; that my knowledge was partial because of my refusal to recognise things I did not like; and that self-knowledge would lead to acceptance of the entire universe.

In the morning, I was well. I did not understand how I could have been cured so quickly; surely one antibiotic tablet would not have done that (and hadn't I suspected a viral illness anyway)? I took a couple more tablets, aiming to "complete the course", before realising I was getting an adverse drug reaction. My doctor telephoned me a week later, and was taken aback to find me well and on a bus.

At the time of my third visit to Cyprus, I was unfit, and found walking painful: I had plantar fasciitis, for which my doctor could only offer me a steroid injection, which I refused. I was also emotionally in a dreadful state: grieving and with a lingering sense of injustice. My dreams in the *dergah* showed me that, far from being wronged, I had been deeply in the wrong: I also saw my inconsideration dramatised by a cat (who eerily resembled someone I loved). I wept a lot: the *dergah* seemed a perfect place to let emotion out. I may, however, have overdone it. Tired, and unaccustomed to changing clothes in a communal space, I spent several days in my pyjamas, reassuring myself that they more closely resembled "dervish dress" than my day clothes. Later, I spoke to a bristly-bearded Chechen who had become a friend:

— So, you're a psychiatrist?

— Yes.

— When we first saw you, we thought you were a patient!—crying all the time, and dressed in your pyjamas.

[Pauses] Still, [consolingly] appearances can be deceptive. I mean, look at me. I spend all day in this heavy coat, even in the summer. I even sleep in it. People might think I'm mad.

My fasciitis caused me a social problem: I excused myself from the *hadra*, and some Lancashire dervishes thought I was disrespectful, or a snob, or both: partly because I was trying not to limp. One evening, I was eating when a longstanding resident of the *dergah* sat next to me. He mentioned that he could cure limps. He had helped a British martial arts master with a back

problem.⁷²⁶ The method was simple: “If I see a person is a good Muslim and I feel pity for him, I pray for him.”

The most important aspect of the prayer was its sincerity of the prayer. But he also used the *ismu 'l-a'zam*, which he recited. I tried to repeat it after him. “That’s correct,” he said. “But everyone has their own *ism-i a'zam*. Yours might be *lā ilāha illā anta, subḥānaka innī kuntu mina 'l-zālimīn.*”⁷²⁷ I repeated this phrase after him.

The next day, I walked without pain. With trepidation, I joined the *ḥaḍra* in the evening, and danced for around 25 minutes. I fully expected to be unable to walk the next day: but I had no pain at all. I was cured, and became a regular in the *ḥaḍra*.

I mentioned to the dervish who could cure limps that I had had a limp, and had been cured the day after I spoke to him. He was drinking tea, and spluttered in surprise. Later, I wondered whether the movements of the *ḥaḍra*, on the soft carpet, had acted as a kind of massage therapy. The fasciitis recurred a year later, when I had a serious illness causing widespread inflammation; it receded with orthotics and time.

In the dergah, I did not pace myself during physical work. I developed a chest infection after getting too close to dust, for too long, while shovelling hay. I injured my left shoulder by carrying sacks of grain: I shrugged it off and proudly slept on the bare carpet of the dergah, only to wake unable to use my right arm. I thought I had a nerve injury, and was disabled for life. A kindhearted junior doctor who was staying in the dergah diagnosed, accurately, a back injury causing a trapped nerve, but I was so unnerved by his seemingly bumbling manner (in the early hours of the morning)—and covering up my own ignorance, and guilt about my ignorance—that I overruled his diagnosis and asked him, “Do you want to kill people?” I was massaged with olive oil by my friends, and given Reiki healing by an Argentine dervish. Some dervishes looked aghast at my being

⁷²⁶ I knew the man he mentioned: he had helped me buy my first car.

⁷²⁷ Prophet Jonah’s prayer, inside the whale (Koran 21: 87). The dervish’s use of *ism-i* rather than *ismu 'l* reflects his Turkish background.

massaged during the dawn zikr; some, notably from the north of England, thought I was making a fuss about very little; others, notably from Italy and Argentina, wept and hugged me. The arm recovered within days, as you might expect when a nerve is trapped by a muscle. Mild left shoulder weakness remained for years.

On my return from 44 days in Lefke—local food, sunshine, early mornings, prayer, and physical work—I was physically much healthier, and mentally very sharp, though somewhat traumatised by events. The editor of the *Lancet* said that I looked 10 years younger; I worked 11-hour days (and commuted for 2 hours each way) without much difficulty.

Then, a meeting with an old friend, on top of longstanding underlying trauma, triggered a massive grief reaction. I realised that, through pride, I had destroyed my life, and done grave injustice to others. I felt as though energy had left my body, from the right side of my chest. I started feeling tired. A few weeks later, I picked up the flu, from sharing a long car ride with a sick woman freshly arrived from the Horn of Africa. The symptoms persisted.

My doctors told me that my illness could not be serious, because my chest was clear. Having worked, on and off, 11-hour days through 6 months of sickness, I was diagnosed with pneumonia. This was aggravated by a severe adverse drug reaction. Before long, my lips and the inside of my mouth were bright red; my lungs felt extremely heavy, and every breath was extremely painful. Eating and drinking were painful: partly because of reflux pain—which, I realised years later, had been triggered by another adverse drug reaction—but mostly because any heat or cold from the oesophagus was transmitted to the lungs. I could not go out, because the air hurt my lungs. Drinking water aggravated inflammation, causing exquisite pain. I was shivering and wrapped in several layers, with the central heating on full blast, and was unable to go out, although it was summer; my mobility was very limited and my energy levels were extremely low.

I was told that my chest was clear, and there was no physical explanation for my symptoms; perhaps I was somatising. A famous London doctor, whom I consulted in desperation, said my lung

was crinkled like a fried lamb chop, and would not get better; homoeopathic medicine (not, this time, from the Sufi) did not work.

At my most disconsolate—hardly mobile, hardly able to breathe, angry with myself, and feeling my life disintegrate—Sufi masters, in my dreams, told me meanings of my illness, and prayers to take me through (about which I was lackadaisical). I was told that I was “annihilated that I might start to live”. In one dream, Shaykh Eşref pointed to my most injured (the right) lung, which emptied of fluid. The next day, I was eating and listening to my mother converse on the phone, when, in surprise, I choked on a cake crumb. This dislodged some sputum that, the doctors had told me, was not there. In subsequent days, I coughed up more sputum, and my lungs felt a bit lighter. Pushing my chest to clear as quickly as possible, I coughed up chunks of pink tissue, which I assumed came from the bronchi.

I managed to drive to the Feltham mosque when Shaykh Hisham visited (a half-hour drive being substantially less taxing than a 15-hour work day). After the prayer meeting, I bumped into a medical herbalist who politely asked me how I was. When I told him, to my astonishment, he started describing some of the other symptoms I had (in contrast to medical doctors, who seemed doubtful even about the symptoms I described). He recommended I took onion juice, as recommended by Shaykh Nazim: 5 mL the first day, 10 mL the second day, and so on up to 45 mL on the 9th day: then keep taking 45 mL a day for another 31 days; I could take it for longer if I was still noticing the benefit. People often found onion juice unpalatable, but I could take it in water if necessary. The important thing was that the juice was completely separated from the pulp (which I could eat later in the day, if desired).

I recognised onion juice: as a remedy for cancer, that was held in high regard by the dervishes.⁷²⁸

Did he think I had cancer?

⁷²⁸ The remedy was attributed by the herbalist to Shaykh Nazim. In *Angels* (1995: 139–40), Shaykh Hisham says that his sister was told by an angel that onion juice “revive[s] the dead cells that the cancer thrives upon to extend over the body.”

No, but onion juice isn't just for cancer. It works by unblocking the lymphatic system. Western medicine has a blind spot about the lymphatic system. The Chinese don't. They call it "white blood" and pay attention to it. But we behave as though it just isn't there.

Cancer develops because the body is full of toxins. Unblocking the lymphatic system helps the body get rid of the toxins. You worked through a viral illness, hence your body hasn't had a chance to get rid of all the toxins. That's why your legs are so heavy and you feel so tired.

I took the onion juice, and felt much more energetic. I spoke to him around 2 months later:

Did I recommend anything for you last time?

Yes.

What did I recommend?

Onion juice.

Did you take the onion juice?

Yes, I did.

How many days is that now?

About 60 days.

Good... Mawlana [Shaykh Nazim] always begins by recommending something very simple, like "onion juice". So he'll recommend it, and you'll think, that's too simple! But if you do it, you'll notice the benefit. So I recommended something very simple for you. Now that you've done it, we can move on to something more detailed. If you hadn't done it, there would have been no point.

The herbalist told me that my lungs were full of phlegm, but the antibiotic had caused the phlegm—and the toxins—to be retained in my tissues. That was why my chest was clear, and why my lungs felt so heavy and breathing was painful. He recommended taking slippery-elm powder in water, and drinking soup with every meal. The slippery-elm preparation and the soup should be "of the same consistency as the phlegm". Soup was the "food of prophets", according to Shaykh Nazim, and was hydrating: more hydrating than water, since it was closer to the osmolality of tissue fluid. It could also provide micronutrients, especially if made, as was Shaykh Nazim's practice, from

leftovers. To my amazement, I started coughing up vast quantities of phlegm, often straight after drinking soup. This continued for 3 months.

I was not generating heat: the herbalist attributed this partly to a breakdown of my endocrine system. “One by one, as you’re under stress, your body’s endocrine organs shut off. That’s why women under stress often develop thyroid problems. The last organ to go is the pituitary. If that goes, you’re in trouble.” He said that, if things went as expected, my organs would gradually recover. He also recommended herbal treatments to help, including “heat balls” of powdered ginger and honey.

I wore thermal garments, as I had when a child vulnerable to chest infections: but, rather than making me feel warm, they just made me feel ill. The herbalist explained that this was because artificial fibres interfere with the body’s electric field. This field is regulated by the lymphatic system. I had not had problems before with artificial fibres because my lymph system had been in good working order; now, clogged with toxins, it was not coping. Corroborative evidence was my newly acquired exquisite electrosensitivity: having previously had to spend whole working days, as a journal editor, at a computer terminal (and done so uncomplainingly), I was now finding it literally painful even to watch television. The dervish’s suggestion, to wear cotton or wool instead of thermal garments, worked. When my electrosensitivity persisted, the herbalist suspected that I had heavy metals in my system, though I had no obvious recent exposure to metals, other than the small amounts in vaccines.

The herbalist felt that I had been a victim of the ethos of modern medicine: and this was a good time to understand it. Medical science was shaped too often by financial rather than patient-centred concerns: so doctors were unaware of cheap, natural treatments that worked. The doctors, while wishing to treat me as an individual, had only been able to take the diagnosis and treatment into account: not the wisdom that every person has a unique and dynamic constitution. The concept of convalescence was now treated as obsolete. “They suppress the symptoms, keep you working, damage your body, and then they throw you on the rubbish dump.”

The herbalist, and other dervishes, took a philosophical approach to my illness, regarding it as part of my personal development. If I had been living against my own best interests, and what was sustainable, I would be taught not to. It might also be a medical education: “You are such a good doctor... this way, you won’t be a hypocrite... When I was [working on a book on Sufi healing], I got nearly every illness in the book, so that I wouldn’t be a hypocrite: I would be talking from experience.”⁷²⁹ I should not, however, practise medicine until I was much better: in my current condition, my negative energy would affect my patients.

The herbalist identified that I was spending emotional energy uselessly: putting 100% of energy into everyday tasks (and therefore living on a perpetual emergency basis, that could now not be sustained); and experiencing considerable angst over things that could not be changed. He advised me to give 70% of my energy to tasks, so that I could build up reserves and recover, and not to get worked up when there was no need. In our general conversation, he remarked,

Mawlana loves the English working class, because they’ll put up with anything. What’s their response to adversity? “Mustn’t grumble,” or “Oh well, there you go.” They don’t riot, they don’t burn things: they just put up with it. And they really have had to put up with a lot over the years. But it builds character, and the ability to handle things with patience. And Mawlana loves that patience.

Initially, flushed with having been in a well paid job, and vaguely aware of how much private treatment usually cost, I gave him £100. But he refused, after that, to take any more than £30 for a consultation, and generally saw me, advised me by phone, and sent herbal tinctures, for free.

The herbalist was not the only person who recommended herbal treatment. Two dervishes commented that, in Naqshbandi tradition, what you need is always near you: had I got any interesting plants in my garden? Perhaps a weed growing there would be just what I needed. Not being a keen gardener, I was unable to identify many plants: notable exceptions being daisies

⁷²⁹ The *Oxford Handbook of Clinical Medicine* states: “If only we could live long enough to suffer from every disease, then we doctors could be of real service to our patients.” (Longmore et al 2014: 17)

(which my mother picked and dried, just in case) and dandelions. I later read, in herbal encyclopaedias, that dandelions might have been useful.

For months, I was hardly able to leave the house. I reflected that, just as I was leaving Cyprus, Shaykh Nazim had said that seclusion was essential for spiritual advancement. At the time, I had thought that seclusion was quite impossible for me, given my full-time job. I started to wonder whether I had underestimated the man.

Shaykh Mehmet recommended boiling *khubūr* in water and drinking the juice: “It is a bitter medicine; but you can have it with honey.” Dervishes told me that *khubūr* was pine resin; I read in *Natural Medicines* that pine resin is used to heal the lungs of people with tuberculosis. I drank the resin: at times, I felt heat and mucus over the painful areas of my bronchi; at times, I felt nothing. Eventually, I realised that the medicine had a tangible effect when concentrated enough to be bitter. I also wondered whether Shaykh Mehmet had been presenting a metaphor for my experience, perhaps one that could help me accept it. This sense intensified when I looked up *khubūr* in Redhouse’s lexicon, and in a modern Turkish dictionary. I did not find it, but I did find the similar-sounding *hubūr*, which had two entries in Redhouse: “Happiness, delight, comfort”, and “1. Men of learning and piety. 2. Inks. 3. Marks, bruises, scars or chafes from blows or friction.”⁷³⁰

A kind Indian dervish said that she had been in spiritual contact with Shaykh Nazim:

It’s all mischief. You’re not really ill. Every time you feel the pain, just say, *bismi ‘Llāhi ‘l-Raḥmāni ‘l-Raḥīm*, *bismi ‘Llāhi ‘l-Raḥmāni ‘l-Raḥīm*, *a‘ūdhu bi ‘Llāhi mina ‘l-Shayṭāni ‘l-Rajīm*,⁷³¹ *bismi ‘Llāhi ‘l-Raḥmāni ‘l-Raḥīm*, and wipe it away with your hand.

⁷³⁰ Redhouse 1978: 762. The metaphor may, of course, have been not at all what Shaykh Mehmet intended to convey. But, through contact with Shaykh Nazim and Shaykh Eşref, I had become accustomed to coming across double or even triple meanings.

⁷³¹ *A‘ūdhu bi ‘Llāhi mina ‘l-Shayṭāni ‘l-rajīm*: I take refuge with God from Satan, the accursed. Often said, as here, before the *basmaala*.

When I asked her what mischief was, she said, “Never mind!” Years later, reading anthropological studies of South Asian Sufis, I realised she must mean the effects of one or more maleficent jinns, perhaps deliberately introduced by a third party. I also reflected that certain experienced dervishes in Cyprus had been very eager to warn me about magic and even to invite me to an exorcism; or, indeed, to do rituals that I now recognised as combatting evil jinn(s). My readings in medical anthropology, and dialogues with dervishes, explained some bizarre behaviour of former associates as attempted sorcery, seemingly directed at me. A South London Cypriot dervish told me that, if someone did wrong because they had been harmed by sorcery, the sorcerer was held morally responsible.

The dervish who warned me about “mischief” also told me to see a healer who specialised in healing oils: “Shaykh told me [in a spiritual contact] that, if you keep taking these oils for 40 days, you will be cured.” I did see the man, but was sceptical of the rationale for his treatment, and did not notice much difference on taking the oils; so I never completed the course. Later, I wished I had given the treatment a chance.

By now diagnosed with chronic fatigue syndrome, I tried drinking water blessed by Shaykh Mehmet and Shaykh Hisham. When I took my bottle to Shaykh Hisham, I told nobody of my wish to have it blessed, and left early, despairing quietly at the crowds around him; only for a dervish to chase after me with water that had been blessed by Shaykh Hisham, with strict instructions on how to take it (that I did not follow).

I visited Lefke for 5 days, and reverently visited a particularly holy part of Glastonbury, of special significance to the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, dipping my hand in the rainwater there. The latter experiment caused a substantial improvement in my energy; which dissipated a little on putting my hand back in the water, and more when I visited Stonehenge (Stonehenge seemed to have, in a phrase sometimes used by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, “bad energy”).

Shortly after returning from Cyprus in 2012, I stopped the dervish exercises and took off my *taʿwīdh* (an amulet containing a talisman—see Appendix 3). I felt that my fieldwork was more or less over, and did not feel motivated to continue. Almost immediately on taking off the *taʿwīdh*, I did something regrettable, and, for no apparent medical reason, developed an excruciatingly painful infection; the pain of which was exacerbated by the pine-resin drink. The pain only decreased when I put the *taʿwīdh* back on. I resumed the dervish exercises.

In the course of my illness, I became aware of three or four energy points on the body, in the same locations as *laṭāʿif* described by Shaykh Hisham, although my experience of them was halting and limited in scope. The energy flow around them seemed to be improved by prayer and by recommended foods (organic food cooked by my mum; *zamzam* water; raw camel milk from the health food shop; breakfasts of dates and milk), and badly affected by sin. 6 months after a Sufi master said that I would be happy in 6 months, if I stayed with him, I felt energy re-enter the right side of my chest, and with it a flow of understanding and serenity. This state of bliss lasted until I committed a sin—that he had warned me about.

In the stillness imposed by my illness, I reflected and remembered instances when I had hurt and betrayed other people.⁷³² Each memory was like a knot which, when pressed, yielded excruciating pain, then relief; so long as I made the intention to atone. Suppressed memories of trauma also came in increasingly vivid flashbacks. Gradually, my life was much less of a mystery than an understandable tragedy; which contained, by definition, the possibility of redemption.

⁷³² An experienced dervish ticked me off for morbid dwelling on wrongdoing: “Do you hang your sin as glass balls on the ceiling of your bedroom?”

B: Me as a healer

Quite a few dervishes knew I was a psychiatrist.⁷³³ One, whose autistic son had been treated by a renowned consultant psychiatrist, said, “My son, I see you as an academic psychiatrist.” Others were not so sure. Before my long period of illness began, a dervish with expertise in healing (and a past history of severe mental illness) said,

I don't think you should become a psychiatrist for three reasons. Number one, you are very kind. People will take advantage of that.

Me: Yes, some doctors can be ruthless..

Not just the doctors, the patients too. They can be cunning. They lie a lot. Not all of them, but many of them. And you don't see that. They could attack you. You will be in danger. Number two, psychiatric hospitals are full of jinns. A lot of illnesses are caused by jinns. You are very sensitive to jinns, and very vulnerable. Number three, you will be in a forum where people are exercising their egos. It is a very egotistical place, psychiatry. No, psychiatry is not for you.

A dervish who practised Reiki healing warned me,

“Actions are by intention”:⁷³⁴ what are your real intentions as a healer? You can only be effective as a healer if you give people positive energy. And you can't do that properly if you still have negative energy within you. You can only heal properly if you understand your negative energy and your motivations. For example, why are you drawn to psychiatry? I'm not saying you're mad, but why does it move you much more than other medical specialties? All kinds of patients are suffering, not just psychiatric ones. Maybe you have some psychological reason for concentrating on psychiatric patients.⁷³⁵

Shaykh Nazim asked me, “What is your job?”

⁷³³ On one occasion, three men stood in line to shake the hand of the Tottenham imam after Friday prayer: a herbalist, me, and a junior doctor. The imam, with a touch of dry humour, greeted us all with “*Salām ‘alaykum, doctor*”.

⁷³⁴ “Actions count only according to intentions” is a well-known hadith (Gibril Haddad, *Four Imams*, 2007).

⁷³⁵ I realised later that I felt tremendous guilt around physical medicine, because of my failure to master clinical disciplines other than psychiatry, and a related failure to put patients and colleagues first.

Me [aware faintly of an irony in the situation]: Psychiatrist.

SN: Oh! [Pause] Many people in this *ṭarīqa* are crazy.

A Sufi master said of me that, “When he grows up,”

He won’t use the knowledge he learnt at medical school. But he will use the knowledge he picked up here.

Dervishes warned me that, if I did practise psychiatry, I would have to take good care of myself. I was in danger of getting “negative energy” from my patients and becoming ill.⁷³⁶ I should see no more than two to three patients a day, and take a shower between patients, or do *wuḍūʿ*? When I said that this would not be possible, one dervish said that another healer had been advised to slap a wall, or some wood, or something like that, to get rid of some of the negative energy: I could ask that healer for advice, or, better still, write to Shaykh Hisham via *eShaykh.com*. At least, I should take a shower on my return home, to avoid carrying heaviness from my work into my family life and relationships.

I did not take their advice. My health and family life did indeed suffer.

Tottenham dervish: How long have you been a psychiatrist?

Me: I first did psychological medicine in about 2001, but I’ve been ill...

I’m not surprised you’ve been ill. If you’re doing something like that, it takes it out of you. You’re taking on all people’s feelings, all that they’re going through. You have to learn to let go... You don’t think it gets to you, but it does... Shaykh Nazim says, only do it for 2 years at a time. Then do something else. You can come back to it, but do something else... I’m not surprised you’ve been ill, if you’ve been doing it that long. I’m surprised you’re still here!

Tottenham dervish: What are you [searching memory], a pharmacist?

⁷³⁶ “Sometimes a [spiritually] unauthorised healer can become ‘infected’ himself, because he does not have any protection. He can be affected by powerful currents of ill-being from the patient which are transferred to him and make him weak and unable to do anything. He will feel tired because he is only running on a battery, as opposed to being connected to a stream of power. If he was, he could treat hundreds of patients without being affected.” (Shaykh Nazim, *Pure Hearts*, 1998: 76; inverted commas added)

Me: Psychiatrist.

Psychiatrist, that's right. Did it break you down?

Yes. Not the patients—the patients were fine. It was the doctors.

[Sympathetically:] That's right. If one doesn't get you the other will.

In the Tottenham dergah, a few people asked my advice on physical and mental health; a young man with autism explored some issues with me, and got far more practical and inspiring advice from my mother, who was with me. Another dervish, a taxi driver, said that he greatly appreciated my essays in the *Lancet* and other medical journals; he also valued my insight into evolutionary theory. But my healing abilities were of marginal interest: I was nothing like as sought after as a herbalist, whose patients came from as far away as Lancashire and the Netherlands.

At Peckham, the few dervishes who hung around after Friday prayers asked me a few times about their health conditions. I was not in a position to take medical responsibility; but I helped my friends to interpret their experiences, and integrate their knowledge of modern medicine, complementary medicine, and sacred healing; we often shared tidbits of knowledge we had picked up from Sufi masters. On one occasion, I took a friend with high blood pressure around a supermarket to teach him about healthy eating, emphasising the many areas in which science and popular discourse were at odds. The dervishes largely stopped seeking my health advice once they got to know me well, although a few of us continued to visit the health-food shop in nearby Elephant & Castle, giving each other tips and advice.

On a few occasions, I was engaged in quite intensive healing. The first time was in the Lefke dergah. The cats there were not "pets", but part of the dervish community. They were, on the whole, much loved and respected by the dervishes, who often talked of Shaykh Nazim's love for them: he was said to be especially fond of a large black cat, his "panther". Cats were seen as defending people from unseen threats such as jinns, just as people were defended from visible threats by dogs. Cats were under the command of a great saint, who directed them in serving

mankind. I understood one dervish as saying that a dervish's treatment of cats was an indication of his inward state.

I fed the cats with titbits from my plate when they looked hungry, but generally left them to people far more confident with animals than I was. However, on one visit, my research assistant was a man exceedingly fond of cats. This encouraged me to be proactive when I saw kittens strolling around with severe conjunctivitis. The dialogue went something like this:

Me: How could the kittens get in such a state? [subtext: when the dervishes are supposed to be looking after them]

Dervish: We have been treating them.

What with?

Cold tea. It is recommended by Shaykh Nazim.

Ah. In this case, or in general?

In general. [Pause] Clearly it hasn't been working.

No. You need an antibiotic. Chloramphenicol, or something like that.

Are you a doctor?

Yes. But a doctor of people, not of cats. But maybe it is the same.

To my surprise, Lefke lacked a pharmacy. The nearest place to get chloramphenicol was a bus ride (or brisk 40-minute walk; but my assistant and I took the bus) away, in Gemikonağı.⁷³⁷ Every day, we rounded up the kittens and applied the ointment to their eyes. To my pleasant surprise, they seemed to improve.

⁷³⁷ Gemikonağı was a smaller town than Lefke. To at least one dervish, Lefke's lack of a pharmacy symbolised its being a refuge from the disordered modern world. "Besides, we have the real doctor [Shaykh Nazim] here."

One kitten had seemingly lost its right eye to advanced infection. We didn't see how the antibiotic could cure that. So, taking the kitten in my arms, I lined up for Shaykh Nazim's Friday walk from his house to the prayer room, hoping he would bless it as he passed. As he passed, the kitten bent its head down and kissed his hand. Thereafter, the kitten's eye grew back.

Caring for the kittens was, for me, more congenial than farm work. It was less arduous and, rather than exposing my lack of fitness and competence, made me look and feel like an expert. I started to acquire an air of authority. Some of the dervishes who had taken an interest in the kittens' health retreated before my medical knowhow. A knowledgeable young Iranian man who evidently loved and understood cats—I heard another dervish refer to him as the "Prince of Cats"—was no longer the man in charge. One dervish, looking at me, murmured "Abu Hurayra", referring to the disciple of the Prophet Muhammad, and respected Hadith transmitter, who was known for his love of cats.

A venerable Syrian shaykh, who had taken an interest in our spiritual welfare, warned me and my assistant that we were "worrying too much about those kittens", and neglecting our zikr—the exercises that would make us able to help people (and cats) insightfully. He prescribed an exercise that would "open us up". The next day, he asked us if we had done the exercise: I nodded, and he put his hand on my heart, as though taking a measurement. "Good, good," he concluded.

Then, or shortly before then, the kittens started dying. They lost weight, shook, and died with their backs arched backwards. We didn't know what to do. The young Iranian made a diagnosis: "This is what happens when you give kittens fat they can't digest. They are too young for it and it blocks their digestive systems. Some fool has been giving them fat." I argued that they probably had a virus or a neurological disease, because they seemed to be coming down with the illness one by one, as though it were contagious; and the shaking and the muscle tension reminded me of neurological disorders. In my desperation, I took a couple of kittens to a vet in Güzelyurt. The simple chore of going to Gemikonağı and buying a tube of ointment had now evolved into a potentially expensive and time-consuming task; and I seemed to have turned the kittens from companions into pets. The

vet offered to do an autopsy on a kitten that had arrived dead, after expiring on the bus, but it seemed pointless.

Hoping for a miracle cure, I took one of the few surviving kittens to a ceremony where the dervishes honoured a hair of the Prophet, that was in the Sufi order's safe keeping; but nothing helped. The day before I left, the last kitten died. It seemed an awful judgement on my medical care; and a mystery.

As the months and years went by, a memory seemed to return: initially with the hallucinatory or dreamlike quality of a traumatic memory, then with increasing certainty. An eccentric cook had asked me if he could give some leftover fat to the kittens. Not wanting to look ignorant, I had said yes, reasoning that they were carnivores and, besides, would not eat anything that was not good for them. The death of the kittens had been largely my fault.

My second attempt at healing started when a newly arrived dervish started calling out God's name after the sunset prayer. Calling "Allah! Allah! Allah!" is, in a way, what dervishes are supposed to do,⁷³⁸ and is included in the daily Naqshbandi-Haqqani litany. But he was so passionate that some dervishes were annoyed; one muttered that he must be mad.

With the Syrian shaykhs having arrived in the dergah, I felt he was in good hands, and I would be well advised to mind my own business: they would tell me if I was needed. But after dinner, as I waited to clear up, the dervish sat, staring into space, looking extremely distressed and distracted. A dervish I had come to rely on said, "It looks like he needs help. And you're the only person here who can help him."

It was as though someone had thrown a switch. I was back, mentally, in a familiar position: with a patient presenting an unknown risk, with inadequate cover, depending on me as the only qualified person around. For the next few days, I made caring for the dervish my business. I even enrolled two people as, in effect, psychiatric nurses: my research assistant, and the Chechen in the greatcoat.

⁷³⁸ Lings 1993: 22.

Much of the time, the dervish—I will call him Ismail—seemed distracted, deeply moved, and stared into space, as though he were hearing and seeing things; he did not speak to the people around him. In between, he was softly spoken, self-effacing, entirely rational, and hinted that my care might not be necessary: “I think I’ll be all right now.”

I assumed that his experiences were hallucinatory and therefore psychiatric. What right did I have to do so? I was a psychiatrist, more middle-class than him, more assertive, bigger than him, and had been in the dergah for longer. Some of the other dervishes also thought he was disturbed: one dervish likened my patient to a lady who had rushed out to sea. But I don’t know to what extent my psychiatric approach influenced their views. A dervish who had been looking out for me, seemingly on behalf of the Syrian shaykhs, said that it was obvious my patient was having a jinn experience: it was a healthy experience, and he would be fine. When I mentioned that I was worried about the risk, he said reflectively, “Maybe the next time you come here, you will understand that everything is arranged.”

My treatments reflected my psychiatric training. I tried to be kind and to connect with the patient, conversing him and trying to reassure him. I also tried cognitive therapy:

Me: What are you looking at?

Dervish [making an effort to concentrate on me, while undergoing experiences]: A winged horse. He’s offering to take me to heaven.

Me [feeling that this would only happen to a saint, and assuming that my patient is not a saint]: But that can’t really be happening. It must be a trick of the mind, mustn’t it?

Dervish [humbly]: Yes. [Looking ahead, as though being told something and awed:] Oh no, it’s not! Oh no, it’s not!

I also tried prayer, which I could excuse as making an effort to enter the patient’s world; and as highly appropriate, if not essential, in a dervish milieu. We stayed up at night reciting the Koranic

chapter of Sincerity;⁷³⁹ the Koranic chapters “The Dawn” and “Mankind”, used to ward off evil;⁷⁴⁰ the *Fātiḥa*; and prayers for the Prophet. The patient seemed very happy with the procedure.

Mindful of risk, I kept a very close eye on the dervish. This was sometimes comically intrusive or clumsy. Once, worried by a folk memory of psychiatric patients hanging themselves from toilet door handles, I called out to him while he was in the toilet; another time, I caused him to have an accident. He sometimes went for a run around Lefke: unfit and asthmatic, I trailed behind him as best I could: he seemed to be looking behind to make sure he didn’t actually lose me.

After a day or two, lack of sleep and nervous strain had left me very tired, and I didn’t seem to be getting anywhere. My efforts to find a doctor had drawn a blank.⁷⁴¹ A dervish suggested that I take my patient to see Shaykh Nazim. A brilliant idea, and one I really should have thought of before, since the Shaykh was the healer in the dergah. My patient also liked the idea. While we waited, he became quite agitated. Inspired by having witnessed an exorcism, I tried to do one, just in case it would work by placebo effect or by actually driving a spirit out. I had no idea how to do an exorcism, beyond what I had seen in the dergah (and once on a video in Bosnia, where someone recited the Koran over some patients until the jinns gave up). A German dervish and I put our hands on the patient’s head and back, while reciting prayers; and I asked the demons to come out. The patient enjoyed the Koran recitation, and joined in, but remained agitated.

After a while, we were let in to see the Shaykh. On this long stay, this would be the nearest I would get to an audience with the Shaykh, although he would converse with me again just before I left.⁷⁴²

When greeted by the Shaykh, and asked a few questions about himself, my patient seemed to slip out of his trance-like state. Laughing softly, Shaykh Nazim gave his salams, apparently to any jinns present, and asked them to show themselves, echoing my exorcism (which he could not possibly have seen by conventional means). My patient was unaffected.

⁷³⁹ See Appendix 3.

⁷⁴⁰ See Appendix 3.

⁷⁴¹ On one occasion, I waited 2 hours for a man who did not turn up.

⁷⁴² On my previous, brief stay, my mother and I had had a lengthy audience with the Shaykh.

Soberly, Shaykh Nazim asked me where the man's family was. I replied that I did not know. He said that I should make sure I fed the man well; take him to the farm, to work with animals, because that was healing for people with psychological problems; and get him to cook chicken for the Shaykh the next day. When Shaykh Nazim asked the patient if he would like to cook chicken curry for him, he responded enthusiastically.

The Shaykh prayed over us, and with intensity and evident love over Ismail (I could see his facial expressions clearly when he blessed Ismail, but not when he blessed me). We took his leave: I kissed his feet, which was considered to be a tremendous blessing. We passed the kitchen, where I introduced Ismail and said that he would be cooking chicken for the Shaykh the next day. The cook nodded his philosophical acceptance.

But things did not turn out that way. As sunset approached, the patient ran towards the farm, with me trailing behind, exhausted and wheezing. The area was largely deserted and I became nervous, though not because I feared anything from the patient. I became desperate, and called my research assistant to help me. He was getting a lift from one of the work organisers: they had been working in construction on a nearby mountain. The organiser drove up, grabbed my patient, and bundled him in the car, driving us all back to the dergah.

What next? I felt disorientated and exhausted, and caught between two worlds: part of me was wondering how best to obey psychiatric protocols, that somehow did not seem appropriate here, and part of me was wondering if I had the courage to obey the Shaykh, who had given me clear instructions. I was ashamed to discuss my dilemma with the other dervishes. I hid round the corner, behind a hedge, and called my mum. She remarked that I had got some advice from Shaykh Nazim that I didn't seem happy with; maybe I could get some new advice.

I felt that I couldn't care for the patient any more, and that he should be handed over to psychiatric care. As I approached Shaykh Nazim's door, other dervishes seemed to sense this, and clustered

near me with grim, sad faces. One whispered, “Do not send him to that Satanic place [psychiatric hospital].” Then, as if by magic, the autistic lad who acted as Shaykh Nazim’s representative appeared. With brisk efficiency, he ascertained that I needed help, and, taking a few minutes, got a doctor and the senior work organiser.⁷⁴³ They gave my patient a benzodiazepine, which he was initially reluctant to take; he fell asleep, and remained asleep for most of the next day.

His family arrived from overseas. Their swift arrival, and ability to trace him despite a lack of phone or email contact, seemed uncanny: I understood a dream was involved. They collected the patient and took him home. They were grateful for my care.

But the more I reflected, the clumsier my care seemed. Rather than moving effortlessly between the dervish and psychiatric worlds, I had been trying, anxiously, to live in both, without having the depth of understanding to do so. I had prided myself on being a humane, culturally sensitive psychiatrist. Here, the patient had told me he was all right; the experienced, venerable Syrian shaykhs did not seem to feel he needed my care; their assistant had said Ismail was having a jinn experience and it was healthy; and yet I had taken responsibility that was not mine to take.⁷⁴⁴ Shaykh Nazim had said that a person with psychological problems could be given animals to look after: but who had been looking after kittens: the “patient” or me? I felt that, overall, I had made my “patient”’s quality of life worse rather than better, and subjected him to indignity, medicalisation, and stigma. He, at least, had contributed to my physical health by taking me for runs; and some of the younger dervishes thought me a bit of a hero, which I liked. If I met the so-called patient again, I would apologise to him with all my heart.

A month or so later, I was in Damascus with a party of dervishes led by Shaykh Eşref. One of my roommates reportedly arrived back late one night, tried to climb over the wall, and was shot at by a neighbour who took him for a burglar. Naturally, I slept through the whole affair. The next

⁷⁴³ At the time, I did not see how this could have been accomplished in such a short time, and suspected a miracle.

⁷⁴⁴ As a dervish, my performance was perhaps even worse: my ability to obey Shaykh Nazim’s orders had lasted roughly 4 hours.

morning, however, my roommate was walking with a hunch, and was stiff all over, even though he had not been hit.

I had a position of responsibility, or felt I did, as the only doctor in the group. Appalled at my inability to work out a neurological mechanism for the presentation, I explained that I did not know what our companion had; I hoped there was nothing to worry about; but he might have had a stroke. This spread panic among the others. Somehow—I do not know who called him, or how—a local doctor appeared, a middle-aged man in a white coat. He was calmness itself, asked the young man a few pertinent questions, and explained that he had hypocalcaemic tetany: psychological shock had led to overbreathing, which had caused a respiratory alkalosis; which, in turn, had caused increased binding of calcium to plasma proteins. The patient would naturally get better within a few hours. I asked the doctor how he knew: seeing my anxiety, he demonstrated Chvostek's sign, characteristic of hypocalcaemia, by tapping over the patient's facial nerve.

I was still nervous. The doctor seemed too calm. Memories of my Indian relatives' epic misdiagnosis and mistreatment sprang to mind: was all "third world" medicine unreliable?⁷⁴⁵ I had never heard of tetany being so severe, and couldn't recall overbreathing causing tetany. Suppose something else were going on? The doctor was surprised at my righteous disbelief, but said that, if I wanted to check the diagnosis, we could take the patient to a nearby clinic. Shaykh Eşref agreed. We took a taxi and got a blood test. In the meantime, as predicted, the patient got better. He was walking pretty well by the time we returned, the glory of which seemed weirdly reflected on me.

When I reflected on the Syrian doctor, he had the same presence I had associated with the saints in Cyprus. Perhaps I had been rude to a very good man. I had always prided myself on being an old-fashioned doctor, one who made diagnoses by talking to people rather than doing tests. But here I had been inexpert when a "third world" doctor had found a diagnosis clinically straightforward, and been able to explain how it could be derived from first principles. Similarly, in Lefke, as a

⁷⁴⁵ I knew nothing of the regard in which Syrian medicine was held.

psychiatrist proud of not over-medicating patients, I had been shown how my own lack of patience and trust had led to a “patient” being medicated.

C: healing Shaykh Nazim

A medical herbalist told me that, at the age of 70, Shaykh Nazim had had the body of a 50-year-old man: he was fit, vigorous, and needed hardly any sleep; he travelled and taught constantly.⁷⁴⁶

For Shaykh Nazim, health was not a commodity but a way of life. In general, to the extent that somebody followed the Sunna, they would be healthy. He walked, rather than get buses or cars (though he used motorised transport for long-distance journeys); he ate sparingly, of simple, home-cooked, often organic food; he gardened, cooked, and prayed. He tried to live a life of prayer and submission to God.

Yet from around 80 years of age, Shaykh Nazim became quite frail. Some dervishes attributed this to the loss of his wife, in 2005: they said he had never been quite the same since. Even so, why would a pure soul become ill? The only possible solution was that he was taking on the burdens of others.

As Shaykh Nazim became physically more frail, he was understood to become spiritually more powerful: the dervishes saw him as being in continuous ascent towards his Maker. Shaykh Nazim’s illness could be regarded as part of his teaching. Although often in pain, he never complained about his illness. Despite his own knowledge of medicine, he treated doctors and carers with perfect manners. He seemed to spend much of his time praying for mankind: he still needed little sleep. When my mother and I went to see him, we were told, by a member of his household, “Please don’t tell him your troubles, if you can avoid it. He has been listening to people’s troubles all day.

⁷⁴⁶ Farrer (2009), who met Shaykh Nazim in Singapore c 2000, similarly reported that the Shaykh had the body and vigour of a much younger man.

Please try to make him happy, if you can.” He was ill that day, but we only found that out later: I tired before he did.

Shaykh Nazim seemed especially vulnerable to chest infections. These seemed to take a cumulative toll on him as the years passed. By 2010, Shaykh Nazim needed support to walk; instead of walking around Cyprus for his health, and to bless the area, he was driven around. In 2012, an exceptionally severe infection left him relying on an oxygen cylinder and a stairlift.

Shaykh Nazim became too ill to see most visitors, though he made some exceptions. One dervish told me that Shaykh Nazim’s seclusion reduced the value of visiting Lefke: “There is no point, really.” Other dervishes felt that, since his spirituality was undimmed—indeed, increasing—pilgrimage was every bit as valuable as it had been; indeed, one dervish told me, to come was now a special privilege. Another pointed out that Shaykh Nazim could communicate and bless powerfully and effectively with a “look”, as he was wheeled past his followers.

Shaykh Nazim was looked after by relatives, and by other people who lived with or near him. His younger daughter, Rukiye, and her children were universally held in high regard by dervishes. Some other carers were regarded by some dervishes as among the “Shaytans” whom Shaykh Nazim kept close to him, for the sake of mankind. One dervish told me that her little son had been hit by a carer, when trying to get to Shaykh Nazim to kiss him: he had told the carer, “You are Iblis”, and kissed the Shaykh.

A herbalist told me that, in the past, he had recommended herbs and chromium for Shaykh Nazim, and discussed the prescription with Rukiye:

She accepted the herbs, and said, “We don’t like chromium.” At least I know she’s checking the *lawḥ-i mahfūz*: that’s all right. She also gave me feedback, so I knew what the medicines were doing.

But some of the other people around Mawlana now, they don’t give you complete information. For instance, they didn’t tell me he had mitral regurgitation. They also don’t give you reliable feedback. You don’t know who’s following what, and there doesn’t seem to be a system... It’s like headless chickens in a supermarket.

Shaykh Nazim accepted treatment from herbalists and from modern doctors. An American dervish, who was also a doctor, lived nearby, and helped with Shaykh Nazim's care and treatment. He told me that some Cypriot doctors had previously given Shaykh Nazim questionable treatment: for instance, prescribing an antibiotic that could damage the kidneys, when other options existed. Shaykh Nazim's recovery from an especially severe episode of illness was widely credited to the intervention of doctors sent from Istanbul by Adnan Oktar, a controversial television personality, who acknowledged Shaykh Nazim as a master:⁷⁴⁷ Shaykh Nazim's son, Shaykh Bahauddin, appeared on Adnan Oktar's television show to thank him in person.

Although a doctor, I was well aware that, in recommending any treatment for Shaykh Nazim, I would be out of my depth. However, on one occasion I was jolted when told by a Lefke taxi driver that, after his pneumonia, Shaykh Nazim found every breath painful. That sounded awfully like what I had had. I had been helped immensely by slippery elm. Perhaps it would help the Shaykh? After prayers, I tried to see Shaykh Mehmet. He did two acts of healing in a typically low-key way: for a dervish with an injured leg, he recited the *Fātiḥa* and touched the leg; for another dervish, he blew into a bottle of water. But he turned away before I could get to him.

I asked the dervish with the injured leg for advice: he got Shaykh Mehmet's attention. Shaykh Mehmet and I communicated by facial expression; he then told me to "come to the garden".⁷⁴⁸ I went with him and some other dervishes to an orchard, where I took olive branches from the field to two tractors. I was wearing flip-flops, and had to be careful where I put my feet: it was an exercise in watchfulness and concentration; I realised that I spent much of my waking life in a haze. My feet got scratched, and bled slightly; but the physical exercise in warm air seemed to help my injured lungs.

⁷⁴⁷ Adnan Oktar was a bestselling author under the pen-name Harun Yahya. He was arrested in 2018 amid accusations that he had been running a "sex cult".

⁷⁴⁸ "The garden" is used by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis to refer to Paradise.

When we got back to the tractors, I started to tell Shaykh Mehmet about the slippery elm. He said that it would be better if we waited until after the afternoon prayer. We rode back to the dergah, and prayed; then, when I approached Shaykh Mehmet, he smiled at me and asked me to tell him my idea. I explained that I had been ill in a very similar way to Shaykh Nazim, and that slippery elm had helped me. He asked if I had any on me. I said that I had not. He said that I could contact him when I had some. I asked how: email, post? He said that we would meet when he came to London.

We did indeed: and he recommended a treatment for my lungs, as well as praying for me. I did not mention the slippery elm: in the meantime, I had spoken to the herbalist who had helped me. He told me that Shaykh Nazim had had a different kind of bronchitis from mine: the herb would not help his chest. It might help Shaykh Nazim's digestion; but the herbalist was wary of doing more harm than good, through interfering with regimens recommended by other clinicians who could see Shaykh Nazim regularly and get more reliable feedback. Moreover,

I also feel that my expertise doesn't cover geriatric medicine very well. I remember Mawlana telling me always to "go to the one who knows",⁷⁴⁹ and, in this case, I'm not the one who knows. I don't want to be the one who kills Mawlana.

Those of us who lacked expertise could, at least, pray for Shaykh Nazim. In early 2012, when he was very ill, *Saltanat* and *Sufilive* emailed their subscribers to ask for prayers; Shaykh Hisham asked particularly for the Koran's "six healing verses" to be recited. One remarkable recovery was credited to the prayers of Raja Ashman, Shaykh Nazim's deputy in Malaysia: he had asked God to take his life instead of Shaykh Nazim's, and his prayer had been accepted.⁷⁵⁰ On another occasion, Shaykh

⁷⁴⁹ An echo of Koran 25: 59.

⁷⁵⁰ Precedent for this existed, in Naqshbandi-Haqqani tradition. Grandshaykh Sharafuddin, 38th on the Golden Chain, had been due to die during an Armenian invasion of Turkey. However, his follower Shaykh Zia prayed that he be killed instead, a prayer God granted (Shaykh Hisham, *NSW*, 1995: 343).

Mehmet reported, Shaykh Nazim had died, but been sent back to his body, like Grandshaykh Abdullah before him. While out of his body, he had had valuable spiritual experiences.

Many dervishes were sure that Shaykh Nazim would live long enough to give his “trust” to the Mahdi. Shaykh Nazim had perfected the Naqshbandi teaching, and spread it worldwide:⁷⁵¹ which, given the expected confrontation between the Mahdi and the Antichrist, was of eschatological significance. He was the 40th Shaykh on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain, 40 being the traditional number of maturity and completion. Moreover, Shaykh Nazim had prayed to reach the Mahdi: would God not grant his prayer?

If Shaykh Nazim did pass away before the Mahdi manifested to the general population, Shaykh Hisham was widely expected to succeed him: he and Shaykh Adnan were Shaykh Nazim’s most visible deputies. Shaykh Hisham strongly discouraged speculation, saying that Shaykh Nazim would outlive those who speculated about his succession.⁷⁵²

However, in 2011, Shaykh Nazim urged all his followers to give their allegiance to Shaykh Mehmet, and said,

...Through our grandshaykhs and *Rasūl Allāh* [here Shaykh Nazim prayed for the Prophet], he is on our Golden Chain.⁷⁵³ He may give any orders to anyone, through east and west. I am weak. I can’t carry more; but he is ok. And I hope to reach to Mahdi, *‘alayhi salām*. He [Shaykh Mehmet] is for his *wuzerā*.⁷⁵⁴ May Allah forgive me.

O people, keep your ways: keep orders, holy orders of heavens, and keep your honour... Keep right ways: don’t go like this, like that. Straight.

⁷⁵¹ One dervish told me that Shaykh Nazim had said that a time would come when he would have only 30 true followers. This echoes the Gospel of Barnabas, in which Christ says, to his disciples, that the Prophet Muhammad “will not come in your time, but will come some years after you, when my gospel shall be annulled, inasmuch that there shall scarcely be thirty faithful.” (Chapter LXXII: Ragg and Ragg 2012: 167) Another interpretation, in the light of Khalid Baghdadi’s statement about having only “half a *murīd*”, is that 30 is quite a high total.

⁷⁵² Shaykh Hisham later implied he had been teaching that holy people never truly die.

⁷⁵³ I seem to recall that, on another occasion, Shaykh Nazim, referring to Shaykh Mehmet, echoed the Prophet’s statement about Abu Bakr: “Everything they have given to me, I have poured into him.”

⁷⁵⁴ *Wuzerā*, or *vuzerā*, is Ottoman Turkish for ministers of state: in other words, Shaykh Mehmet was, or would be, one of the Mahdi’s closest aides (or, if “for” meant “serving”, would work closely with them).

May Allah forgive him [Shaykh Mehmet], forgive me, forgiving all of you. *Fātiha*.

Shaykh Mehmet had previously had a lower profile in the order than Shaykhs Hisham or Adnan, but started travelling widely from around that time; he also became more closely involved with running the dergah in Lefke. Shaykh Nazim's younger son, Shaykh Bahauddin, also became a much more visible presence from around that time.

By mid-2013, the question of succession seemed almost irrelevant. Shaykh Nazim's health had improved in a way that, given his age and the severity of his conditions (a healer told me that he had never before seen someone with such severe oedema survive), was truly extraordinary. In one sohbet, Shaykh Nazim said joyously:

"How are you?"

"I am feeling exhausted."

"What do you do?"

"I take pills."⁷⁵⁵

Leave these pills. These ones even made the Shaykh go crazy, making him swallow pills all the time. Now he is back to his strength and yelling at you. Instead why don't you say *Bismi 'Llāhi 'l-Raḥmāni 'l-Raḥīm? Bismi 'Llāhi 'l-Shāfi, Bismi 'Llāhi 'l-Kāfi, Bismi 'Llāhi 'l-Mu'āfi, Bismi 'Llāhi 'l-Raḥmāni 'l-Raḥīm.*⁷⁵⁶ How beautiful, how beautiful, how beautiful. What a happiness it gives! And it leaves no idle person. It leaves no ugly person either...⁷⁵⁷

On 6 April 2014, Shaykh Nazim seemed to be in good form as he gave a sohbet on Hala Sultan, at whose shrine he spent his childhood. Unusually, he reminisced about those years at some length. It was the last of his sohbet to be formally recorded. He became very ill and was rushed to hospital as an emergency. He pulled through when it seemed he was about to die: but he remained very unwell. For the next few weeks, Naqshbandi-Haqqanis worldwide were in a vigil. Many prayed for

⁷⁵⁵ Many of Shaykh Nazim's sohbet contained extempore dramatic dialogues such as this one.

⁷⁵⁶ *Shāfi, Kāfi, and Mu'āfi* are all names of God: *Shāfi* is the One who gives health; *Kāfi* is the One who is more than enough for all who are in need; *Mu'āfi* is the One who exempts or frees others.

⁷⁵⁷ Shaykh Nazim, *70,000 Angels*, 08 February 2013. Transcript retrieved from www.sufi-zentrum-rabbanijya.de, and altered slightly to correct Arabic grammar.

him; on 18 April, for instance, I received a text message: “Sheikh Adnan says maulan’s health improving and sheikh Mehmet said to do quran khatm⁷⁵⁸ and if not reading can read darood Tanjeena⁷⁵⁹ as much as possible.” Many flew to Cyprus, to be near Shaykh Nazim. Shaykh Nazim’s family were constantly in the hospital in Nicosia, receiving visitors and looking after their elderly relative.

At one stage, Shaykh Nazim needed a series of blood transfusions. Grandshaykh Abdullah had reluctantly received a blood transfusion shortly before his death, and spent days doing zikr to purify the blood spiritually after it entered him; Shaykh Nazim received many units. Out of the blue, I got a phone call from a friend, asking my blood group. It turned out to be the same as Shaykh Nazim’s. I was asked, could I go to Cyprus to give blood? The message had gone out for all dervishes with the same blood group to go there.

I was not in the best of health myself; but my latest blood tests implied that my blood wasn’t actually poisonous (though it probably needed a fair bit of zikr). The journey would exhaust me; but the Shaykh’s need was obviously greater than mine (it crossed my mind that, in dervish thought, anyone who gave blood to Shaykh Nazim would be supremely blessed; but I tried to expel selfish considerations from my mind). Just after deciding to try to go, I received a phone call from the same friend: they had enough blood for the time being.

Some dervishes felt that, during this illness, Shaykh Nazim’s spiritual power was stronger than ever; in early May, Shaykh Nazim’s physical health was reported to improve. But it did not last. Dervishes were asked to give sugar to poor people, to support Shaykh Nazim’s liver. On the morning of 7 May, he passed “into the divine mercy”. Dates in the dervish calendar are flexible: moonsighting varies, and so does the spiritual manifestation of the month; but, by the time of his

⁷⁵⁸ *Qurʾān khatm* is to read the Koran from start to finish. It is typically done in a group, with each person taking part of the Koran (typically, one thirtieth).

⁷⁵⁹ *Ṣalāt al-tunjīnā*, the prayer of deliverance (see Chapter 6.3).

death anniversary, a consensus existed that Shaykh Nazim had passed away on 7 Rajab, classically associated with the Night of Desires.

One dervish told me that, at the precise moment of his death, she had had an unbearable pain, “like a heart attack”. Another had been sleeping, and had had a dream in which Shaykh Nazim was between the Prophet Muhammad and Ali, “as though they were his grandfathers and he was going into their care”; the emotional and spiritual atmosphere of the dream was “too good [for description]... beyond imagination.” She woke at the moment Shaykh Nazim died. Another dervish fretted that he had barely prayed for Shaykh Nazim during his illness, and not even got round to distributing the sugar: he heard a voice in a dream the next night, saying “Do not worry about Shaykh Nazim. Now he is eating real fruit.”⁷⁶⁰

The day Shaykh Nazim died, it reportedly rained in Mecca, Medina, and Cyprus: which was said to be a sign of God’s mercy, especially since rain in May was not usual.⁷⁶¹ Shaykh Nazim was buried the same day. His funeral procession, from Nicosia to Lefke, was televised. He was buried in the dergah’s garden: “Open 24 hours”, one dervish told me, “open to everyone.” Witnesses said that his body expanded to fill the large grave that had been dug for him; symbolising the vastness of his spirit and his intercession. His grave became a place of pilgrimage: after all, he was a saint, and therefore still alive. A dervish advised me that I must go to renew my connection with him, just as I would have done before he passed away. Another dervish noted that, in common with other holy people, Shaykh Nazim would “return” when the Mahdi came.⁷⁶²

Who should succeed Shaykh Nazim? Years before, Shaykh Hisham had been widely anticipated as a successor, with mixed responses: people felt he might not be charismatic enough,⁷⁶³ or that he

⁷⁶⁰ Shaykh Nazim’s characteristic phrase, derived from the Koran, to describe true knowledge.

⁷⁶¹ Shaykh Hisham said that rain had not fallen “in Cyprus and throughout the Middle East” in May for 42 years.

⁷⁶² When the Mahdi manifests, he will reportedly be accompanied by the “lights” of holy people who have passed away (Naqshabandi Mureeds of Sri Lanka 2006).

⁷⁶³ Habibis 1985.

divided opinion among the dervishes.⁷⁶⁴ Now, however, the dervishes I met seemed instinctively to gravitate to Shaykh Mehmet:⁷⁶⁵ the choice seemed obvious, especially since Shaykh Nazim had said that Shaykh Mehmet was on the Golden Chain. This choice was confirmed by Shaykh Adnan, who gave his *bay'at* to Shaykh Mehmet instantly and in public. So did Shaykh Hisham;⁷⁶⁶ but this news was not quite so widely circulated. When an email from *Sufilive* and a book cover described Shaykh Hisham as “the successor” to Shaykh Nazim, some dervishes felt this was overstepping the mark, and became abusive on the internet. In response, Shaykh Hisham sent his son to Shaykh Mehmet, and the two shaykhs released a statement saying that there never had been any difference between them, and abusive behaviour among dervishes was not allowed; although such controversies had the providential nature of showing people’s real character to themselves.

In subsequent years, I gained the impression that Shaykh Mehmet had been accepted as Shaykh Nazim’s successor by the overwhelming majority of dervishes. To my surprise, however, in Feltham (which was very much regarded as Shaykh Hisham’s centre), the prayers for the saints on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain generally did not include Shaykh Mehmet; and there was an emphasis on praying for Shaykh Hisham. This did not constitute a split in the order: among other things, dervishes from north London, who acknowledged Shaykh Mehmet as master, visited Feltham regularly and took part in prayers. But it was certainly a difference of emphasis.

6.5 Eschatological healing

In Naqshbandi-Haqqani theology, the first creation was the light of the Prophet Muhammad. The rest of creation, including all the spirits of all other human beings, was created from his light.⁷⁶⁷ Before being sent down to planet Earth, the spirits of human beings were asked by God, “Am I not

⁷⁶⁴ Stjernholm 2011.

⁷⁶⁵ Stjernholm (2015) noted that not all dervishes were enthusiastic about Shaykh Mehmet’s succession.

⁷⁶⁶ Stjernholm 2015.

⁷⁶⁷ Gibril Haddad, *ML*, 2012; Hajjah Amina, *Muhammad*, 2002.

your Lord?” and answered, “Yes, we testify.”⁷⁶⁸ However, on coming to Earth, people forgot that meeting. The role of saints is to guide people through their life on Earth, so that they can successfully re-enter the Divine presence.

Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters teach that there have been, or will be in total, 7,007 Naqshbandi saints. Their spirits, and the spirits of the people destined to follow them, were in the cave in which the Prophet Muhammad and Abu Bakr took refuge from pursuers, while migrating from Mecca to Medina. While the Prophet slept, Abu Bakr repeatedly prevented a snake from entering the cave, by blocking a hole in the wall of the cave with his foot. In the process, he was bitten many times (on waking, the Prophet healed his foot). This selfless act of sacrifice was the trigger for the spirituality of the Naqshbandi order to be transmitted from the Prophet to Abu Bakr, from Abu Bakr to the spirits of the saints of the Order, and from the saints to the spirits of their followers. The Islamic calendar traditionally begins with the migration from Mecca to Medina; in Naqshbandi-Haqqani teaching, it also marks the beginning of the Naqshbandi order.

The Naqshbandi order is said, by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, to have an increased role as the end of time approaches. They say that all other spiritual paths, including Sufi orders, are dying out. Great Sufis in other orders, including branches of the Naqshbandi order, are not leaving equivalent successors in their line. Their spirituality is being taken on by Shaykh Nazim, and their spiritual realities are being found in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order. For instance, the spiritual reality of the Mevlevi order is said to be found in Shaykh Ahmad Dede, a student of Shaykh Nazim, and the head of the Naqshbandi-Mevlevi-Haqqani suborder.

Relative capacities for spiritual transformation are, of course, difficult to assess from a scholarly perspective. Naqshbandi-Haqqanis pointed out that well-known and widely respected Sufis such as Bawa Muhaiyaddeen (d 1996) had died without leaving obvious successors of similar calibre. Werbner (2003) reported a similar perception in Pakistan, where Zindapir acquired his sobriquet

⁷⁶⁸ Koran 7: 172–73.

(*Zinda pīr* is Urdu for “living *pīr*”) because several venerated holy men had died, and he was seen as remaining to carry that level of holiness. He also died without an obvious successor. However, it is difficult to know, from a scholarly perspective, whether such a process is happening more than has always been the case.

The Naqshbandi-Haqqani belief that, as the last days of mankind approach, holiness is increasingly concentrated in their order, has been described as a “monopolistic discourse”;⁷⁶⁹ but perhaps it is not unusual for people to believe that their own religious group is uniquely good. Naqshbandi-Haqqani dervishes told me that they made a point of respecting every Sufi shaykh they came across, since such people carried *baraka*: but, for teaching, they chose Shaykh Nazim. One dervish said that he had been offered a role as a shaykh in another Sufi order (I believed him: he was a man of charisma and kindness), but had declined: “To be the most humble servant of Shaykh Nazim is better than being a shaykh in another order.”

The sense that the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order subtends other spiritual orders produces, paradoxically, an easy ecumenism, in which dervishes and masters share teachings and perspectives with people from a variety of religious backgrounds. People from any religious background, and none, are welcome at Naqshbandi-Haqqani meetings. Memorably, in 2010, Shaykh Nazim made a, by then, rare excursion from Lefke to meet Pope Benedict XVI, who was visiting Cyprus. They hugged. Dervishes commented that a pope does not usually hug people in public. When Benedict resigned, Shaykh Nazim described him as one of the very best of the popes.

A Naqshbandi-Haqqani trope is that, towards the end of time, “the sun will rise in the West”:⁷⁷⁰ spirituality will increasingly be found in the “West”, rather than in the “East”. By the time of World War Three, the “West” would be following true religion and morality more than would the “East”. Grandshaykh Abdullah is reported to have prophesied that England would enter Islam. Shaykh

⁷⁶⁹ Böttcher 2011.

⁷⁷⁰ Shaykh Hisham Kabbani (*AA*, 2003) quotes a hadith (narrated by Abu Hurayra, in Bukhari’s *Kitāb al-Tafsīr*) that, towards the end of time, the sun will rise in the west.

Eşref told me that this was happening: people were not necessarily calling themselves Muslim, but were becoming Muslim in character—at least, compared to people in other parts of the world.

Since, in Islam, Muhammad is considered to be the last prophet, a sense of the imminence of the last days is perhaps not illogical. However, the sense of imminence varies considerably between Islamic cultures. Naqshbandi-Haqqani discourse strongly emphasises the belief that the advent of the Mahdi is imminent. The Mahdi was born between 1930 and 1940, in the Hijaz, and was visited in his infancy by Shaykh Sharafuddin and Grandshaykh Abdullah Dagestani.⁷⁷¹ He has spent most of his life in the Empty Quarter of the Arabian Desert, guarded by jinns. He will manifest to mankind in general during the Third World War, which will be a horrific nuclear conflict, in which most of humanity will die.

Shaykh Nazim said, many times, that he expected the Mahdi to manifest within the next few years. However, this did not happen. Periods of highly intense expectation included the outbreak of the Gulf War in 1990, and the approach of the (AD) millennium, in which dervishes related religious expectations to discourse about the possible impact of the Millennium Bug.

These predictions have been responded to by dervishes in various ways. Some change their usual patterns of behaviour: I was told that, in the lead-up to the millennium, a small minority of dervishes gave up their college courses, or took out loans they did not expect to repay. Some groups of dervishes, notably in Lebanon and Malaysia, seem to have fled to rural hideouts, fearing a catastrophe.⁷⁷² However, most dervishes do not seem to have changed their patterns of living substantially, if at all. Some dervishes found it difficult to take the prophecies “literally”;⁷⁷³ yet others seem to have just got on with their lives.

⁷⁷¹ Habibis (1985) reports that the Mahdi was born in 1941. But, if so, it is difficult to explain how he could have been visited in infancy by Shaykh Sharafuddin (d 1936).

⁷⁷² Nielsen 2003; Nielsen et al 2006; Farrer 2009; Conner 2015.

⁷⁷³ Schlessmann 2003.

Some people left the Order when, in 2000, catastrophe failed to occur.⁷⁷⁴ At the time, I attended zikrs in Oxford, and was not aware of any dervishes I knew becoming disillusioned with Shaykh Nazim. Two had said that, if Shaykh Nazim said the end of the world [sic] was coming, it was coming, but they did not seem to change their lives dramatically in anticipation; when the world did not end, life continued more or less just as before. Some dervishes concluded that they had misunderstood Shaykh Nazim; others started to understand him as training them so that when the Mahdi came, they would be ready.

Another discourse among the dervishes was that Shaykh Nazim's predictions reflected aspects of reality that could change. A dervish who spent a lot of time with Shaykh Nazim around the time of the Gulf War said that he had led a group of dervishes in a powerful prayer: "the walls were shaking". This, she felt, had prevented the development of the conflict into a Third World War, which would have led to the advent of the Mahdi. I heard from dervishes that the masters kept praying for mankind to be spared the catastrophe of nuclear war: and, as the war was delayed, the proportion of mankind who would survive increased.⁷⁷⁵

In 2003, Shaykh Hisham published *The Approach of Armageddon?* which codified and, to some extent, reified Naqshbandi-Haqqani teaching about the last days. It consisted largely of a collection of hadiths, with an accompanying commentary that argued that most of the signs of the approach of the last days had been fulfilled. The commentary also reflected other longstanding Naqshbandi-Haqqani tropes: about, for instance, tribulations coming from Najd, and true religion becoming established in the West. In his talks, Shaykh Hisham has pointed out to dervishes that, of the signs of the advent of the Mahdi, a few are yet to occur: the flooding of Cairo, and the eruption of a volcano near Bursa (other accounts describe other signs of the end, including a Russian incursion into Turkey and the sinking of Cyprus).

⁷⁷⁴ Farrer 2009.

⁷⁷⁵ Similar findings were obtained by Conner (2015).

Shaykh Nazim said, some years into the new millennium, that humanity was in the process of Armageddon. Shaykh Eşref said, in 2010, that the process had begun with the Twin Towers atrocity; and, indeed, Shaykh Nazim's final, prolonged seclusion in Lefke could be dated roughly from that time. Signs of the end of the world continued to be noted: as the civil war erupted in Syria, Shaykh Eşref recalled a hadith, "When Aleppo burns, the whole world will burn."⁷⁷⁶

If the Mahdi was indeed born between 1930 and 1940, he would now be elderly. However, extreme longevity is not unusual in characters associated with the eschaton. Christ, after all, is believed to be still alive, albeit in the heavens; Khidr, who will last until the end, is held to be hundreds of years older than Christ, and still wandering the Earth; the Antichrist, too, is widely believed to have been alive for hundreds of years.⁷⁷⁷ Among 12-imam Shi'as, it is commonly believed that the 12th Imam, who was last heard from in AD 874, is the Mahdi; such a belief was echoed by certain Sunni scholars of standing, including, perhaps most notably, the renowned Egyptian Sufi Abdul Wahhab al-Sha'rani (d 1565).⁷⁷⁸

The Naqshbandi-Haqqani Mahdi—who is not the 12th Imam—is said to have manifested to saints, on Arafat, during Hajj, in around 1970; saints are said to have met him since. Naqshbandi-Haqqanis believe that he will be an inheritor of the Naqshbandi Golden Chain. Part of Shaykh Nazim's role is therefore to prepare the way for the Mahdi. Tayfun Atay (2012) said that, in the early 1990s, some of Shaykh Nazim's followers actually believed that he was the Mahdi; although the quotes Atay presents leave open the possibility that the dervishes felt Shaykh Nazim was *their* Mahdi (i.e. the person who represented the Mahdi to them), rather than *the* Mahdi. In 2014, a dervish notable for confrontational relationships expressed a view that Shaykh Mehmet was the Mahdi. However, Shaykh Nazim spoke of the Mahdi as being a different person from himself, as indeed does Shaykh Mehmet; and Shaykh Mehmet's biography does not resemble that of the Mahdi, as given by Shaykh Nazim. Shaykh Nazim also described the Mahdi as having long arms,

⁷⁷⁶ Talk given by Shaykh Eşref, 29 September 2012; retrieved from *sufi-zentrum-rabbaniya.de*.

⁷⁷⁷ Abel 2012.

⁷⁷⁸ Madelung 2012b.

that reach to his knees, and a mark like ashes on one of his cheeks; neither of which can be said about Shaykh Mehmet (although a note of caution is appropriate here: Shaykh Nazim often used physical descriptions metaphorically, so “long arms”, for instance, could signify generosity).⁷⁷⁹

Much existing academic study of the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis has concentrated on their millenarian beliefs.⁷⁸⁰ However, in everyday interaction among the dervishes, even at prayer meetings, it only plays a small part in discourse: weeks can go by without the Mahdi being mentioned. Anticipation of the Mahdi is occasionally triggered by world events: when, during the Syrian civil war, a Russian aeroplane crossed into Turkish airspace, a Peckham dervish remarked that this was one of the signs of the advent of the Mahdi. But it was a topic briefly mentioned, moved on from; and I was unaware of any changes in the dervish’s plans for the following week. I have not, in recent years, heard dervishes putting an expected date to the Mahdi’s arrival; except for when a London shaykh remarked that, in traditional prophecy, the age of tyrants was only supposed to last a hundred years, and that time must be nearly up.⁷⁸¹ The emphasis among dervishes is on drawing the necessary spiritual and practical lessons from Shaykh Nazim’s predictions.

One of the lessons often discussed is that societies reliant on technology are, Shaykh Nazim said, going to collapse. Partly because of this, Shaykh Nazim advised dervishes to move away from big cities, although this was not a blanket recommendation. A dervish healer told me that, when several London dervishes moved to the countryside, Shaykh Hisham asked some of them to move back to the city, since they were needed there.

The perceived need to move to the countryside varies between countries. In 2011, Shaykh Nazim said that, in England, he liked the towns of Windsor, Nelson, and Glastonbury; and that Scotland

⁷⁷⁹ The Prophet reportedly said that the first of his wives to die after him would be the one with the longest arms; his wives measured their arms, but the first to pass away was the most generous: the one with the longest metaphorical (or spiritual) arms (Lings 1991).

⁷⁸⁰ Notably Damrel (1999); Weismann (2014); Conner (2015).

⁷⁸¹ The shaykh dated the age of tyrants from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire: which, he said, had in effect happened in 1909, when Sultan Abdul Hamid II was forced to abdicate.

would be safe, in the city or the countryside. My impression was that in Germany, the move to the countryside might be more pronounced:⁷⁸²

Berlin dervish: Has Shaykh [Eşref] told you to move to the countryside?

Me: Shaykh Nazim told people in general to move to the country.

Dervish: Yes, but has he told you personally?

Me: [Pause:] No.

Dervish: Me neither. But many people have been told to move. [Joking:] Maybe we are the ones strong enough to live in the city!

Dervishes in the countryside tend to be connected, through commerce or, more often, through friendship, to organic farms, slightly anticipating the environmentally friendly, self-sustaining networks characteristic of Shaykh Nazim's envisaged *salṭanat*.

Some dervishes said that the Order's emphasis on the Mahdi was evidence of its spirituality: people were thinking of spiritual events, rather than relying on material gain or politics. The Mahdi can also, of course, be viewed in a materialistic fashion; but the discourse around him tended to be moralistic. In general, survivalist and ethical discourses merge: the places that will be relatively safe, before and during the Third World War, will be the places where oppression is relatively low. Likewise, in Naqshbandi-Haqqani discourse, people will be saved if they are good, as in the calamities that befell the people of Noah and Lot.

The Mahdi (and Christ) versus the Antichrist is viewed as a battle of good against evil, rather than of religious identity. Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters have said that many "New Age" people will be on the side of Christ; and many who call themselves Muslims will be against. An element of Naqshbandi-Haqqani discourse, especially in recent years, has been a focus on the limitations of religious identities: as in the *sohbet* of 20 October 2010, *Be Rabbānī*:⁷⁸³

⁷⁸² Shaykh Eşref himself was based in the countryside, rather than Berlin, from 2014 (Yarosh 2019).

⁷⁸³ I transcribed this *sohbet*: my transcription differs somewhat from the official transcript on *Sufilive.com*.

[God] created everything, all for glorifying Him Almighty, *subhānahu wa ta‘ālā*.⁷⁸⁴ So, so, simple. From [the] beginning, [the] first [divine] messenger *Sayyidinā* Adam, he was crying and saying, “O, *Yā Rabbānā*,⁷⁸⁵ *yā Rabbānā, yā Rabbānā! Subhānak yā Rabbānā*,⁷⁸⁶ *subhānak yā Rabbānā!*” And he was teaching his children to say, “*Yā Rabbānā, yā Rabbānā!* O our glorified Lord.” That was [the] first word that Adam, peace be upon him, was calling his Lord. And after him, Seth, ‘*alayhi salām*;⁷⁸⁷ after Seth, Idris, ‘*alayhi salām*; after Idris so many prophets coming [inaudible] between, reaching to Noah, ‘*alayhi salām*; he was calling, “O, *Yā Rabbānā! Nabī*⁷⁸⁸ Hud, *nabī* [two short Arabic phrases that I did not understand] Lot, ‘*alayhi salām*; Jonah, ‘*alayhi salām*; Abraham, ‘*alayhi salām*; Ishmael and Isaac⁷⁸⁹ ‘*alayhima salām*:⁷⁹⁰ all of them calling, “*Yā Rabbānā!*” Moses calling, “*Yā Rabbānā!*” Jesus saying, “*Yā Rabbānā!*” *Sayyidinā* Muhammad is saying [Shaykh Nazim stands], “*Yā Rabbānā, yā Rabbi*,⁷⁹¹ *yā Rabbi, yā Allāh!*” [Shaykh Nazim sits]...

Allah Almighty not saying, “*Kūnū mutaṣawwifīn, kūnū Naqshbandiyyīn, kūnū Qādiriyyīn, kūnū Mawlawiyyīn, kūnū Shādhiliyyīn, kūnū 40 ṭarīqas.*”⁷⁹² Stopping tonight! To be, therefore, never mentioned “Salafi” name also, through speech of Prophet or through Holy Koran: either *ṭaṣawwuf* or “Salafi”, no!...

The Lord of [the] heavens... is not saying that servants, you may claim, “I am this one”, “I am that one”, no. All of them under my feet now! But the Lord of Heavens saying, [Shaykh Nazim stands] “O My servants! *Fa kūnū rabbāniyyīn!*”⁷⁹³ Be a *rabbānī*. No way any “*ṭaṣawwuf*”, “*maṣawwuf*”, *mā fī*.⁷⁹⁴ Never! From now up to end of the

⁷⁸⁴ “Most glorified and exalted is He.”

⁷⁸⁵ *Yā rabbānā* can be translated as, “O our Lord.”

⁷⁸⁶ “Glory to You, O our Lord.”

⁷⁸⁷ “May peace light and abide on him.” (Lane 1984: 1215)

⁷⁸⁸ *Nabī* is Arabic for Prophet.

⁷⁸⁹ Shaykh Nazim gave the names of these prophets in Arabic: I have anglicised them.

⁷⁹⁰ “May peace light and abide on them all.”

⁷⁹¹ “O my Lord.”

⁷⁹² “Be Sufis, be Naqshbandis, be Qadiris, be Mevlevis, be Shadhilis, be 40 *ṭarīqas*.” Shaykh Nazim seems to be echoing Koran 3: 79, in which God asks his servants to “Be *rabbānī* [*kūnū rabbāniyyīn*]”. However, Shaykh Nazim switches from a plural to a feminine singular form, *kūnū*. This form only occurs in the Koran once, when God tells Nimrod’s fire not to consume Abraham: “O fire, be coolness and safety for Abraham!” (21: 69; Arberry’s translation) By using the singular form, Shaykh Nazim may be emphasising that one heart cannot be split into 40 *ṭarīqas*.

⁷⁹³ Translation from *Sufilive.com*: “Be those who establish Lordly worship.”

⁷⁹⁴ *Mā fī* is Arabic and Ottoman Turkish for “nothing in[side]”. *Maṣawwuf* may be a play on the words *mutaṣawwif* (follower of *ṭaṣawwuf*), *mā*, and *ṭaṣawwuf*, indicating that there is nothing of worth in the labels *ṭaṣawwuf* and *mutaṣawwif*.

world, you must say,⁷⁹⁵ “I am *rabbānī!* I am not ‘Sufi’: I am *rabbānī!*” That is [the] highest honour for us. This is for Christians, for Jewish people, for [the] whole Islamic world, taking away [Shaykh Nazim sits] from them *nifāq wa shiqāq*.⁷⁹⁶ That order coming tonight. Don’t say, “Naqshbandi-Haqqani”:⁷⁹⁷ belongs to *rabbānī!* *Wa kūnū rabbāniyyīn; wa kūnū rabbāniyyīn: āyatu l-karīma*.⁷⁹⁸ O ‘*ulamāʾ*’!⁷⁹⁹ If anyone asking to you, what is your way, say, “I am trying to be *rabbānī,*” or “I am *rabbānī.*” Finish!

Lā ilāha illa Llāh.

That is bombarding fortress of *Shaytān*. Finish! Don’t say, “I am—Christian,” “I am— Jewish,” “I am—*Mārūnī* [Maronite],” “I am—Orthodox,” “I am—Catholic,” “I am— Protestant,” “I am—Shi’a,” “I am—me-a,” “I am— thee-a”. No. No more “*taṣawwuf*”. That name never heard from *ṣahāba*. If heard, *Qurʾān-i karīm*⁸⁰⁰ is saying, (*astaʿīdhū bi Llāh*)⁸⁰¹ *wa lākin kūnū rabbāniyyīn*.⁸⁰² You must say, who are you, “I am muslim *rabbānī.*” Finish. No more “Naqshbandi”, no more *taṣawwuf*. [Inaudible] to be happy Salafis!⁸⁰³ Take them away, that titles, you are making these titles. The Lord of Heavens not that. *Emir*.⁸⁰⁴ *wa kūnū:*⁸⁰⁵ to whom you must be, for whom? Nations! “You must be *rabbānī,* belonging to Me only!” Finish! ...

⁷⁹⁵ The instruction to “say” something refers to an attitude of mind rather than a specific form of words.

⁷⁹⁶ “Hypocrisy and egotistical contention.”

⁷⁹⁷ I have tentatively inserted a colon here, based on Shaykh Nazim’s pause and hand gesture, and the *Sufilive.com* transcriber’s interpretation of this sentence.

⁷⁹⁸ “A noble sign”: a phrase characteristically used to refer to a verse of the Koran. Probably, in this context, 3: 79, translated by *Sufilive.com* as: “No human to whom Allah has given the [Holy] Book, Judgement and prophethood would say to the people, ‘Be worshippers of me, rather than Allah,’ but rather [they would say], ‘Be of the Lord [kūnū rabbāniyyīn], for that you teach the book, and in that you have studied.’”

Arberry’s translation (1964: 56):

It belongs not to any mortal that God should give him the Book, the Judgement, the Prophethood, then he should say to men, “Be you servants to me apart from God.” Rather, “Be you masters in that you know the Book, and in that you study.”

⁷⁹⁹ ‘*Ulamāʾ*’ is the plural of ‘*ʿālim*’: person of knowledge, scholar. Shaykh Nazim is using the English plural in addition to the Arabic plural, perhaps to indicate that he is addressing all kinds of scholars.

⁸⁰⁰ The Noble Koran. The grammar is Persian, and hence also Ottoman Turkish and Urdu.

⁸⁰¹ “I seek refuge with God,” from evil and specifically, from the devil.

⁸⁰² *Wa lākin kūnū rabbāniyyīn* is from Koran 3: 79: “But rather, ‘Be *rabbānī.*”

⁸⁰³ Shaykh Nazim is alluding here to the central Salafi concept that, with the exception of Salafis, Muslims have diverged erroneously into different sects, each one of which is *bidʿa*, an innovation, and by definition undesirable. Shaykh Nazim indicated earlier in the *sohbet* that the Salafi label or identity could itself be regarded as a *bidʿa*, following the same reasoning.

⁸⁰⁴ *Emir* is Ottoman Turkish, from Arabic, for a commander or ruler, and specifically for a deputy of the Prophet.

And then what saying, the Lord of Heavens? Hadith Qudsi! Highest powerful speech from Prophet, *ṣalla ‘Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*.⁸⁰⁶ The Lord of heavens, Allah Almighty [Shaykh Nazim stands] is saying how you should be *rabbānī*. He is saying, “*Yā ‘abdi atī‘nī*. O My servant, follow My orders, *aj‘aluka rabbānī*. [Shaykh Nazim sits] If you are keeping My orders, I am making you *rabbānī*. Don’t wait people saying, you are *rabbānī*. I am saying, you are *rabbānī*.”

And if you are asking a[n] evidence, the Lord of heavens saying [Shaykh Nazim stands], “*Aj‘aluka rabbāniyyan taqūlu li shay’in kun fayakūn*.⁸⁰⁷ [Shaykh Nazim sits] That is My order or My divinely sign on My servant that he is *rabbānī*.” Try to reach that point and your level highest level. May Allah forgive us. *Subḥān Allāh, Sulṭān Allāh*.⁸⁰⁸ This is a limit to make [the] *umma* on one level, finish!... May Allah forgive us: Allah, for the honour of the Seal of Prophets, forgive us. *Fātiḥa!*

This never heard before; you can’t be able to hear it secondly, it’s finished. The Day of Resurrection just on doors.⁸⁰⁹

The above *sohbet* illustrates how Shaykh Nazim would weave a complex and textured narrative around a Koranic verse. It has many potential interpretations, with an unambiguous stress on typical Naqshbandi-Haqqani themes of humility and universality. In its wake, the Naqshbandi-Haqqani *ṭarīqa* started being widely known as Naqshbandi-Rabbani. In a much earlier *sohbet*, transcribed into more conventional English, Shaykh Nazim had described the journey from Haqqani to Rabbani as a spiritual progression:

A person who stands for justice is called “Haqqani”, and that title is the basis of all other honourable ranks in the Divine Presence... It means nothing to Allah whether you were known in this world as a Muslim, Christian, Jew, or Buddhist, but He will be concerned with whether you deserved the title of Haqqani. Those who have been Haqqani in this life are transformed, their very essence adopts Divine attributes so that they become “Rabbani” or beings who pertain to the Lord intimately. It is about these people that Allah Almighty says in a Holy Hadith:

⁸⁰⁵ “And be”.

⁸⁰⁶ “May God bless and protect him.”

⁸⁰⁷ “I will make you a *Rabbānī*. You will say to a thing ‘Be’, and it will be.”

⁸⁰⁸ “Glory is God’s, God is the Supreme Ruler.”

⁸⁰⁹ Transcribed at *Sufilive.com* as “just at the door”, which is probably an intended meaning.

**Oh My servant, be obedient to Me
and I will make you Rabbani
Then you (also) will say to a thing “be”
and so it will be.**

When one reaches the level of Rabbani, God dresses him in His Own attributes and makes him His deputy. Then he grants you willpower that is not your own, but His. But the way to attain the Station of Rabbani leads through the Station of Haqqani, and whoever intends sincerely to be Haqqani will receive guidance from Him.⁸¹⁰

The change of label, from Naqshbandi-Haqqani to Naqshbandi-Rabbani, might be held to reflect an increase in salvific capacity. This would match the general belief among Naqshbandi-Haqqanis (as I will continue to call them, for ease of reference) that the power of their *ṭarīqa* is continually increasing. As the Prophet ascends continually towards God, the mercy and the knowledge that he can extend towards humanity also increases. So, although the people of the last days are weak, the mercy extended towards them is correspondingly vast.

Beyond death, in Naqshbandi-Haqqani thought and in Islamic doctrine in general, lies the Day of Judgement, the possible destinies being Heaven and Hell. Shaykh Nazim’s description of Hell closely matches, functionally, Naqshbandi-Haqqani teachings about suffering on Earth:

[Shaykh Nazim said,] “It is like a man who falls from a second-storey window and breaks his head, his legs, and his neck; he may stay in the hospital one year, or six months, till he has recovered; then he comes out. He who makes himself wounded in this life with the spear of Satan will stay, for recovery, in graves and in Hell. When he is all right, he will go on to Paradise. What do you think about all those people in hospitals? Are they in mercy, or in punishment?”

Quickly, one murid said, “Mercy!”

While another said, “Punishment!” Again, we all laughed.

⁸¹⁰ Shaykh Nazim, *M O Lovestream*, 1987: 101–02. The concept expressed in this paragraph as “deputy” is probably *khalīfā*; it implies no equivalence between God and man.

“Yes!” agreed Shaykh Nazim. “From one side they are in punishment, and from the other side they are in mercy. Their imprisonment is not as if they were in jail. It is mercy for them, as if they were in hospitals. You understand? Clear? This is from all religions, and all Holy books.”⁸¹¹

Shaykh Hisham and Shaykh Eşref pointed out that people’s light cannot be punished, since it is pure, but their egos can be.

Naqshbandi-Haqqanis teach that nobody can deserve salvation: it comes from God’s grace. In Sunni eschatology, this grace is manifested through the Prophet’s intercession for creation on the Day of Judgement.⁸¹² Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters teach that intercession is delegated to holy people: so Naqshbandi saints will be able to save some or all of their followers, on behalf of the Prophet.⁸¹³

The structure of salvation therefore reflects the structure of the *ṭarīqa*. The connection that enables salvation is said to be love:

One day the Prophet was giving a sermon when one Bedouin came to the door of the mosque and shouted, “Oh Prophet, when is the Last Day coming?” There was no answer, so he called out again and still again. The Prophet was waiting for Allah to provide him with an answer, as only He knows when is the Last Day. Then the Angel Jibril [Gabriel] came to him saying: “Ask him what he did in preparation for the Last Day.” The man replied: “Muhammed, I love you and I love your Lord, nothing else, only this.” Then Jibril told Muhammed: “Answer him that he will be with you and your Lord like two fingers together. Everyone who loves another must be with him on the Last Day.”⁸¹⁴

Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters say that the loving connection between them and their students helps the student’s character to develop. In the process, however, the student is asked to live up to his

⁸¹¹ Shaykh Nazim, *MO 1*, 1980: 92. The idea of Hell being a mercy may clarify a verse of the Koran (83: 34), in which the inhabitants of Heaven are described as “laughing” at the inhabitants of Hell. Since Naqshbandi masters have been known to pray that they might be sacrificed for the rest of mankind, the idea of laughing at people suffering is strange; unless the suffering were a mercy (indeed, a dervish quoted Shaykh Hisham to me as saying, “Do you think we are laughing, ‘Ha ha ha, you are in *Jahannam* [hell]?!”).

⁸¹² See, for instance, al-Ghazali 1989.

⁸¹³ Shaykh Nazim, *MO 2*, 1980.

⁸¹⁴ Shaykh Nazim, *MO 2*, 1980: 102–03.

responsibilities. Shaykh Eşref warned me that people who complacently rely on love alone may get a “nasty surprise”.

Beyond such apparently two-way relationships is the sacrifice of holy people. Bayazid Bistami is said to have provoked people to stone him, by saying superficially outrageous things, and, on regaining consciousness, to have prayed, “O my Lord, those who harm me, forgive them and send them to Paradise. I wish that I would die and have You create me again, so that they may again harm me and I may again ask for their forgiveness.”⁸¹⁵ He is also said to have prayed, “O Lord! Make my body as wide as hell and as deep, that I might enter that space and fill it and so no one else may enter.”⁸¹⁶ A similar prayer is attributed to Abu Bakr. Grandshaykh Abdullah’s followers reported that he had a particularly significant role:

Before [Grand]Sheikh Abdullah passed away... he came to the mosque where he is buried now and he made the *Khatmu ‘l-Khwājagān* or the Naqshbandi group zikr. While doing this Zikr he was crying profusely. He then gave a lecture in which he said that on that night the Prophet Muhammad (Sal)⁸¹⁷ told him that the children of Adam (alai)⁸¹⁸ and his nation specially this last nation are going to be so weak in their *Īmān* (faith) and so weak in their worshipping. That they will be following their desires and their egos and that they will love this world and this life. That they will not be following Allah Almighty and the Prophet Muhammad (Sal) and they will not be following the Saints.

The Prophet Muhammad (Sal) said “So there is no way that they will be saved from hell except and unless an *Awliyā’* (saint) [the plural *Awliyā’* is being used here as a singular] of the highest rank sacrifices himself and takes upon himself all their badness and all their sins. They are running away from Allah Almighty and from me and they are cursing all kinds of religions. If such a saint who belongs to this highest rank sacrifices himself on behalf of them Allah Almighty has given me a promise that he will save all of them and all their unbelief, rejection, sins and badness will be taken over by this high-ranking saint.”

⁸¹⁵ Shaykh Hisham, *SSSR*, 2006: 89.

⁸¹⁶ Shaykh Hisham, *PC 1*, 2005: 27.

⁸¹⁷ An abbreviation of *ṣalla ‘Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam*, “may God bless and protect him”. *Sallam* is often translated as “send him peace”, but is given by Lane (1984: 1412) as “make... safe, secure, or free... from evils of any kind.”

⁸¹⁸ An abbreviation of *‘alayhi salām*, “may peace light and abide on him.”

The Prophet (Sal) said further that he could not say about the future of this high-ranking saint and that therefore he could not guarantee what would be the condition of this high-ranking *Wali'u Llah* [friend of God] who sacrifices himself thereafter. Allah Almighty may send him to hell or paradise as the Prophet Muhammad (Sal) said that he did not know what the condition of this great saint is going to be after he so sacrifices himself.

The Prophet (Sal) also said that there is no saint who is of that required highest ranks at present except Sheikh Abdullah who could make that sacrifice. The Prophet (Sal) said that he is not in a position to ask anyone to do this sacrifice as he could not guarantee to him as to what Allah Almighty would do to this saint. Immediately Sheikh Abdullah said, "As you like my beloved Seal of Prophets, I am going to sacrifice myself for your nation."⁸¹⁹

Consistent with Naqshbandi-Haqqani reverence for the Prophet's family, a major intercession is attributed to his daughter Fatima, the mother of Hasan and Husayn:

Upon her marriage to Ali, a letter of Light was sent by the Lord Almighty, saying that the right of intercession was given to Fatima for the Day of Judgement, to be the bridal gift for the Nation of Muhammad, and to be a helper to her father who is the "Mercy for the Worlds"... This paper was brought and stored in a bottle, all the *Ṣahāba* saw it, and the marriage contract was signed by the Angel Jibra'il [Gabriel] and by the bride's father. When she was at the point of death, she asked Ali to lay this upon her chest, under her burial shroud, so that she might have her claim ready to show when she entered the presence of the Lord Almighty.⁸²⁰

Beyond human intercession is God's mercy, which was described in a story that was repeated more than once in sermons:

On his ascent through the heavens, the Prophet reached the Divine Throne. There, he was shown an endless ocean. On its near side was a tree; in the tree was a bird the size of a dove; in its beak was a piece of clay the size of a lentil.

"Do you know what this is?" God asked.

"My Lord knows best," the Prophet answered.

⁸¹⁹ Naqshbandi Mureeds of Sri Lanka, *Khatm*, 2006: 21–23 (punctuation amended in a few places).

⁸²⁰ Hajjah Amina, *Muhammad*, 2002: 318.

God replied, “You are forever entreating Me to forgive your nation their sins. This sea is the likeness of My Mercy Oceans. That tree signifies the world; the bird is the likeness of your nation, and that bit of clay is the likeness of their sins. Now you have seen the relation of your nation’s sins to the vastness of My Mercy, so let your heart be at rest.”⁸²¹

The ultimate return is to the Divine presence. Shaykh Nazim said that, in a sense, most of us never leaves: one ray of our light comes to this world for the experience of the earthly life.⁸²²

⁸²¹ Rewritten from Hajjah Amina, *Muhammad*, 2002: 234.

⁸²² Shaykh Nazim, *MOHT*, 1981: 110.

Chapter 7: Knowledge, healing, and postmodernity

all worlds have halfsight,seeing either with

life's eye(which is if things seem spirits)or
(if spirits in the guise of things appear)
death's:any world must always half perceive.

Only whose vision can create the whole

(being forever born a foolishwise
proudhumble citizen of ecstasies
more steep than climb can time with all his years)

he's free into the beauty of the truth;

and strolls the axis of the universe
—love. Each believing world denies,whereas
your lover(looking through both life and death)
timelessly celebrates the merciful

wonder no world deny may or believe

—e e cummings⁸²³

CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter is a summary and discussion of the findings of this dissertation.

7.1 Knowledge. The generation and transmission of knowledge in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order.

⁸²³ Cummings 1994: 845. Originally published in *73 Poems*, 1963.

7.2 Healing. Concepts and practices of healing in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, in contrast with those of modern psychiatry.

7.3 Postmodernity. The role of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, and in particular its healing, in the contemporary world.

7.4 Conclusions and future research.

7.1 Knowledge

Previous research, principally that of Vidich, depicted spiritual knowledge as being sent to Shaykh Nazim by his masters, and transmitted to people under Shaykh Nazim's care. People could consciously try to learn from Shaykh Nazim by being with him, physically or by means of spiritual exercises. Shaykh Nazim was also said to be capable of influencing people who were completely unaware of him.

Shaykh Nazim's spiritual knowledge was widely recognised as difficult to explain by naturalistic means. Researchers had contrasted it with "intellectual" knowledge; Habibi (1985) had asserted that it was based partly on fantasy.

My findings were entirely consistent with Vidich's work on the transmission and reception of knowledge, but differ from previous research on the nature of the intellect. They also depict Naqshbandi-Haqqani knowledge in much greater depth, detail, and nuance than do previous studies. They locate knowledge in a world of everyday practice and relationships.

I found that the capacity to receive knowledge is said to increase with purification of the intellect (*'aql*). The intellect is purified by means of *taṣawwuf*, spiritual apprenticeship under a master: in this case, Shaykh Nazim. The stronger the connection with Shaykh Nazim, the greater the learning. The relationship with Shaykh Nazim is envisaged as being built on love: this allows the dervish's ego to submit to someone else, through dramas, losses, and disorientations. It also encourages the student to keep making a spiritual connection (*rābiṭa*) with Shaykh Nazim, and to visit him.

Knowledge is not impersonal, but located in relationships. The centrality of *adab* to *taṣawwuf* means that epistemology depends on ethics.

The Naqshbandi-Haqqani order does not have a fixed body of knowledge. The Prophet is reported to be forever receiving new knowledge in the divine presence; this is transmitted to the saints, in accordance with their capacities and needs. Like scientific knowledge, sacred knowledge evolves. However, whereas scientific knowledge is always provisional, although the best of its kind available at the time, sacred knowledge is held to be, through God's grace, perfect for the audience at the time. Each person is said to receive differently from Shaykh Nazim, according to their personalities and needs. Each dervish, at each stage of their lives, has a different understanding of the order and of the world around him. The scientific revolutions described by Thomas Kuhn (1996) are mirrored in the personal knowledge of the dervish.

Naqshbandi-Haqqani knowledge is not a series of facts to be memorised, but a way of experiencing and living. The world and the soul are understood through the intellect, which is in a constant relationship with Shaykh Nazim. Each skill, be it healing, building, or writing, is experienced and deepened through the relationship with Shaykh Nazim. The order can be seen as a living organism for the generation of knowledge. For the dervish, everything is a way of relating to Shaykh Nazim; but this is particularly true of the people (or cats) around him. Life around Shaykh Nazim is a kind of living theatre, populated with extraordinary characters, with and from whom the dervish is encouraged to learn.

Geertz's finding (1968/ 1971) that classical Islam is experienced through symbols with standard interpretations is therefore, at best, incomplete. For a dervish connected to Shaykh Nazim, the whole world consists of religious symbol, and is a way of connecting to him, in a deeply personal and therefore idiosyncratic way. The meanings of symbols change as the relationship develops.

Werbner's assertion (2003) that following a Sufi master requires a loss of individuality is also wide of the mark, at least with regard to the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, since a dervish is not asked to lose

his individuality, but is invited to have his personality development shaped by his relationship with Shaykh Nazim: who was said to be not a manufacturer of “plastic people”, but a gardener of souls. Dervish practices and dress are regarded as having an instrumental, often health-giving value, and are recommended according to the individual’s development. As Farrer (2009) and Vidich (2000) noted, people who become overenthusiastic about Sufi identity are regarded as immature.

Dervishes do not necessarily obey Shaykh Nazim: they may “get permission” to do something else, argue that they are obeying his real intent, or even that they are doing what he would want, if he knew all the facts (although for most dervishes, Shaykh Nazim is divinely inspired, so knows all that he needs to know). But I never heard a dervish argue that Shaykh Nazim was ignorant; only once did I hear someone say he was mistaken. When Shaykh Nazim says something that seems to go against academic consensus—about the Gospel of Barnabas, or the value of antenatal ultrasound—dervishes tend to give him the benefit of the doubt, and may use his views as a stimulus for research. People who leave the order may conclude that, while in the order, they were badly advised, and their time poorly spent.⁸²⁴

The claim that the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order is “anti-intellectual” reflects broader claims that Sufi knowledge is emotional rather than rational.⁸²⁵ Vidich, the most sympathetic participant-observer, contrasted Shaykh Nazim’s teachings with “intellectual” learning, rather as Hoffman (1995) distinguished between intellectual knowledge and spiritual discernment. However, Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters tend to be trained in intellectual disciplines in addition to *taṣawwuf*. After taking a good science degree, Shaykh Nazim trained in the Islamic sciences; his *sohbets* can largely be viewed as extempore exercises in Koran and Hadith exegesis. Shaykh Hisham also took a science degree and trained in *fiqh*. In both cases, *taṣawwuf* is believed, by their followers, to give them insight.

⁸²⁴ A case history is in Sardar (2004).

⁸²⁵ Werbner and Basu 1998b; Werbner 2006.

Claims of anti-intellectuality seem to be based on the Enlightenment notion of the intellect as an analytical processor of empirical information. The Naqshbandi-Haqqani model of the intellect is much closer to Ghazali's notion of a faculty that can gain knowledge through divine illumination, in a way that deepens scholarship and makes it authentic.

Anyone, inside or outside the order, can have access to knowledge at any time, through connecting with the knowledge that is always being spiritually sent. Human knowledge is not perfect, because people are not perfect. However, Shaykh Nazim and the other masters are viewed as perfect *ead*: able to receive knowledge and pass it on without innate distortion. Their claims to be teaching a "kindergarten and a university at the same time" are reflected in their discourse, which is vernacular but complex and layered: people can take from it according to their understanding.

Naqshbandi-Haqqani knowledge is arguably anti-authoritarian, since it cannot be imposed. Shaykh Nazim is believed to act as God's servant and arrange teaching situations for his dervishes; but whether they respond to them as teaching situations, and whether they obey Shaykh Nazim, is up to them. The acquisition of knowledge does not depend on money or power, nor can it be shaped by financial investment, since Shaykh Nazim is said to reach dervishes according to their intention and the purity of their souls. Some of the most advanced "intellects" in the order belong to people with learning disabilities or mental illness.

Knowledge is given for the purpose of soul-purification. This could be conceived of as a feedback process: *taṣawwuf* purifies the intellect; which allows access to knowledge and experience; which, in turn, creates the capacity for further *taṣawwuf*. Shaykh Nazim strongly discourages the acquisition of "useless knowledge", which is conceived of as knowledge that does not benefit the soul. Scientific knowledge is neither bad nor good in itself; its value depends on its use and context. In general, intellectual disciplines are subsumed into *taṣawwuf*, and interpreted in the light of the dervish's relationship with Shaykh Nazim.

7.2 Healing

So far, the most substantial contribution to academic understanding of Haqshbandi-Haqqani healing has been made by Vidich, who described Naqshbandi-Haqqani learning as based on purification of the *nafs*, which was also a form of psychological healing. Habibis (1985) described the loosening of the ego's control over the personality as being done by the undermining of self-esteem; Vidich, a participant observer, and Schlessmann, in a vignette, gave a much more detailed picture, in which psychological change was effected by graduated humour leading to shock and revelation.

Various researchers described Shaykh Nazim as providing what amounted to an alternative health service. He was approached by people in the belief that he could cure all kinds of illness. His conceptual range was broader than that of a physician, since he diagnosed and treated jinn-related problems in addition to medical problems, and treated with prayers as well as "natural" remedies. His deputies had various healing skills and techniques, some of them innovative, such as the *Ḥayy-Kraft-Yoga* developed by Shaykh Eşref. The Naqshbandi-Haqqani body was innately energetic, connected to *laṭā'if* through which spiritual energy could be drawn by means of prayer. Naqshbandi-Haqqani prayers were experienced through the body and could be used to give physical power. Shaykh Nazim recognised the value of modern medicine, but treated it as one of many healing techniques, and sometimes apparently disagreed with physicians.

Shaykh Nazim was described by Vidich and Farrer as overseeing every aspect of his patients' lives. Farrer said that illness might afflict a dervish by Shaykh Nazim's permission; healing might be effective through his permission.

All the above findings were confirmed by my research. In addition, my research located the theory of healing in everyday practice, and broadened the concept of healing in the Order beyond the psychological and medicalised activities noted by previous researchers. The Order is, in effect, built

around emic concepts of healing. In the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, *taṣawwuf*, soul-purification, and medicine are inseparable:

- ◆ Medical techniques are attributed ultimately to the Prophet: either through historic transmission of knowledge, or through ongoing inspiration and spiritual connection.
- ◆ The ultimate contemporary healer, in terms of knowledge and effectiveness, is also held to be the holiest person—Shaykh Nazim.
- ◆ Illness is held to purify the soul.
- ◆ Illness can be an expression of the soul's problems, and can be removed by means of *taṣawwuf*.
- ◆ Holy people are held to take on the burdens of others, including illness.
- ◆ Discourse centres ultimately on purification of the *nafs*, the *psyche*. This is conceived of not just as a medical act but an intellectual act, helping the patient to perceive himself and the universe; and a salvific act, in this world and the next.
- ◆ Social and political activities of the order are held to be ultimately devoted to *taṣawwuf*.

Healing is held to be universal: almost everyone is crazy, and in need of help with their *nafs*, since they are under the control of their egos. The Order therefore transforms what is ordinarily a liminal, stigmatising state into a universal condition. In fact, people who recognise their craziness, and have found a suitable spiritual healer, are held to be privileged. The Order's ability to receive marginalised, often mentally ill people and make them more whole is not only a demonstration of the Order's power and compassion, but a redrawing of social boundaries. Disparate people, often with difficult lives, are brought together by Shaykh Nazim's charisma, and inducted into a shared world of symbol and meaning. Everybody is perceived to have a role in the order, no matter what their moral or intellectual shortcomings: they are actors in a moral theatre, directed by Shaykh Nazim on behalf of his spiritual masters.

The sense of universality is heightened by the Order's claim to be working for, and healing, all of humanity. Even people who have never heard of Shaykh Nazim or the other masters may be reached by means of the nine points on the chest. Narratives of salvation in the Order do not just concern individuals, but humanity's fate in the era approaching the eschaton. Correspondingly, the Order's healing activity spans politics, agriculture, education, art, health, and many other disciplines. The perception of the Order's mission is reflected by its worldwide (though not ubiquitous) distribution, which has substantially increased in recent decades. In a related discourse, descendants of the Prophet Muhammad, and indeed of the Virgin Mary, are said to be increasingly spread worldwide, though often unaware of their ancestry; people bearing this holy blood are said to be relatively likely to end up in the Order.

Shaykh Nazim's healing techniques include those characteristically associated with "Sufi healing". He, and his students, recommend prayers (*wirds*, *wazīfas* and *du'ās*), to heal the body and mind. They use treatments that originate in Graeco-Arabic medicine. They exorcise bad jinns, and get the help of good ones. The dergahs, particularly though not exclusively the dergah in Lefke, act as asylums. The masters do not ask for payment, although they accept donations. A universality typical of Sufi healers is reflected in unrestricted access to dergahs, and the willingness to treat people irrespective of creed or ethnicity.

However, Naqshbandi-Haqqani medicine goes beyond what is generally recognised as "Sufi healing" to embrace all kinds of practices, including modern medicine; all of which are traced, in theory, to the Prophet's example: surgery, for instance, finds its archetype in the "heart surgery" done on the Prophet by an archangel. The connection with the Prophet is made live, for Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, by their spiritual connection with Shaykh Nazim, and therefore to the Prophet. Almost any medical discipline, informed by this connection, can be a "Sufi" discipline.

Healing and knowledge are cyclically related. Sacred knowledge, derived ultimately from the Prophet, not only provides knowledge about healing but provides knowledge during and in healing. Healing of the soul allows the intellect to perceive more and truer knowledge. Healing is therefore a

manifestation of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani intellectual perspective, and of perceived holiness. Depth of ethics (from personal holiness), depth of knowledge, and capacity for healing tend to go together.

The emphasis on Shaykh Nazim's holiness is reflected in the exorcism techniques associated with him. No sticks or chains were present; bad jinns are said to be unable to enter his dergah. Naqshbandi-Haqqani healers do not become possessed themselves, which may reflect Naqshbandi mores in general; although a psychic surgeon who did become possessed was reportedly recommended by Shaykh Nazim (or, at least, that was the perception among some dervishes). Notably, jinn healing was only a minor part of medicalised discourse in the Order. This may reflect the fact that most of my fieldwork was done in the West, rather than in, for instance, India or Malaysia. But it also seems to reflect Shaykh Mehmet's remark that jinn syndromes are overdiagnosed.

Shaykh Nazim is reported to heal through miracles. A few miracle stories are well known and widely credited. However, they do not form a major part of the discourse around Shaykh Nazim, or even around his healing; nor do they substantially reinforce his authority, which relies mainly on perceptions of his charisma and spiritual authority. Shaykh Nazim is reported to hide his miracles: from modesty, but also because he wants to be learnt from, not venerated. Shaykh Nazim's perceived ability to heal does indeed contribute substantially to his authority, and to the social cohesion of the group, but it is the ability to heal characters and lives that dominates discourse.

Although Naqshbandi-Haqqani zikr practices incorporate techniques classically associated with other orders, deliberate injury followed by miraculous healing is not one of them. Shaykh Nazim is nonetheless said to have the capacity to ensure the miraculous healing expected in Rifa'i ceremonies. Embodied efficacy is not as graphic in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order as in the orders where dervishes are skewered. However, efficacy is experiential, and perceived in the mind and body, as well as in the social body.

Illness experience is also spiritual experience. Illness arises as an expression of spiritual need and is healed as an expression of grace. For some dervishes, illness and healing are experientially an interaction with Shaykh Nazim. Some dervishes report that they feel spiritual energy, directed through the masters, interacting with and supporting their bodies, typically through the *laṭāʿif*.

Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters are also said to sacrifice their health for the people under their care. Travelling, constant teaching, and healing with spiritual energy are said to drain energy. The masters are also said to take on people's spiritual and psychological burdens, in a way that manifests as illness. One master, Raja Ashman, was said to sacrifice his life for his master, Shaykh Nazim, by means of prayer.

One of the roles of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani master is to embody folly, as a sacred prankster who aims to show people the limits of their thinking; but not in such a way that they react irrevocably against him. The sense of folly is heightened in dergahs, and particularly in Lefke, where many of the people in positions of responsibility or honour are liminal, outcast people or have apparent mental illnesses. Shaykh Nazim wryly challenges social norms about madness and sanity, commenting that anyone not officially crazy is really crazy. Naqshbandi-Haqqani soul-healing is said to induce apparent craziness, as the ego's grip on the personality is loosened and people are confronted with suppressed (or induced) horror. This is said eventually to lead to the possibility of true sanity and happiness. The trajectory of supposed craziness reflects Naqshbandi-Haqqani teachings about soul-purification in general, in which people have to "empty their cup", becoming truly without arrogance, before the metaphorical cup can be filled. Or, in another metaphor I encountered, people's lives have to turn to compost so the roses can grow. Perhaps more than modern medicine, Naqshbandi-Haqqani healing emphasises the art of suffering. Suffering is inevitable, at least until the soul is completely purified. The act of suffering well is part of the soul's healing.

Like a psychotherapist, a Naqshbandi-Haqqani master is considered to have insight into the mind, and the authority to recommend changes of lifestyle or thinking. However, his insight into

character and destiny is held to be much greater than that of a psychotherapist: so he can, for instance, advise someone authoritatively on whom to marry, or how to earn a living. Whereas a psychotherapist is typically subject to regulatory and internal corporate oversight, Shaykh Nazim is understood to be under the oversight of the Prophet. Dervishes are not encouraged to complain about him, but to understand their complaints as manifestations of their *nafs*, and to use this as an educational experience and stimulus to improve. Organisationally, rather than being in the typical position of a modern clinician, Shaykh Nazim is in the position of a sultan; albeit one who is subject to the wider laws of the land.

Such an understanding is, in theory, open to abuse. Accusations of abuse against leaders of new religious movements are not rare.⁸²⁶ To my knowledge, Shaykh Nazim was not accused of abuse, although he was accused of implicit complicity in the corrupt behaviour of others. A couple of disillusioned visitors to the dergah felt that the order's links to US neoconservatives were ethically inappropriate. Ex-followers implicitly accused Shaykh Nazim of claiming, or having others claim on his behalf, insight he did not have.

In both Naqshbandi-Haqqani healing and modern medicine, the patient is expected to improve upon seeing the doctor. A psychiatric patient who does not respond to treatment may be framed as a difficult or anomalous case. A dervish who seems unhinged or unpleasant is benefiting from the mercy transmitted through his masters, and engaging in a long-term cure. Belief is helpful in Naqshbandi-Haqqani treatment: not merely to trigger the physiological reaction associated with placebo treatment, but as an act of commitment and connection to the master. In contrast to the psychiatrist, the master is assumed not to fail.⁸²⁷ The traumatic or disconcerting experiences associated with early stages of "treatment" could be glossed as side-effects, but are used as part of

⁸²⁶ Hammer and Rothstein 2012.

⁸²⁷ The boundary between a psychiatrist's and a patient's "failure" is of course difficult to determine, and a psychiatrist who has followed guidelines is generally deemed to have acted appropriately. Epstein (2006) points out that the theoretical structure of psychoanalysis, and by extension the actions of the psychotherapist, have been difficult to assess objectively (and potentially find wanting).

the treatment; rather as, in psychoanalysis, emotional and behavioural responses are a stimulus for reflection.

People for whom Shaykh Nazim was a soul-healer, or psychiatrist, chose him, rather than having him allocated to them by administrative process; although many said, in accordance with Naqshbandi-Haqqani belief, that their spirits had met Shaykh Nazim before they had physically met. Some felt that Shaykh Nazim had chosen them. Almost by definition, perhaps, those who stayed with him found him effective. People rarely spoke about their own gains (perhaps from a sense of modesty or privacy), but, more commonly, spoke about how Shaykh Nazim had influenced other people to give up crime or to pray. Some people observed how their relationships improved merely through obeying Shaykh Nazim's instructions on *adab*. Vidich (2000) has pointed out that a dervish is expected to show perfect manners, rather than "act out", but in practice this discipline is not necessarily perfect; although people do tend to behave well in the physical presence of a master.

The exposure of vulnerabilities as part of healing can be seen as a medical theme: surgeons cut and psychiatrists probe. In these cases, agency is primarily with the doctor. The theoretical agency of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani masters can hardly be denied: some dervishes even describe the shock that (in theory) dislocates the ego as "heart surgery". However, dervishes are regarded as "co-creators" of their destiny. Naqshbandi-Haqqani healing trajectories can be understood as tragedy, in which a person undergoes hardship as a result of his own character flaws, before eventually reaching a degree of self-knowledge and redemption. It might be objected that the hardships are being imposed by the shaykhs; but in Naqshbandi-Haqqani thought, the shaykhs are acting as servants of God, rather as God, or the gods, are ultimately behind events in Greek or Shakespearian tragedy.

The need for the patient to heal himself, to take the opportunities provided to develop, is more pronounced in Naqshbandi-Haqqani healing than in modern medicine, where many clinical regimens are essentially passive. Naqshbandi-Haqqani dialogues with masters are more broadly personalistic than is usual in modern medicine, reflecting the wider view of healing taken by the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order. Whereas the body of modern medicine is physiological and, by

extension, chemical, the Naqshbandi-Haqqani body is biological: it is inhabited by the human spirit, and responds with its own will to healing interventions. It is also influenced by angels and jinns. This model is non-scientific, but empirical: people can experience, and be aware of, these non-human beings. However, whereas in science the empiricism is held to be general (although in practice, perceptions vary among scientists), in Naqshbandi-Haqqani thought empirical ability varies considerably. A master like Shaykh Nazim can be exquisitely aware of angels, jinns, and the spirits of holy people, when another person might sense only a change in atmosphere—or nothing at all.

People other than the masters have specific medical expertise: perhaps more, in certain respects, than the masters themselves. Through the process of *rābiṭa*, they act in some ways as extensions of the masters; through their own fallibility, they act as part of the testing and educational process of the order. Even when they fail to heal, they are part of a healing process. The learning by interaction with fellow dervishes could be likened to group therapy (it could also be said that, in a mental hospital, the patient does not choose his neighbours). The dyadic healer-patient relationship referred to by Ewing (1984) is reflected, at least potentially, in human interaction in general: other people are a reflection, no matter how distorted, of the master. Werbner (2003: 225) observed that the charisma of a master generated an “emotional ecology” that tended to engender “peace of mind” in the visitor. But the interactions around Shaykh Nazim are much more complex and, at times, paradoxical.

In general, the process of *rābiṭa* structures the order. The order has been described as “translocal” rather than transglobal,⁸²⁸ on account of the overtly high degree of autonomy of local groups. But this is to set aside the role of “heart-to-heart” communication, real or perceived, in determining the actions of dervishes far away from the master. *Rābiṭa* could almost be said to parallel the clinical and professional guidelines of psychiatry; except, of course, that spiritual dialogue with the master is much more situational and spontaneous, and less easy to demonstrate to others.

⁸²⁸ Nielsen et al 2006.

Dergahs and mosques could, of course, be said to parallel hospitals as centres of treatment. The political and social institutions set up by the Order are, at least in theory, devoted ultimately to *taṣawwuf*, so can be envisaged as adjuncts to the dergahs and mosques, almost as though political and social institutions in the wider society were established with the health service in mind.

As well as being universal, Naqshbandi-Haqqani psychiatry is conceived of as constant: it is based on the patient's interaction with his Sufi master, which shapes his everyday life, largely through the master's reported ability to send spiritual knowledge to the "heart", and to arrange educational (or therapeutic) situations. The experience of being with the master never ends. Even people who, as far as they are concerned, have left the order are still thought to be under the masters' care. The interaction with the master is said to shape the student's life throughout eternity. Since many people are said to be under the care of the masters without knowing it; and since Shaykh Nazim is said to be the *Sulṭānu 'l-Awliyā'*, through whom God's grace descends to creation, Naqshbandi-Haqqani healing, in theory, encompasses the universe.

The association of holiness with Sufi healing is well established in medical anthropology. Healing is commonly thought to come from holy people and to validate holiness. However, to my knowledge, no previous ethnographic study has shown Sufi healing to have the universally inclusive, theoretically salvific nature characteristic of the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis. Naqshbandi-Haqqanis believe that the universe is in their masters' care. The centrality of soul-healing, *taṣawwuf*, to Naqshbandi-Haqqani discourse means that all activity is a part of it; and the role of *rābīṭa* in dervish life means that every experience is connected with the Shaykh, and therefore with soul-healing. Indeed, the whole universe is part of the soul-healing mechanism.

The inclusion of much (potentially all) worldly activity as part of soul-healing was arguably the underlying theme of Ghazali's *Ihyā'*. A contemporary scholar, sympathetic to Sufi Islam, remarks:

The Qur'an is itself a "healing", (17: 82) and books, art, and believers themselves can only claim to be truly conformed to the Revelation when they act as a source of healing for others. The Prophet himself, may peace be

upon him, was a physician of bodies and of spirits, and nothing can claim to be properly Islamic unless it conforms to this fundamental Sunna.⁸²⁹

7.3 Postmodernity

Jean-François Lyotard, who was influential in establishing the concept in the social sciences, argued that postmodernity was characterised by incredulity towards metanarratives.⁸³⁰ This is reflected in the many and various definitions of, and approaches to, the concept of postmodernity. However, postmodernity, at its most conceptually basic, is a state of mind or action that comes after modernity: which, by definition, is a state of perceived human progress through material advancement. Since material advancement is often something done to, or on behalf of, some people by others, modernity is also associated with rationalisation.⁸³¹ Postmodernity implies a critical attitude towards the narratives that characterise modernity; and, often, a consequent tendency towards eclecticism and personalisation in constructing meaning.

The principal narrative in scientific medicine, by definition, is that science can be applied to heal human beings. Modern science is envisaged as a progressive, ultimately utopian discipline: as science develops, the effectiveness of scientific medicine should improve.

Although physiology became a widely accepted medical science in the 16th century, treatments based on physiological experiment did not become widespread until the 19th century.⁸³² The 20th century saw a vast expansion of medical technology and treatment,⁸³³ with tremendous symbolic power: babies could be conceived outside the womb, organs and joints replaced, smallpox eradicated.

⁸²⁹ Abdal Hakim Murad, in *an-Naqshbandi* (2011: xxv).

⁸³⁰ Lyotard 1984.

⁸³¹ Illich 1981; Kalberg 2005; Voll 2007.

⁸³² Wootton 2007.

⁸³³ Le Fanu 2000.

Science is, perhaps by definition, the ideal religion for the modern age, since it embodies material progress, and generally requires rationalisation in order to be funded and administered. Scientific naturalism might also be held to embody the *Entzauberung* (“disenchantment”) that Weber regarded as characteristic of modernity.⁸³⁴ However, even if spirits and souls are no longer held to exist (or to matter), some habits of enchantment remain. People might understand that their minds are merely the result of probabilistic chemical reactions, but behave, and feel, as though they have will, emotion, and purpose.⁸³⁵ Scientific narratives can help to provide purpose and meaning; indeed, with its promise of the betterment of mankind, science offers a kind of salvation.⁸³⁶ Medicine can be viewed as embodied salvation—or, in psychiatry’s case, the salvation of the *psyche*. However, in recent years, medical academics have expressed the following concerns about the effectiveness of modern medicine:

1. *Medicines don’t work*. Although randomised controlled trials have indicated that many medicines are better than placebo (for specific patients, sets of conditions, and durations of assessment), the same trials can be used to show that for most patients, the drug is no better than placebo. Even the positive effects detected are often of debatable clinical significance.⁸³⁷ Since trials are typically designed, administered, and interpreted by people working for, or with financial connections to, the companies manufacturing the drugs, they are considered unlikely to underestimate drug effects.⁸³⁸ When doctors go on strike, death rates typically stay the same or go down.⁸³⁹

⁸³⁴ Kalberg 2005.

⁸³⁵ Dawkins (2006), while describing organisms, including humans, as “machines”, describes their genes as selfish, gangster-like [sic] “replicators” who survive through creating and inhabiting the life-forms they occupy. The burden of agency and, arguably, personality has been transferred from the person to part of the cell. Moreover, “their preservation is the ultimate rationale for our existence” (2006: 20). Dawkins’ language is puzzling, since the gene is broken up on the death of the cell it inhabits: the organic-base sequence of the gene is passed on to the next organism, not the gene itself.

⁸³⁶ Midgley 1992.

⁸³⁷ Lepping et al 2011; Ziliak and McCloskey 2008.

⁸³⁸ Götzsche 2013; Angell 2009.

⁸³⁹ Metcalfe et al 2015; Cunningham et al 2008.

2. *We cannot know whether medicine works.* In 1973, spot-checks on US laboratories allegedly conducting clinical trials of new compounds revealed that a third of the trials were not being done at all, and a further third were not being done according to the protocol.⁸⁴⁰ Ongoing concern about the probity of clinical science was raised in the new millennium by editors of the world's two leading medical journals. Marcia Angell, former editor of the *New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM)*, wrote, "It is simply no longer possible to believe much of the clinical research that is published, or to rely on the judgement of trusted physicians or authoritative medical guidelines. I take no pleasure in this conclusion, which I reached slowly and reluctantly over my two decades as an editor."⁸⁴¹ Richard Horton, the long-serving editor of the *Lancet*, commented,

The case against science is straightforward: much of the scientific literature, perhaps half, may simply be untrue. Afflicted by studies with small sample sizes, tiny effects, invalid exploratory analyses, and flagrant conflicts of interest, together with an obsession for pursuing fashionable trends of dubious importance, science has taken a turn towards darkness.⁸⁴²

Venture capitalists are said to work on the basis that more than half of published medical-science studies cannot be replicated in an independent industrial laboratory.⁸⁴³ In 2001–10, the *NEJM* published 363 studies that assessed clinical practices previously supported by research: 138 upheld the practice, and 146 found it unhelpful or harmful.⁸⁴⁴

Statisticians have noticed that publishable findings can be generated using flexible study designs and statistical analyses: which might even create a correlation between prominence

⁸⁴⁰ NW 1973; Special Commission on Internal Pollution 1975.

⁸⁴¹ Angell 2009.

⁸⁴² Horton 2015.

⁸⁴³ Prinz et al 2011.

⁸⁴⁴ Prasad et al 2013.

and unreliability.⁸⁴⁵ This ought to be counteracted by the greater scrutiny afforded to potentially important results. But Glenn Begley and Lee Ellis (2012) repeated 55 influential laboratory studies in cancer medicine, and were able to replicate reported findings in only six.

The above concerns are rarely, if ever, directly challenged in academic medicine. However, they do not visibly influence most discourse, which is devoted to further advances in science. The academics who raise concerns about the reliability of medical science, or the fallibilities it reveals, accompany their articles with recommendations for greater scientific or regulatory rigour. More challenging is the idea that medicine is innately ineffective against much that it is used to address. Medicine is used to address a vast variety of suffering, which is transformed into illness, and then becomes disease. Currently, 4% of the world's population is deemed free from disease.⁸⁴⁶ Much of this disease is chronic: over 80% of healthcare spending in the USA is on chronic disease.⁸⁴⁷ Many of life's problems have become chronic disease.⁸⁴⁸

The medicalisation of suffering can stabilise power structures in modern societies, and regulate potential dissent. William Epstein (2006) argues that psychotherapy (and presumably, by extension, psychiatry) transforms deviance and rehabilitation into a "morality play" that, by locating social problems in the individual, allows social policy to persist largely unchanged. Nancy Scheper-Hughes (1988) showed starving, overworked plantation workers in Brazil describing themselves as "weak" and "nervous" rather than oppressed, and spending money, badly needed for food, on medicine. Julian Tudor Hart (2013) described British parents desperate for their children to be diagnosed as

⁸⁴⁵ Button et al 2013.

⁸⁴⁶ McGrail et al 2016.

⁸⁴⁷ McGrail et al (2016) gave an estimate of 84%.

⁸⁴⁸ Kleinman 1995.

mentally ill, as this would release financial support ordinarily required for everyday living.⁸⁴⁹ Since poverty and abuse predispose to problems labelled as mental illness, psychiatry may, by channelling potential dissent into health-seeking behaviour, sustain the structures that create the illnesses it treats (interestingly, psychosis has quite a well established association with social modernisation).⁸⁵⁰

Modern medicine has tremendous narrative and organisational power. In a way consistent with Bacon's vision, it is the medicine of state, corporation, and university. But the very concentration of power it represents means that people looking for alternative narratives will look elsewhere. This is particularly likely if they are disillusioned with modernity as a whole, through poverty or simply because it seems inadequate to address problems of suffering and meaning.

Medicine's attempts to remove suffering and avert death by scientific methods can be traced conceptually to Bacon's programme to reverse the Fall of Man. Despite Bacon's wishes, earthly immortality cannot yet be attained, let alone immortality without suffering;⁸⁵¹ therefore, at best, science can offer a reduction of pain, or the prolongation of a life containing pain. The individual scientist, or subject of science, does not participate in utopia, but in experiments that lead towards its advent.⁸⁵²

In addition, for many people, modern medicine is largely unavailable: the "inverse care law", in which those most in need of medicine are the least likely to get it,⁸⁵³ operates between as well as within countries,⁸⁵⁴ and is responsible for (for instance) the discontinuation of manufacture of the only antivenom shown to be safe and effective against all types of snakebite in sub-Saharan

⁸⁴⁹ Roy Porter (2003: 64–66) remarked that, in late Elizabethan England, madmen were permitted to beg but sane people were not. They therefore ended up masquerading as madmen. "What a crazy world in which the poor had to pretend to be mad in order to get a crust!"

⁸⁵⁰ Torrey 1987; Littlewood and Dein 2000, 2013; Fortes and Mayer 1969; Littlewood 2002. In 1514, Dürer prophetically depicted *Melencolia* [sic] as a fallen angel holding a geometer's compass, surrounded by measuring instruments, builder's tools, and regular three-dimensional shapes.

⁸⁵¹ Jonathan Swift (*Gulliver's Travels*, 1726) created the Struldbruggs, to satirically illustrate the potential hideousness of earthly immortality.

⁸⁵² Midgley 1992.

⁸⁵³ Tudor Hart 1971.

⁸⁵⁴ Moosa et al 2013.

Africa.⁸⁵⁵ 10–25% of global spend on public procurement of health is lost through corruption;⁸⁵⁶ around one in six drugs are fake.⁸⁵⁷ 85–90% of new drugs provide few or no advantages for patients over existing drugs;⁸⁵⁸ which has been attributed, in part, to the prioritisation of profit by pharmaceutical companies.⁸⁵⁹ Eventually, given its reliance on oil (for fuel, plastics, drugs), metals, and considerable energy supplies, modern medicine might be expected to hit environmental limits.

Even in Bacon's utopia, some people seemed to have the Fall reversed more thoroughly than others;⁸⁶⁰ it may not be entirely coincidental that the concept of postmodernism arose when inequality of wealth and opportunity (often attributed to neoliberal economics, the petrodollar system, and structural adjustment) started to increase within and between societies.⁸⁶¹

Perhaps unsurprisingly, psychiatry as a whole has not taken a postmodern turn. Diagnosis and treatment remain overwhelmingly physiological, and psychiatric science generally materialist and reductionist. When psychotherapies are offered by health services, this is generally on the basis of standard diagnoses, with the intention of treating them. The hearing-voices movement has sought to explain disembodied voices as dissociation, often as a result of trauma, and has even argued that some patients may prefer to hear voices rather than take medication.⁸⁶² However, should a voice-hearer be behaviourally deviant, he will be classified according to standard diagnostic criteria, and considered in need of treatment. Transpersonal psychology, some of which has been influenced by interpretations of Sufi thought,⁸⁶³ has little interface with clinical psychiatry. Spirituality is attracting increasing interest within academic medicine,⁸⁶⁴ but remains a fringe subject; much of the discourse

⁸⁵⁵ *Lancet* editorial 2015.

⁸⁵⁶ Jain et al 2014.

⁸⁵⁷ Cockburn et al 2005.

⁸⁵⁸ Light and Lexchin 2015.

⁸⁵⁹ Naci et al 2015; Davies S 2013.

⁸⁶⁰ Webster 1975.

⁸⁶¹ Ahmed N 2010; Graeber 2014, 2015; Harvey 1989.

⁸⁶² Romme and Escher 1993; Longden et al 2012.

⁸⁶³ Hermansen 2004.

⁸⁶⁴ Cobb et al 2012.

centres on the instrumental, medical value of religious behaviour.⁸⁶⁵ Indeed, in recent decades, changes in funding arrangements, and the decline of psychoanalysis, have sharpened psychiatry's overall focus on diagnosis and drug treatment. Doctors have high rates of mental illness and suicide:⁸⁶⁶ psychiatrists are often "wounded healers" not only in the sense of being rationalised in order to rationalise, but in suffering from the kind of suffering they attempt to cure.

The behaviour of patients, however, is increasingly postmodern. Even those who see psychiatrists (and other doctors) generally do not take the medicine as prescribed.⁸⁶⁷ In the West, the amount of money spent on "alternative" medicine may well exceed that spent on scientific medicine.⁸⁶⁸ An "inferior" form of healing can be one that is widely available, at low cost, without bureaucratic hindrance or consequence; which can be particularly salient when the state is experienced as "arbitrary, indifferent, corrupt, and prejudiced".⁸⁶⁹ An "unscientific" medicine can accommodate personalistic narratives and premodern epistemologies: the personalistic approaches of some alternative practitioners can be experienced as a welcome contrast to the increasingly naturalistic, systematised approach of modern healthcare systems.⁸⁷⁰ A "superstitious" outlook can be experienced as appropriately religious, or as acknowledging self-evident truths: the existence of unseen beings can be so obvious that the correct research question, for an anthropologist, is not "do you believe in them?" but "which ones do you believe?";⁸⁷¹ and medicine against their deprivations can be perceived as essential.⁸⁷²

⁸⁶⁵ Koenig et al 2012.

⁸⁶⁶ Brooks et al 2011; Center et al 2003.

⁸⁶⁷ Osterberg and Blaschke 2005; Cramer and Rosenheck 1998.

⁸⁶⁸ Eisenberg et al 1998. Surprisingly little research has been done in the last 20 years to show how the prevalence of alternative-medicine use has changed. Harris et al (2012) argue that it is probably essentially unchanged in the USA and Australia (where longitudinal data sets exist), but their data could be interpreted as indicating an increase. The proliferation of alternative-medicine outlets on high streets might seem to indicate that it is becoming ever more popular.

⁸⁶⁹ Basu 2015, describing how the Indian state is experienced by its poorer citizens.

⁸⁷⁰ Bivins 2010; Relman 2014; Yawar 2008.

⁸⁷¹ Good 1994; Evans-Pritchard 1937.

⁸⁷² Stoller and Olkes 1987.

People often do not have a deep commitment to or interest in the beliefs of the alternative-medicine practitioners they consult. However, therapy can be a gateway to a deeper interest in Sufi healing. In Germany and Argentina in particular, the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order has spread through alternative-medicine practice and networks.⁸⁷³ A positive-feedback cycle seems to exist, in which increasing use of alternative therapy leads to an increasing interest in spirituality; which, in turn, leads to a deeper interest in alternative therapy and a questioning of modernity. The “therapeutic turn”, in which problems of living are psychologised, has been criticised for leading to narcissism rather than action.⁸⁷⁴ In Naqshbandi-Haqqani healing, the opposite is intended to happen: Sufi healing is supposed to allow people to cease being imprisoned by their self-image, and thereby function positively in the world.

In the modern world, the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order is innately counter-cultural. The knowledge available to humanity is held to be increasing, but through the Prophet’s spirituality, rather than scientific experiment; ignorance and injustice are expected to become more widespread until the advent of the Mahdi. The Fall of Man is reversed not by naturalistic empiricism but by initially purgatorial purification of the soul; the coming golden age is a world without industrial technology, to be reached through prayer, rather than science.

Naqshbandi-Haqqani religious narratives sometimes join the primordial past and the ultimate future: pilgrimage to Damascus, for instance, takes in Cain and Abel and the Scales of the Day of Judgement. However, in contrast to Mircea Eliade’s thesis (1949/ 2005), religious ritual is not said to be about primal re-enactment, but about a living interaction with a holy person; the religious actor is not framed as embodying an archetype, but remains fallibly individual (otherwise, there would be no point in meeting the holy person).

Shaykh Nazim’s envisaged *salṭanat* is not just Muhammadan, but Adamic: intended to represent ways of living that could be primordial and continue indefinitely. This imagined world of small,

⁸⁷³ Selim 2015; Salinas 2015.

⁸⁷⁴ Stein 2011.

independent, organic farms, facilities provided largely through friendships, and a government strong on holiness but light on bureaucracy is consistent with Shaykh Nazim's admiration for the Ottoman Empire,⁸⁷⁵ but also recalls strands of ecological, anarchist, and new-age thinking. The Naqshbandi-Haqqani order is associated with centres of New Age activity (Glastonbury, Berlin, El Bolsón),⁸⁷⁶ and has attracted longstanding spiritual seekers and people interested in "alternative" lifestyles.⁸⁷⁷ As Sufi orders tend to do,⁸⁷⁸ the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order generates fluid, organic social networks that provide intimacy outside kinship or work networks, and in which the status markers of the outside world often mean little. The scale of the order means that support networks are potentially quite extensive—though, here too, some people are central and others marginal; and Shaykh Nazim's emphasis on being part of the wider society helps to limit the extent to which people socialise exclusively with other dervishes.⁸⁷⁹ Support networks extend from dervishes into neighbours, friends, and acquaintances: the boundaries of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order are difficult to define.

With its emphasis on locally grown food, natural medicines, traditional crafts, folk music, and communal support, the order's ethos is in contrast to a financialised world. Naqshbandi-Haqqani healing is not necessarily the "medicine of the poor", being used in all social classes. But it is to some extent independent of economic imperatives: prayer and *rābiṭa* do not require money. Most (though not all) of the clinical healing I came across in the order was offered free of charge, or cheaply.

Naqshbandi-Haqqani healing is, in general, neither funded nor regulated by the state. The definitions of illness and health are not necessarily the same as those used by the state and the

⁸⁷⁵ Evans-Pritchard 1949.

⁸⁷⁶ The *New York Times* described El Bolsón as "the mecca of the Argentine counterculture" (Krauss 2001).

⁸⁷⁷ Schlessmann 2003; Salinas 2015.

⁸⁷⁸ Werbner 2007.

⁸⁷⁹ Shaykh Nazim advised his followers not to form communities isolated from the wider society (*M O Lovestream*, 1987).

medical profession; the overall aim is not merely to be free of disease, or able to work, but to have a pure soul.

Shaykh Nazim's introduction of the Naqshbandi order to new cultural and geographical spaces probably exceeds that of any previous Naqshbandi master; although the order has been historically associated with the introduction of Islam to new areas, notably in central Asia.⁸⁸⁰ The Naqshbandi-Haqqani order is also typically Naqshbandi in its Sunni identity (and *Bakrī silsila*); its championing of Hanafi *fiqh*; its use of *rābiṭa* and its reported *Uwaysī* connections; and its use of seclusion and "seclusion in the world".

Where the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order might seem atypical, this is explained within the order as adaptation to the needs of the students. The masters emphasise *sharī'a*, but ask students to understand and follow it gradually and of their own free will (peer pressure and direct instruction aside); zikr is often loud, rather than silent, because this helps the "young" dervishes.⁸⁸¹ The eleven characteristic practices of the order are rarely discussed as a discrete topic (though Shaykh Hisham has written about them); rather, the principles are reportedly introduced according to the student's progress and understanding.

Other apparent differences can be linked to the characteristic Naqshbandi sense of pre-eminence. Shaykh Nazim has introduced practices from other Sufi orders, but this is said to be because he understands them and knows how to use them: he is a master in these orders too. Moreover, in Naqshbandi-Haqqani discourse, other Sufi orders are drying up, as real masters are no longer found; the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order spiritually incorporates these other orders, and will carry the essence of humanity's spirituality until the time of Christ.

This sense of pre-eminence leads, paradoxically, to an easy ecumenism: every way of knowledge or healing is in some way a Naqshbandi-Haqqani path, if correctly understood and used. Some of the

⁸⁸⁰ Abun-Nasr 2007.

⁸⁸¹ Algar (1990a) notes that loud zikr is common in contemporary Naqshbandi groups in general.

masters are known for their interfaith work: Shaykh Eşref does much of his public work in an interfaith context, visiting (for instance) a synagogue in India or a convent in Palestine. The “enemy” is the Devil, who turns knowledge towards the self-serving agenda of the ego; the nearest Naqshbandi-Haqqanis get to religious opponents are the groups they see as making Islam egotistical (or disrespectful of the Prophet, which, I was told, is a manifestation of egotism).

The extraordinary spread of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order reflects, and sustains, its universalist approach. The order finds sacredness worldwide, and regards all people as part of the Prophet’s community, whether they are aware of this or not. The Naqshbandi-Haqqani holy world is contemporary and evolving—or being revealed. Places are sacred through their association with holy people; every part of the world has its holy places, including those in which the Naqshbandi order is a newcomer. Sometimes these places are already holy in legend or the popular imagination (Glastonbury); sometimes they are not (Peckham).

The order celebrates its internal subcultures rather than seeking to eradicate them: religious discourse in Peckham, where the community has a high Turkish population, is tinged by Ottoman nostalgia; in Glastonbury, it does not neglect Christ and King Arthur. In Lefke, global cultures are expressed, the diversity of the order a celebration and an expression of Shaykh Nazim’s charisma. In some cities, members of different ethnic groups tend to attend different zikr groups.⁸⁸² But they are all united by the *khatm* and by their adherence to Shaykh Nazim.

In several countries, including the UK and USA, the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order has been credited with stemming the growth of Salafi groups, through presenting an alternative universalist Islam. In a way historically characteristic of Naqshbandi groups, the order can articulate a “scripturalist” Islam that refers to fundamental sources, and is fairly light on dramatic ritual that might be disorientating to the newcomer.

⁸⁸² Nielsen et al 2006.

Marcia Hermansen (2006) classified Sufi orders as *transplant* (essentially the same as in the country of origin), *hybrid* (formally Islamic, but adapted to local customs), or *perennial* (with little or no overt expression of Islam). In western Europe and the USA, the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis could be described as a hybrid order; but some members behave like “transplants”, and others like “perennials”; and people’s behaviour changes over time. The notion of a homeland is problematic in an international order with many converts and widespread holy places (and in which “homeland” often means the divine presence). Moreover, the classification implies the existence of a (surprisingly uniform) norm to which Sufis are invited to adapt, rather than a respectful dialogue between equals, or the negotiation of an individual’s identity and persona in a complex world. Subsequent classifications of Sufi groups as “theirs” or “ours”,⁸⁸³ or according to their relationship with “American” identity,⁸⁸⁴ are perhaps best understood in terms of a polarised discourse, shaped more by concerns with US identity than by engagement with Sufi teachings.

Sufis have often been perceived as “good Muslims”: unlikely to be violent or conspicuously alienated from “western” cultures.⁸⁸⁵ Habibis (1985) described Naqshbandi-Haqqanis in Lebanon as alienated from a society that was modernising and riven by civil war. Subsequent researchers, notably Wahyu Nugroho (2015), have found that Naqshbandi-Haqqanis are generally at ease in a pluralistic society.⁸⁸⁶ My own observation was that Naqshbandi-Haqqanis were rarely hostile to, or alienated by, society in general, but often had an ironic attitude to dominant narratives.

Marie LeBlanc (2014: 434–36) noted that a Montréal Naqshbandi-Haqqani imam had a “public image as the prototypical ‘good Muslim’”, using a high media profile to establish a discourse of “tolerance and openness”. However, she commented, “The compatibility between the *umma* [Islamic community], the world citizen and Quebec’s nationalist cultural project is not readily

⁸⁸³ Hermansen 2009.

⁸⁸⁴ Dressler 2009.

⁸⁸⁵ Hermansen 2004; Sedgwick 2015.

⁸⁸⁶ See also Farrer (2009); Milani and Possamai (2015).

evident. In other words, the balancing act for Naqshbandi devotees between their allegiance to the *umma* and to Quebec society may turn out to be rather precarious.”

LeBlanc’s analysis seems to reflect a polarisation that hardly exists in Naqshbandi-Haqqani discourse: there is no contradiction between being a member of the *umma* and of the wider society. Naqshbandi-Haqqani dervishes sometimes used the word *umma* to refer to Muslims; but, at other times, told me that everyone contemporary with, or born after, the Prophet Muhammad is part of his *umma* (though they considered themselves privileged to be in the special category who recognised him as God’s prophet). The Naqshbandi-Haqqani doctrine that the “Sun is rising in the West” exemplifies their belief that they are part of the “West”, although critical of modernity. In my experience, most dervishes are not following a Naqshbandi-Haqqani agenda, whatever that might be, but an individual path of living in the world and connecting with Shaykh Nazim—who was, with his universalism and political stances, very much a “good Muslim”. The Naqshbandi-Haqqanis exemplify (and to some extent established) a global “political Islam” that concentrates on co-operating with, rather than revolting against, existing social and political structures. In contrast to the oppositional discourse of “Jihad versus McWorld”, which is really a clash of opposing modernisms,⁸⁸⁷ the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order deals with modernity largely by incorporating it into a significantly non-modern worldview.

Naqshbandi-Haqqani healing is a particularly inclusive meta-narrative, incorporating all human endeavour, including science, into the endless journey to the divine presence. Arguably, therefore, it is not truly postmodern. Alternatively, perhaps the label “postmodern” is typically applied to activities and modes of being that embody a fragmented, late modernity, in which modern systems and ideas create disillusionment but continue to dominate the imagination. In that sense, Naqshbandi-Haqqani thought might be truly postmodern, since its remedy for the Fall of Man is altogether different from that of modernity.

⁸⁸⁷ Roy 2004; Gray 2007; Voll 2007.

Physiological medicine is unusual in its materialism, naturalism, anti-vitalism, reductionism, and rationalisation.⁸⁸⁸ It can be viewed as a progressive advance from superstition and speculation; or as a disruption in a “Western” cultural outlook in which, from the ancient world to the early modern period, the intellect was often understood to be (potentially) divinely inspired, and healing to have an essential spiritual dimension. Paradoxically, with its use of Greek medicine, and a model of the intellect fairly close to Augustine’s, the supposedly “eastern” Naqshbandi-Haqqani Sufi order could be held to represent a continuity with the “Western” cultural heritage that has elsewhere been disrupted by modernity.

The Naqshbandi-Haqqani order is well equipped to continue to spread in the West, with its ethos of tolerance, easy ecumenism, embracing of vernaculars, and finding the sacred in every person and place. Its unification of epistemology and personalistic ethics may attract people alienated by the Enlightenment separation of intellect and intimacy;⁸⁸⁹ its ecological approach unifies personal and collective morality. The key element behind its spread seems to be the charisma of its leader, and the related concept, or promise, of direct experience of truth.

Given its resilience even under Soviet and Maoist rule, and its minimal need for public display or formal infrastructure, the Naqshbandi order is likely to survive opprobrium or persecution. From the emic perspective, it will survive as long as the Prophet continues to communicate with humanity, i.e. for ever. It is possible that, like certain prominent Sufis of the past, Shaykh Nazim will increasingly be held in high regard, rather than controversy, as the years pass. His followers regard him as a significant figure in the Naqshbandi order, based on their experience of his personality and charisma; but, even among those unpersuaded, his historical impact may eventually be seen as considerable, in spreading the order to east and west.

⁸⁸⁸ Kleinman 1995.

⁸⁸⁹ Horkheimer and Adorno (2002) powerfully argue that alienation is inherent in Enlightenment thought.

7.4 Conclusions and future research

Research Question 1: How is knowledge generated and transmitted in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order? Knowledge is generated by traditional means, through claimed contact with the Prophet. The Shaykh then transmits this knowledge to his followers in the order. Knowledge in the order is not so much a body of facts, as a way of understanding and relating to the self and others, by means of interaction with the spiritual master. Each person has a separate body of knowledge, and it is constantly changing. Knowledge from other disciplines, including science, is incorporated into Naqshbandi-Haqqani ways of knowing and living.

Research Question 2: How is healing understood and done in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order? Humoral medicine, including Graeco-Arabic medicine, is practised by various people in the order, and prayer is widely used. However, healing does not consist primarily of a series of medical disciplines, but of an ethos and practice pervading the order. Healing is not primarily about the immediate removal of suffering, or the extension of life, but a process in which the soul is purified, reportedly during and after life on earth. People are reportedly healed by the spiritual master, who is guided by the Prophet, who is taught by God. Within this framework, all kinds of medical disciplines are incorporated, including bodily healing,⁸⁹⁰

Since the only sane people are those who have purified their souls, nearly everybody is perceived as mad. Naqshbandi-Haqqani soul-healing is a form of psychiatry. People who are initially functionally sane, in social terms, might become perceived as mad as their personality structures are broken down, or as they become perceptive enough to question societal norms. Purification of the soul is held to lead to increased acuity of intellect, and therefore to truer knowledge, including of healing. Healing and knowledge are therefore linked.

Research Question 3: How does the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order find a role in the modern world, and in the West in particular? The order gains followers through the charisma of Shaykh Nazim,

⁸⁹⁰ This perspective, at least superficially, resembles that attributed to Socrates in *Charmides*.

whose students interpret their experiences and lives through their relationship with him. Since contact is made with Shaykh Nazim through *rābiṭa*, the Order requires very little bureaucracy to persist. The interpretation of experiences and the reported healing of souls can take place anywhere.

The Naqshbandi-Haqqani order has attracted Western spiritual seekers, and has an ecological, postmodern discourse that is likely to become more attractive as modern societies and medicine reach political and cultural limits.

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This is one of the first, if not the first, full-length ethnographic studies of Sufi healing in the “West”. It is the first academic study to focus explicitly on knowledge or on healing in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, one of the most prominent Sufi orders in the West. It is also the most extensive academic study of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, in terms of the range of fieldwork sites and the timescale and extent of fieldwork. Participant observation is far more immersive than in previous studies. It does not merely address the views of the masters, or the order as a whole, but illustrates interactions in the order and the roles played by participants of varying levels of expertise. Previous ethnographies have described charismatic Sufi healers or the practices of Sufi orders. This study does both, and shows how the charisma of Shaykh Nazim shapes life in the order, and turns interactions into (perceived) acts of healing.

Perhaps the most important contribution of this study is the unification of medical and religious discourses. Previous researchers, including Klinkhammer (2015) and Selim (2015), have observed that Sufi healing in the West is often presented as therapy. Klinkhammer argues that this is part of the “therapeutic turn” in which religion adopts a hegemonic medical or psychotherapeutic discourse. But the reverse could be argued: that Naqshbandi-Haqqanis are bringing medical and psychotherapeutic discourse into a worldview shaped by religion. The central Naqshbandi-Haqqani discourse, covering all kinds of activity, is purification or healing of the soul.

In its admittedly brief analysis of physiological psychiatry as religious endeavour, and its analysis of Sufi activity through medicine, this dissertation demonstrates that science and religion can be ways of addressing similar problems of meaning and suffering, and that scientific discourse need not be uniquely epistemologically or ontologically privileged. The use of an essentially culturally relativist, phenomenological approach allows religious and magical phenomena to be reported without naturalistic judgement. They are real for those who experience them, and perfectly in order in Naqshbandi-Haqqani cultures.

Another contribution, perhaps, is to de-exotify Sufi healing and ground it in everyday practice. Sufi healing might be, and sometimes is, prayer, magic, miracles, and the inversion of established power through the exploitation of liminal status and advancement of minority narratives; but it is also about everyday personal and social relationships, and can be undemonstrative as well as dramatic, vernacular in Tottenham as well as in Lefke.

Intellectual and medical discourses are shown to be closely related. The model of knowledge underlying Naqshbandi-Haqqani healing is not merely emotional, but based around a purification of the intellect made possible by healing contact with holy people. It is grounded in experience, although a more personal, intuitive experience than that of materialist empiricism.

Sufi healing requires active participation on the part of the patient. It is a matter of experience and relationships, rather than theory. My role as a participant observer was therefore crucial. Notably, I began as a novice and finished as a beginner. My intermittent access to people at the top was very much shaped by our roles in a teaching environment. A dervish more accomplished at Sufi healing might have given a very different account.

In addition, I was in a largely gendered environment, and my informants were mostly male. Although I visited places of importance to the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, my (psycho)geographical sampling was far from comprehensive. Even in Britain, I did not accompany the masters to

Lancashire and Yorkshire, or visit the symbolically important town of Nelson (although I did meet dervishes from these areas).

As a young man with a Muslim identity, religious sensibility, a love of literature and music, and little sense of belonging to an “Asian” or “Muslim” community, I was likely to find the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis attractive, with their universalist discourse emphasising love and peace, and their easy acceptance of the arts in principle. My sympathy for the order and my liking for many people there, in particular the masters, allowed me to participate closely and, to a degree, effectively in the life of the order. It also meant that I had to be wary of a tendency to be defensive of my sources, or to idealise the order. Equally, I had to make sure that ostensibly negative experiences did not colour my reporting.

In reality, there is no one Naqshbandi-Haqqani view on knowledge or on healing; or, if there is, it can only belong to Shaykh Nazim (or the others on the Golden Chain). Every participant experiences and understands the order differently. Although I have reported findings from fieldwork rather than my own inner life, their interpretation reflects my own understanding and experiences. Even the use of phenomenological *epoche* cannot obviate the need to present a narrative, which reflects the mind of the observer.

My research was not designed to focus strongly, but more narrowly, on issues of class and gender in the order, or on the different subcultures within the order; or to show, almost as in a kinship network, who exactly is healed by whom, and when. Nor did I describe, in detail, the individual experience of dervishes as soul-healing progresses. These issues were all considered briefly in this study, but should be taken up by future research.

If it is hazardous to talk about a single Naqshbandi-Haqqani culture or worldview, it is even more hazardous to reify “Sufi healing”. However, this study is likely to be of particular relevance to academics considering Sufi healing in the West, and the ways in which Sufi healing survives, sometimes thrives, in the (post)modern world.

Does Naqshbandi-Haqqani healing work? Since efficacy is a matter of personal interpretation, and participation is not coerced by the state, a reasonable approximation is that people who stay in the Order find that the healing works for them; people who leave do not. A disease-centred model of efficacy is much narrower than the widely held concept of Naqshbandi-Haqqani healing as encompassing the patient's entire existence. Political and eschatological success cannot be readily measured by ethnographic method or clinical trials. Clinical scientists might wish to examine how, in certain cases, Sufi healing triggers a placebo effect. But this would require understanding whom the placebo is done for, under what circumstances, how, and by whom: in other words, an assessment of individualised symbolic healing rather than a standard clinical mechanism.

Psychiatrists may find that this study enhances their understanding of normative beliefs among Sufis in general, and Naqshbandi-Haqqanis in particular. However, expert emic input may still be required in individual cases. Cultural psychiatrists might once have regarded belief in magic as evidence of primitive thinking, or the experience of meeting the spirits of holy people as evidence of psychological disorder. Such fashions are now regarded as past, supplanted by a robust cultural relativism which recognises the importance of cultural context.⁸⁹¹

Various writers have presented elements of Sufi teaching as psychotherapeutic,⁸⁹² but have had little or no measurable impact on health services dominated by treatment of specific diagnoses. It is just possible that a technique such as *Ḥayy-Kraft-Yoga*, suitably packaged and delimited, could play a part in contemporary health services, as a “complementary medicine” in a context where patient choice is a priority. However, Naqshbandi-Haqqani healing techniques as a whole are unlikely to be adopted by modern medicine: they are too organically integrated with the Naqshbandi-Haqqani perspective on soul-healing, and too individualised and spontaneous; indeed, they can only be fully understood in the light of the emic belief in the unending flow of knowledge from the Prophet. Even if a “National Sufi Service” should one day make a substantial contribution to state-regulated

⁸⁹¹ van der Geest 2005; Littlewood and Dein 2000.

⁸⁹² Bakhtiar 1993–94; Frager 1999; Ali-Shah 1995; Shafii 1985.

healthcare, I suspect that most Sufi healing will continue unregulated: Sufi activity, particularly perhaps in the Naqshbandi order, is difficult to quantify, let alone regulate.⁸⁹³

It is not difficult to imagine that psychiatric services, and medical services in general, will continue to be under financial strain, and unable to provide adequate support or equal access for all; and that a postmodern openness to alternative medicine will continue to grow, particularly perhaps in the West, where modernity is long-established. Under such circumstances, Sufi healing is likely to remain of academic and clinical interest. Future research may study how (and if) the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order continues to grow, and to vernacularise itself in various surroundings; and how healing networks develop. Given the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order's rapid growth worldwide, it is likely to remain a valuable source of academic insight for the foreseeable future; or, at any rate, until Christ comes again.

⁸⁹³ Hoffman (1995) found that in Egypt, where Sufi activity is officially regulated by the state, official reports only partly reflected the activity she found.

APPENDIX 1: RESEARCH STUDIES ON THE NAQSHBANDI-HAQQANI SUFI ORDER

A. Full-length monographs

☞ Tayfun Atay (book, 2012; paper, 1999). Atay did fieldwork in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order in London in 1991–92, for his doctoral research at SOAS. He concentrated on the construction of identity in the order: Sufis versus Wahhabis; Turkish, South Asian, and “Western” followers of Shaykh Nazim; Turks versus Turkish Cypriots; secular versus religious identities; and the order’s engagement with modernity. His 1999 paper concentrated on the construction of Naqshbandi-Haqqani identity, in opposition to a perceived Wahhabi discourse.

☞ Andrew Vidich (2000) researched “the Naqshbandiyya method of self-transformation”, the methods of psychological and spiritual healing used within the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, as part of his PhD in religion at Berne University, New Hampshire.

☞ Jörg Hüttermann (book, 2002; paper, 2003) did fieldwork among young Naqshbandi-Haqqanis in a town in western Germany, in 1994–95, focusing on the development of their identity and social milieu. His doctoral dissertation was submitted to the Faculty of Sociology, at the University of Bielefeld, in 1998.

☞ Annabelle Böttcher (2011): a book based on her postdoctoral thesis (*Habilitationsschrift*) at the Islamic Studies department of the Free University (*Freie Universität*) of Berlin. As well as textual research, notably on the history of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, she did fieldwork in Lebanon, Syria, Germany, France, and the USA.

Böttcher focuses on the structure and expansion of the order, using the metaphor of Sufi order as multinational corporation, and terms such as “network management” and “expansion strategies”.

Naqshbandi-Haqqani practices and beliefs are treated as “legitimisation strategies”, and as part of “the successful marketing” of a “religious product-range” to “national and international markets”.⁸⁹⁴

The predominant use of this framework means that the emic perspective is rather neglected; and little space is given to the spirituality, real or imagined, of a religious order.

☞ Simon Stjernholm (book, 2011; paper, 2010; book chapter, 2009) did fieldwork in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order in 2004–09, largely at the centre in Tottenham, for his doctoral dissertation at the Centre for Theology & Religious Studies at Lund University, Sweden. Stjernholm concentrated on the Sufi activities in the Tottenham centre; the Sufi Muslim Council (SMC), a British political organisation strongly associated with the Order; teaching-journeys by and to the shaykhs of the order; and Naqshbandi-Haqqani use of books and the internet.

Stjernholm also used his fieldwork to write a critique (2014) of recent taxonomies, of Sufi groups in the “West”, devised by Marcia Hermansen and Markus Dressler.⁸⁹⁵

☞ Wahyu Nugroho (2015): a book on the role of Naqshbandi-Haqqani culture in helping to build a tolerant society in Indonesia. Provides a general overview of the order’s history, practice, and ethos. Based on a dissertation submitted (2014) to the Department of Theology in the University of Rostock.

☞ Rhiannon Conner (2015): a doctoral dissertation in Arab and Islamic Studies, at the University of Exeter, which was a study of apocalyptic beliefs in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, titled *From Amuq to Glastonbury*.

⁸⁹⁴ Böttcher 2011: 23, 27, 56.

⁸⁹⁵ Hermansen 2009; Dressler 2009. These classifications are addressed in Chapter 7.3.

B. Monographs containing substantial study of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, generally in juxtaposition with another Sufi order.

☞ Daphne Habibis (1985): a comparative study of Naqshbandi groups in Lebanon and in London for her doctoral dissertation at the London School of Economics. The Lebanese group was the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order: at the time of Habibis' fieldwork, 1980–81, Shaykh Nazim spent much of his time in Tripoli.

Habibis provides a fine-grained, sociologically inclined analysis of the development, structure, and functioning of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order in Tripoli and in Damascus. Her overarching theme can be described as the survival of Sufism in modern and politically challenging times.

The section of Habibis' dissertation on the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis was distilled and published as a paper in 1992; a 1989 paper, and 1990 book chapter, considered Shaykh Nazim's millenarian teachings, a prominent topic in the dissertation.

☞ (Ian) Mustafa Draper (2002): a doctoral dissertation, for the Department of Theology at the University of Birmingham, on Sufism in Britain, reflecting on Sufi orders' adaptations to their cultural environment. He focused in particular on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani and Qadiri-Budshishi orders. He describes the organisation and development of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order in London, Sheffield, Birmingham, and Glastonbury, and describes Naqshbandi-Haqqani engagement with pre-existing religious narratives in Glastonbury. A book chapter drawing on his doctoral dissertation was published in 2004.

☞ Ludwig Schlessmann (2003): a book on Sufism in Germany, based on his 2002 doctoral dissertation for the Educational Studies department at the University of Cologne. A chapter of the book is devoted to the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, the "most important Islamic Sufi order with predominantly German members".⁸⁹⁶ Schlessmann's focus is above all on the development of the

⁸⁹⁶ Schlessmann 2003: 43.

Order in Germany. But he is also interested in Shaykh Nazim as a teacher, describing his followers as students (*Schülern*).

¶ Douglas Farrer (2009): a book based on the doctoral dissertation he submitted to the National University of Singapore in 2006. He focused on *silat*, the Malay martial art, which he framed as “war magic”. Both words were defined inclusively: “war” included not only fighting, but healing, which, as an informant remarked, was an inevitable concomitant of combat; “magic” was used to describe the whole, often supernatural, world of the *silat* practitioner, including prayer and its effects. Farrer did his fieldwork in Tottenham and Malaysia, between 1999 and 2003, with a group led by Pa’ Ariffin, a representative of Shaykh Nazim; so his research can be regarded as a detailed study of a specific Naqshbandi-Haqqani activity.

C. Short papers, book chapters, and brief considerations in longer studies.

¶ Semra Galip (1990): a brief book chapter that concentrates on Shaykh Nazim’s social role among the Turks of Cyprus. It relies on personal enquiry, Turkish press reports, and a single book;⁸⁹⁷ and as a result, perhaps, is journalistic in style and contains surprising errors and omissions. For example, Shaykh Nazim is described as having succeeded a Shaykh Nadjibullah as head of “the Syrian branch” of the Naqshbandi order, having come across the order through his wife.⁸⁹⁸ By 1990, it was widely documented, not least by Habibis, that Shaykh Nazim was the successor to Grandshaykh Abdullah Dagestani, in one of many Naqshbandi branches active in Syria;⁸⁹⁹ biographical accounts other than Galip’s describe Shaykh Nazim as studying under Naqshbandi and other Sufi teachers long before he met his wife.

⁸⁹⁷ *Sarıklı Dünya* (“Turbaned world”), by A Okan; published in Lefkoşa (Nicosia), 1987.

⁸⁹⁸ Galip 1990: 429.

⁸⁹⁹ Grandshaykh Abdullah represented, as his appellation suggests, a Dagestani branch of the Naqshbandi order. If any branch merited identification as “the Syrian branch” of the order, it was arguably that headed by Shaykh Ahmad Kuftaru, who in 1990 was the Mufti of Syria (Habibis 1985; Weismann 2004).

☞ Ali Köse (1996): a book on conversion to Islam, based on his 1994 doctoral dissertation at Kings College London. His fieldwork took place in 1990–91, and consisted largely of interviews with English converts to Islam, with a particular focus on the Sufi followers of Shaykh Nazim and Shaykh Abdalqadir al-Murabit.

☞ David Damrel (1999): a paper on Naqshbandi-Haqqani millenarian beliefs, and (2006) a book chapter that touched on these beliefs, but was primarily devoted to the order's organisation and public role in the USA.

☞ Ian Netton (2000): a book, on Sufi ritual, that used extracts from Shaykh Nazim's books to illustrate the teachings of the Naqshbandi order. Netton also used extracts from Habibis' 1990 paper, to illustrate what he felt to be the tendency of Sufi groups towards alienation from the modern world and isolation from the cultural mainstream.

☞ Ron Geaves (2001): a book chapter on "apocalyptic millennialism" in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order. Geaves has written widely on Sufism in Britain, and several of his book chapters briefly discuss the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis,

☞ Jørgen Nielsen (2003): a book chapter on the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis as a transnational organisation. Another book chapter (2006), co-authored with Mustafa Draper and Galina Yemelianova, briefly described the organisation of the order.

☞ Garbi Schmidt (2004): a book chapter on the use of the internet in and by the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, with particular emphasis on the order's political role in the USA.

☞ Annabelle Böttcher (2006): a book chapter on "religious authority in transnational Sufi networks", in which she concentrated entirely on the Naqshbandi-Haqqanis. She sought to describe and explain how Shaykh Nazim's spiritual authority transcended national boundaries, and touched on his charisma, his reported miracles, spiritual connections with the Shaykh, and the role of women in the order.

- ☞ Sean Foley (2008): a paper in which he examined Shaykh Nazim’s social and cultural role as a saint, in the light of the Naqshbandi-Khalidi tradition.
- ☞ Markus Dressler (2009): a book chapter which considered Sufi groups’ approaches to identity and networking in “post-9/11 New York”. Among the groups he briefly profiled was the branch of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order led by Shaykh Abdul Kerim, a Cypriot follower of Shaykh Nazim.
- ☞ William Dickson (2014): a paper which discussed Naqshbandi-Haqqani political activism in the USA, in the context of Naqshbandi traditions.
- ☞ Marie Nathalie LeBlanc (2014): a paper on discourses around tolerance and identity expressed by, and affecting, Naqshbandi-Haqqani Muslims in Montréal.
- ☞ Itzhak Weismann (2014): a book chapter on Naqshbandi-Haqqani apocalyptic beliefs, in the context of postmodernity.
- ☞ Simon Stjernholm (2015): a paper describing Shaykh Nazim’s final years; life in Lefke, Cyprus, where Shaykh Nazim was based from the early 1980s; and Shaykh Nazim’s spiritual legacy. The paper was based on four field trips, made between 2008 and 2014.
- ☞ Gritt Klinkhammer (2015): a book chapter on Sufi healing in Germany, that included (and briefly analysed) extracts from a book by Shaykh Hisham Kabbani: who, although not based in Germany, is a senior deputy in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, which has many followers in that country.
- ☞ Nasima Selim (2015): a book chapter on Sufi body practices in Berlin, including those of dervishes in the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order.
- ☞ Milad Milani and Adam Possamai (2015): a paper on religious views and cultural identities in the Nimatullahi-Khaniaqi and Naqshbandi-Haqqani orders in Australia.

☞ Lucia Salinas (2015): a paper on culture and identity in Naqshbandi-Haqqani communities in Argentina.

☞ Francesco Piraino (2016): a paper on the internet pages of Sufi groups, contrasting what he termed “Naqshbandi[-Haqqani] nebulosity” of practice, participation, and communication with the more easily characterisable work of four other Sufi orders.

☞ Jamila Rodrigues (2017, 2018): papers on women’s experience of the *hadra*, a genre of zikr involving dance and drumming, in a Naqshbandi-Haqqani group in Cape Town.

☞ Oleg Yarosh (2019): a paper on the expansion of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order, and the Islamic group known as the Ahbash, into central and eastern Europe.

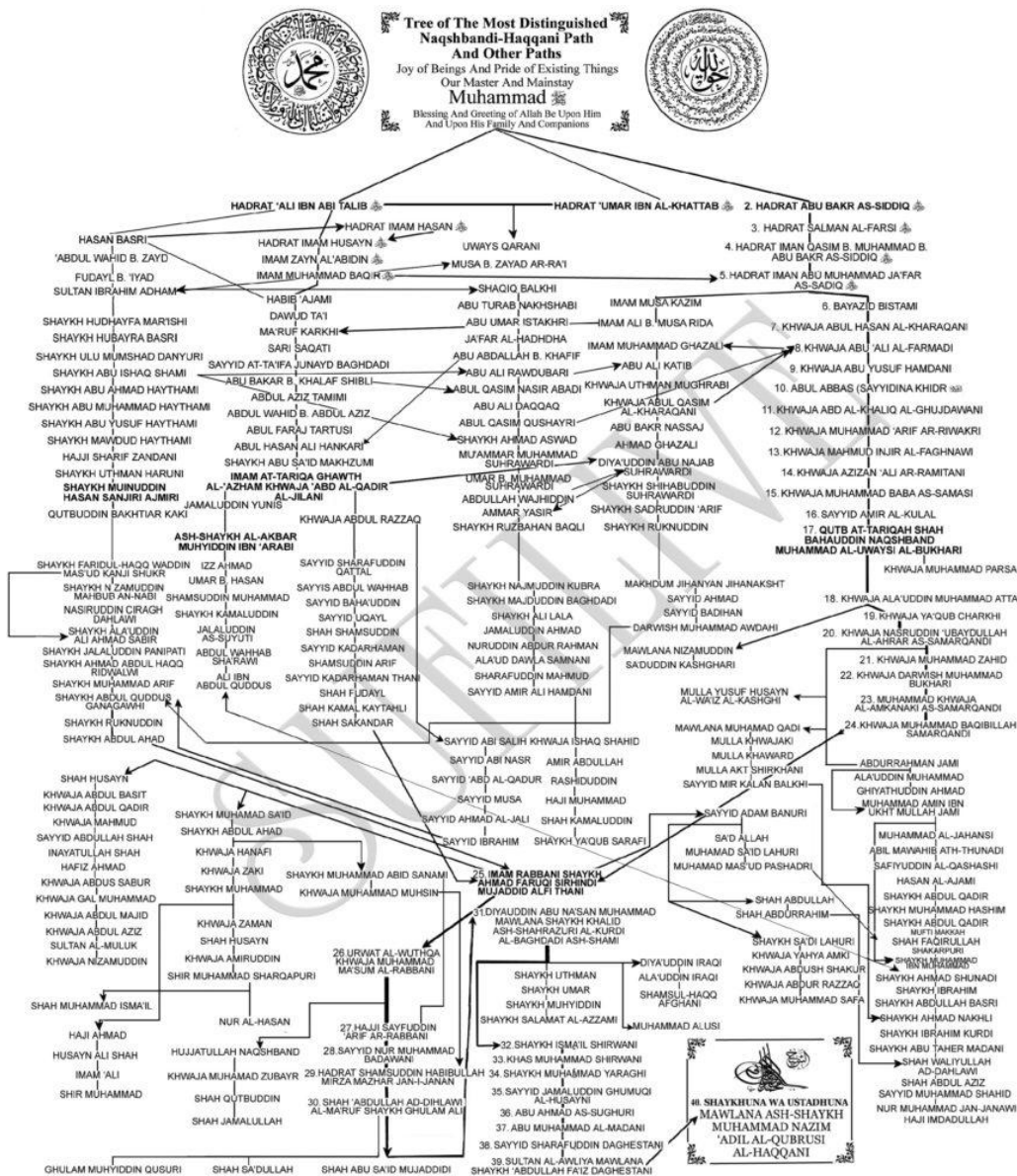
APPENDIX 2: THE NAQSHBANDI -
HAQQANI GOLDEN CHAIN

Number	Name	Location of grave	Year of burial
1	Prophet Muhammad	Medina	632
2	Abu Bakr	Medina, next to the Prophet	634
3	Salman the Persian (Salman al-Farsi)	Jerusalem	654
4	Qasim, grandson of Abu Bakr	Qudayd, near Medina	726
5	Jafar al-Sadiq	Medina	765
6	Bayazid Bistami	Damascus, Syria, or Bistam, northern Iran	875
7	Abu 'l-Hasan Ali	Kharqan, northern Iran	1033
8	Abu Ali Farmadi	Farmad, northern Iran	1084
9	Yusuf Hamadani	Merv, Turkmenistan	1140
10	Khidr	Alive and travelling the earth	
11	Abd al-Khaliq al-Ghujdawani	Ghujdawan, near Bukhara, Uzbekistan	1179
12	Arif Riwakri	Riwakar, near Bukhara	1239
13	Khwaja Mahmud Faghnavi	Qilit, near Bukhara	1317

14	Ali Ramitani	Khwarazm, near Bukhara	1321 (or 1315)
15	Baba Samasi	Samas, near Bukhara	1354
16	Sayyid Amir Kulal	Sukhar, near Bukhara	1370
17	Bahauddin Shah Naqshband	Bukhara	1388
18	Alauddin Attar	Jaganyan, near Bukhara	1400
19	Yaqub Charkhi	Hulgatu, Afghanistan	1447
20	Khwaja Ubaydallah Ahrar	Kaman Kashan, near Samarkand, Uzbekistan	1490
21	Muhammad Zahid	Samarkand	1529
22	Dervish Muhammad	Samarkand	1562
23	Muhammad Khwaja Amkanaki	Shash, Afghanistan	1599
24	Baqi Billah	Delhi, India	1605
25	Ahmad Sirhindi Faruqi	Sirhind, Punjab, India	1624
26	Muhammad Masum	Sirhind	1668
27	Muhammad Sayfuddin	Sirhind	1684
28	Sayyid Nur Muhammad Badawani	Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan	1722 or 1723
29	Shamsuddin Habib Allah	Cafevyan, Punjab, India	1781

30	Abd Allah of Delhi	Delhi	1825
31	Khalid of Baghdad	Damascus	1827
32	Ismail Anarani OR Ismail Shirwani	Damascus (Anarani) OR Amasya, Turkey (Shirwani)	1827 (A) or 1840 (S)
33	Khas Muhammad	Damascus	1844
34	Muhammad Effendi Yaraghi	Sughur, Dagestan, Russian Federation	1848
35	Jamaluddin Ghumuqi Husayni	Üsküdar, Istanbul, Turkey	1869
36	Abu Ahmad of Sughur	Sughur	1882
37	Abu Muhammad Madani	Güneyköy, near Bursa, Turkey	1913
38	Shaykh Sharafuddin	Güneyköy	1936
39	Grandshaykh Abdullah Dagestani	Mount Qasyun, Damascus	1973
40	Shaykh Nazim	Lefke, Cyprus	2014
41	Shaykh Mehmet Adil	Lives in Akbaba, in the Beykoz district of Istanbul. Spends time in Lefke, Cyprus, and travels worldwide.	

Diagrammatic representation of the Naqshbandi-Haqqani *silsila*, retrieved from *naqshbandi.org*, based on the diagram published in *The Naqshbandi Sufi Way* (Shaykh Hisham Kabbani, 1995).



APPENDIX 3 : NAQSHBANDI - HAQQANI PRAYERS

Pledge of allegiance

A person joins the Naqshbandi-Haqqani order as follows:

1. Meets an authorised representative of Shaykh Nazim; or looks at a picture of Shaykh Nazim or Shaykh Mehmet; or makes a spiritual connection with Shaykh Nazim or Shaykh Mehmet.
2. Gives his right hand to the Sufi (if they are meeting physically) or raises his right hand (if they are not).
3. Greets the Sufi.
4. Asks to join the order.
5. Recites, *Allāh hū, Allāh hū, Allāh hū, Haqq!* (God, He; God, He; God, He; Truth!) three times.

When someone joins the order in a dergah, quite often other people will put their right hands on that person's right shoulder; other people will put their right hands on those people's right shoulders, and so on. These people are renewing their pledge, and join in with the recitation of *Allāh hū, Allāh hū, Allāh hū, Haqq!*

Prayer expressing intention for seclusion

Nawaytu 'l-arba'in, nawaytu 'l-i'tikāf, nawaytu 'l-khalwa, nawaytu 'l-uzla, nawaytu 'l-riyāda, nawaytu 'l-sulūk, li 'Llāhi ta'ālā fi hādha 'l-masjid.

I intend the 40 [days of seclusion per year, towards which daily devotions can be counted, with God's grace]; I intend retreat; I intend seclusion; I intend isolation;⁹⁰⁰ I intend spiritual discipline; I intend following the spiritual path, for the sake of God the Most Exalted, in this place of prostration.

Short Koranic chapters often used in Naqshbandi-Haqqani prayers

1. *The Expanding, Chapter 94*⁹⁰¹

<i>Alam nashrah laka şadrak</i>	Did We not expand thy breast for thee ⁹⁰²
<i>Wa waða'nā 'anka wizrak</i>	And lift from thee thy burden,
<i>Alladhī anqaða zahrak</i>	The burden that weighed down thy back?
<i>Wa rafā'nā laka dhikrak</i>	Did We not exalt thy fame?
<i>Fa inna ma'al 'usri yusrā</i>	So truly with hardship comes ease,
<i>Inna ma'al 'usri yusrā</i>	Truly with hardship comes ease.
<i>Fa idhā faraghta fanşab</i>	So when thou art empty, labour,
<i>Wa ilā Rabbika farghab</i>	And let thy Lord be thy Quest.

2. *Sincerity, Chapter 112*⁹⁰³

	O Messenger— ⁹⁰⁴
<i>Qul huwa 'Llāhu Aḥad</i>	Say: "He, Allah, is but One!

⁹⁰⁰ Isolation, 'uzla, implies less restricted social contact than does *khalwa*, seclusion: translator's notes to al-Shabrawi (1997).

⁹⁰¹ Translation by Arberry (1964: 649).

⁹⁰² *Şadrak* means "your chest" or "your bosom", but can be translated as "your mind" (Lane 1984: 1661). Below, in Chapter 114 of the Koran, I have translated *şudūr* as "minds".

⁹⁰³ Translation by Shah (1964: 403). Shah's translations are not universally held in high regard (Elwell-Sutton 1970), but this particular translation has the merit of euphony.

⁹⁰⁴ "O Messenger—" is not in the Koranic text. It was interpolated presumably because the Koran is addressed above all to the Prophet.

Allāhu 'l-Ṣamad

Lam yalid wa lam yūlad

Wa lam yakun lahū kufuwan aḥad

Of days neither ended nor begun,

Fathering not, a son of none—

And none is like to him, not one!”

3. *The Dawn, Chapter 113*

Qul aʿūdhu bi Rabbi 'l-falaq

Min sharri mā khalaq

Wa min sharri ghāsiqin idhā waqab

Wa min sharri 'l-naffāthāti fi 'l-ʿuqad

Wa min sharri ḥāsīdin idhā ḥasad

Say: I seek refuge with the Lord of the Dawn,

From the evil in creation,

And from the evil of darkness when it gathers,

And from the evil of those who blow on knots,⁹⁰⁵

And from the evil of an envier when he envies.

4. *Humanity, Chapter 114*

Qul aʿūdhu bi Rabbi 'l-nās

Maliki 'l-nās

Ilāhi 'l-nās

Min sharri 'l-waswāsi 'l-khannās

Al-ladhī yuwaswisu fī ṣudūri 'l-nās

Min al-jinnati wa 'l-nās.

Say: I seek refuge with the Sustainer of

Humanity,

The King of humanity,

The God of humanity,

From the evil of the slinking whisperer,⁹⁰⁶

The one who murmurs in the minds of men;


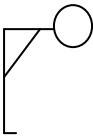
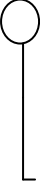
From jinns and from humanity.

⁹⁰⁵ The process of “blowing on knots” is a technique used in witchcraft: the person who assaulted the Prophet got some locks of the Prophet’s hair, on a pretext; tied them into knots, blew curses on them, and cast them down a well (Lings 1991; Hajjah Amina, *Muhammad*, 2002).

⁹⁰⁶ The “slinking whisperer” is the devil. *Waswās* is indistinct, soft speech, typically consisting of vain and confusing suggestions (Lane 1984: 2939–40); the words translated above as “whisperer” and “murmurs” come from the same root.

Namaz⁹⁰⁷


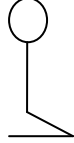

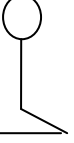
Namāz, or *ṣalāt*, is done in cycles, or *rakʿas*. Each prayer contains up to four cycles (usually two or four); each cycle has six or seven stages:

STAGE OF CYCLE	POSTURE	WORDS
1		<p>[First cycle, raising hands to ears before lowering them:]</p> <p><i>Allāhu Akbar</i> (God is Most Great)⁹⁰⁸</p> <p>[First cycle:] <i>Subhānaka ʾLlāhumma, wa bi ḥamdika, wa tabāraka ʾsmuka, wa taʿālā jadduka, wa lā ilāha ḡhayruka.</i></p> <p>(Glory is Yours, O God, and praise, and Blessed is Your Name, and Exalted is Your Majesty, and there is no god other than you.)</p> <p>The <i>Fātiḥa</i>.</p> <p>[First two cycles in a set:] At least one other verse from the Koran.</p> <p>[While bending:] <i>Allāhu Akbar</i> (God is Most Great)</p>
2		<p><i>Subhāna Rabbiya ʾl-ʿAzīm</i> (Glory to my Lord, the Great)</p> <p>[While straightening up:] <i>Samiʿ Allāhu li man ḥamidah</i> (God listens to those who praise Him.)⁹⁰⁹</p>
3		<p><i>Rabbanā laka ʾl-ḥamd</i> (Our Lord, praise be to You)</p> <p>[While bending:] <i>Allāhu Akbar</i> (God is Most Great)</p>

⁹⁰⁷ I have aimed to document the basics of *namāz*. Various prayers can be added.

⁹⁰⁸ This can also be translated as “God is greater than the mind can encompass” (inferred from Lane 1984: 2587).

⁹⁰⁹ Lane (1984: 1427) says that, in this context, *samiʿa* means “he accepted” or “he answered”: and translates *Samiʿ Allāhu li man ḥamida* as “May God answer the prayer of him who praise[s] Him.”

4		<p><i>Subhāna Rabbiya ‘l-‘Alā</i> (Glory to my Lord, the Most Exalted)</p> <p>[While straightening up:] <i>Allāhu Akbar</i> (God is Most Great)</p>
5		<p>[Silence]</p> <p>[While bending:] <i>Allāhu Akbar</i> (God is Most Great)</p>
6		<p><i>Subhāna Rabbiya ‘l-‘Alā</i> (Glory to my Lord, the Most Exalted)</p> <p>[While straightening up:] <i>Allāhu Akbar</i> (God is Most Great)</p>
7 [even-numbered cycles, and last cycle in a set]		<p><i>Al-taḥiyyātu li ‘Llāhi wa ‘l-ṣalawātu wa ‘l-tayyibātu</i> (Eternity is God’s, and all prayers and goodness)⁹¹⁰</p> <p><i>Al-salāmu ‘alayka ayyuha ‘l-nabiyyu wa raḥmatu ‘Llāhi wa barakātu</i> (May peace light and abide on you, O Prophet, and the mercy of God and His blessings)</p> <p><i>Al-salāmu ‘alayna wa ‘alā ‘ibādi ‘Llāhi ‘l-ṣāliḥīn</i> (May peace light and abide on us, and on the righteous servants of God)</p> <p><i>Ashhadu an lā ilāha illa ‘Llāh wa ashhadu anna Muḥammadan ‘abduhu wa rasūluhu</i> (I bear witness that there is no god save God; and I bear witness that Muhammad is the Servant and Messenger of God)</p> <p><i>Allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa ‘alā āli</i></p>

⁹¹⁰ “*Al-taḥiyyātu li ‘Llāhi* means *Endless existence belongs to God: or dominion, or kingship: or freedom, or security, from all evils, and from all causes of the cessation of existence: or endless existence, and security from evils, and dominion, and the like: or the expressions [of praise] that indicate and imply the ascription of dominion and endless existence: or salutations and benedictions are God[’]s, and at his disposal.*” (Lane 1984: 683; I have omitted Lane’s copious references)

		<p><i>Sayyidinā Muḥammadin...</i></p> <p>(O God, bless our lord Muhammad and the family of our lord Muhammad...)</p> <p>[Last cycle in a set:]</p> <p><i>...kama ṣallayta ‘alā Sayyidinā Ibrāhīma wa ‘alā āli Sayyidinā Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamīdun Majīd</i> (...as you blessed our lord Abraham and the family of our lord Abraham; truly you are the Most Praiseworthy, the Most Noble.)</p> <p>[Last cycle in a set:]</p> <p><i>Allāhumma bārik ‘alā Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa ‘alā āli Sayyidinā Muḥammadin kama bārakta ‘alā Sayyidinā Ibrāhīma wa ‘alā āli Sayyidinā Ibrāhīma innaka Ḥamīdun Majīd</i></p> <p>(O God, bless our lord Muhammad and the family of our lord Muhammad as you blessed our lord Abraham and the family of our lord Abraham; truly you are the Most Praiseworthy, Most Noble.)⁹¹¹</p> <p>[Last cycle in a set, turning head to right and then to left:]</p> <p><i>Al-salāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatu ‘Llāh; al-salāmu ‘alaykum wa raḥmatu ‘Llāh</i> (May peace light and abide on you, and the mercy of God; may peace light and abide on you, and the mercy of God)</p>
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⁹¹¹ Words from the roots *ṣ-l-w* and *b-r-k* are both translated as “bless” or “blessing”. *ṣ-l-w* has connotations of mercy and forgiveness; *b-r-k* implies abundance (Lane 1984: 193–95, 1720–21).

The seven stages of the prayer cycle might correspond to the seven verses of the *Fātiḥa*; the seven levels of heaven;⁹¹² or the seven stages of the soul as it is purified.

Ṣalātu 'l-Tasbīḥ

The *ṣalātu 'l-tasbīḥ* is traditionally done on Fridays, but can be done at any time. It is a namaz of four cycles. In each cycle, the prayer below is recited 75 times, giving a total of 300 recitations:

Subḥāna 'Llāhi wa 'l-ḥamdu li 'Llāhi wa lā ilāha illa 'Llāhu wa 'Llāhu Akbar

Glory be to God, and Praise be to God, and there is no god save God, and God is Most Great.

Funeral prayer

The supplicant stands and raises his hands to his ears, saying *Allāhu Akbar*. He then lowers his hands and recites the following:

1. The *Fātiḥa* OR the prayer beginning *Subḥānaka 'Llāhumma...* (see *Namāz* stage 1); *Allāhu Akbar*.
2. A prayer for the Prophet; *Allāhu Akbar*.
3. A prayer for the deceased; *Allāhu Akbar*.

The supplicant then turns his head to the right and the left, saying *Al-salāmu 'alaykum wa raḥmatu 'Llāh* each time.

⁹¹² “Prayer is *mi'rāj* [the Prophet's ascent through the heavens to the divine presence] for Allah's servants. He gives them the honour of *mi'rāj* when they pray.” (Shaykh Nazim, *TDP 1*, 1984: 108)

The *Najāt* prayer

Najāt is prayed, on waking, before dawn. First, the dervish says *Yā Ḥalīm* (O Infinitely Gentle One) a hundred times, and *Yā Ḥafīz* (O Guardian) a hundred times. Then, the dervish prays two cycles of prayer. The following parts of the Koran are recited after the *Fātiḥa*:

- ◆ First prayer cycle:
 - ◆ The Verse of the Throne (2: 255; see chapter 6.3);
 - ◆ Koran 3: 18–19. *Shāhida ‘Llāhu annahū lā ilāha illā huwa wa ‘l-malā’ikatu wa ulu ‘l-‘ilmi qā’iman bi ‘l-qist. Lā ilāha illā huwa ‘l-‘Azīzu ‘l-Ḥakīm. Inna ‘l-dīna ‘inda ‘Llāhi ‘l-islām.* (God bears witness that there is no god but He, as do the angels and the people of knowledge; the Upholder of Justice. There is no god but He, the Almighty, the Wise. Truly the way to serve God is humility and peace.)⁹¹³
 - ◆ Koran 3: 26–27. *Quli ‘Llāhumma Mālika ‘l-mulk. Tu’ti ‘l-mulka man tashā’u wa tanzi’u ‘l-mulka mimman tashā’u. Wa tu’izzu man tashā’u wa tudhillu man tashā’u. Bi yadika ‘l-khayr. Innaka ‘alā kulli shay’in qadīr. Tūliju ‘l-layla fī ‘l-nahāri wa tūliju ‘l-nahāra fī ‘l-layl wa tukhriju ‘l-ḥayya min al-mayyiti wa tukhriju ‘l-mayyita min al-ḥayy. Wa tarzuqu man tashā’u bi ḡhayri ḥisāb.* (Say: O Lord God, Lord of all dominion: You give dominion to whom You will, and You take dominion from whom you will. And You honour whom You will, and You abase whom You will. In Your hand is all goodness. Truly You are the Powerful over all things. You make the night enter the day and You make the day enter the night; and You bring forth the the living from the dead and You bring forth the dead from the living. And You provide for whom You will, without reckoning.)
- ◆ Second prayer cycle: The Chapter of Sincerity, 11 times.

⁹¹³ *Dīn* means, among other things, spiritual way of life; obedience to God; way to serve God. It has connotations of indebtedness. *Islām* means submission, or humility; it has connotations of peace, safety, and freedom from evil (Lane 1984: 942–45; 1412–17). *Inna ‘l-dīna ‘inda ‘Llāhi ‘l-islām* is often translated as “The true religion with God is Islam”.

- ◆ After the second prayer cycle, the dervish prostrates and asks God to remove his envy, anger, spiritual immaturity, and all bad conduct. He can also ask God for everything that is best for him, in this world and the next.

Daily *wird*

This should be done once a day: ideally, after the dawn prayer, or between the afternoon prayer and the night prayer. Variants exist.

- ◆ [3 times:] *Ashhadu an lā ilāha illa ‘Llāh wa ashhadu annā Muḥammadan ‘abduhu wa rasūluhu* (I bear witness that there is no god but God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and His messenger)
- ◆ [70 times:] *Astaghfiru ‘Llāh* (I seek forgiveness from God)
- ◆ The *Fātiḥa*
- ◆ Koran 2: 285. *Āmana ‘l-rasūlu bi mā unzila ilayhi min Rabbihī wa ‘l-mu‘minūn. Kullun āmana bi ‘Llāhi wa malā‘ikatihī wa kutubihī wa rusūlih. Lā nufarriqu bayna aḥadin min rusulih. Wa qālū “Sami‘nā wa aṭa‘nā ghufrānaka Rabbanā wa ilayka ‘l-maṣīr.”* (The divine Messenger believes in what has been sent down to him from his Lord, and so do the believers. They all believe in God, and His angels, and His books, and His messengers. They make no division between the messengers. And they say, “We listen, and we obey; forgive us, our Lord; and to You is the homecoming.”)
- ◆ Koran 2: 286. *Lā yukallifū ‘Llāhu nafsān illā wus‘ahā. Lahā mā kasabat wa ‘alayhā ma ‘ktasabat. Rabbanā lā tu‘ākhidhnā in nasīnā aw akhṭa‘nā. Rabbanā wa lā taḥmil ‘alaynā iṣran kamā ḥamaltahū ‘ala ‘l-ladhīna min qablinā. Rabbanā wa lā tuḥammilnā mā lā ṭāqata lanā bihī. Wa ‘fu‘annā wa għfir lanā wa rḥamnā anta Mawlānā fa ‘nṣurnā ‘ala ‘l-qawmi ‘l-kāfirīn.* (God charges no soul save to its capacity; for it is what it earns, and against it what it deserves. Our Lord! take us not to task if we forget or err; and Our Lord! charge us

not with a load such as You laid on those before us; and Our Lord! do not burden us beyond what we have strength to bear. And pardon us;⁹¹⁴ and forgive us; and have mercy on us; You are our Protector; help us against those who cover the truth.)

- ◆ [11 times:] The chapter of Sincerity.
- ◆ [7 times:] The chapter of Expansion
- ◆ Chapter of the Dawn.
- ◆ Chapter of Mankind.
- ◆ [9 times:] *Lā ilāha illa ‘Llāh*
- ◆ *Lā ilāha illa ‘Llāh, Muḥammadun Rasūl Allāh*
- ◆ [10 times:] *Allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa ‘alā āli Sayyidinā Muḥammadin*
- ◆ *Allāhumma balligh thawāba mā qara’nāhū wa nūra mā talawnāhū hadiyyatan wāsilatan minnā ilā rūḥi Sayyidinā wa Nabiyinā wa Mawlānā Muḥammadin, ṣalla ‘Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam; wa ilā arwāḥi ikhwānihi min al-anbiyā’i wa ‘l-mursalīna wa ‘l-khudamā’i shārā’ihim; wa ilā arwāḥi ‘l-a’immati ‘l-arba’a; wa ilā arwāḥi mashāyikhinā fi ‘l-ṭarīqati ‘l-naqshbandiyyati ‘l-‘aliyya: khaṣṣatan ilā imāmi ‘l-ṭarīqati wa ghawthi ‘l-khalīqati, Khwāja Bahā’u ‘l-dīn Naqshband, Muḥammad al-Uwaysī’i ‘l-Bukhārī; wa ilā Haḍrati Sulṭāni ‘l-Awliyā’ Shaykh ‘Abdullāh al-Fā’iz al-Dāghistānī; wa ilā Sayyidinā wa Mawlānā Shaykh Muḥammad Nāzim al-Haqqānī Mu’ayyadī ‘l-dīn; wa ilā Shaykh Muḥammad al-Rabbānī qaddas Allāhu sirrahu; wa ilā Sayyidinā Muḥammad al-Mahdī ‘alayhi ‘l-salām; wa ilā sā’iri sādātīnā wa ‘l-ṣiddiqīn. Al-Fātiḥa!’⁹¹⁵ (O God, send the reward of what we have recited and the light of what we have followed⁹¹⁶ as a gift and a loving connection from us to the spirit*

⁹¹⁴ The Arabic root ‘-f-w has connotations of effacement: so ‘fu annā could be translated as (for instance) “efface our sins”, or “make us innocent”.

⁹¹⁵ This prayer, the *Ihdā’* (“gifting”), is a prominent feature of Naqshbandi-Haqqani zikrs.

⁹¹⁶ The Arabic words *qara’nāhū* and *talawnāhū* both mean “we have recited” or “we have read aloud”. The root q-r-a has connotations of “chanted”, and t-l-w “specially signifies the following God’s revealed scriptures, sometimes by reading, or perusing, or by reciting, and sometimes by conforming therewith.” (Lane 1984: 313, 2502)

of our lord and prophet and protector Muhammad, may God bless him and keep him safe; and to the spirits of his brothers among the prophets and the messengers, and the servants of his ways of spiritual living; and to the spirits of the four Imams;⁹¹⁷ and to the spirits of the shaykhs of the exalted Naqshbandi order, in particular to the Imam of the order and deliverance of creation, Master Bahauddin Naqshband, Muhammad the Uwaysi of Bukhara; and to the Presence, Sultan of Saints Shaykh Abdullah Faiz of Dagestan; and to our lord and protector Shaykh Muhammad Nazim al-Haqqani, divinely strengthened in the way of obedience; and to Shaykh Muhammad al-Rabbani [Shaykh Mehmet], may God increase his spirit in holiness;⁹¹⁸ and to our master Muhammad the Mahdi, may peace light and abide on him; and to our other masters and the truthful ones. The *Fātiḥa*!)

- ◆ The *Fātiḥa*.
- ◆ [1500 times:]⁹¹⁹ *Allāh*.
- ◆ [100 times:] *Allāhumma ṣalli ʿalā Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa ʿalā āli Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa sallim*.
- ◆ [100 times:] Chapter of Sincerity *OR* one-thirtieth (a *juzʿ*) of the Koran.
- ◆ [100 times:] *Allāhumma ṣalli ʿalā Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa ʿalā āli Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa sallim OR* one day's portion of *Dalāʿilu ʾl-Khayrāt* (the *Guide to Good Acts*), a set of prayers for the Prophet compiled by Muhammad al-Jazuli.⁹²⁰

⁹¹⁷ The four scholars after whom the schools of law are named: Abu Hanifa, Malik, Muhammad al-Shafi'i, and Ahmad ibn Hanbal.

⁹¹⁸ The general Naqshbandi-Haqqani blessing for a saint.

⁹¹⁹ With experience and aspiration, dervishes gradually increase the number of recitations of *Allāh*, eventually aiming at 7,000 (or more, for saints).

⁹²⁰ At least two editions of *Dalāʿilu ʾl-khayrāt* have been produced by the order for English-speaking dervishes; the more recent edition contains a transliteration as well as a translation.

Khatm ul-Khwajagan (weekly zikr)

This is often done on Thursday nights (i.e. Friday eve), but is also done at other times, to make it easy for people to attend. As with the daily *wird*, variants exist.

- ◆ [3 times:] *Ashhadu an lā ilāha illā ‘Llāh, wa ashhadu anna Muḥammadan ‘abduhu wa rasūluhu* (I bear witness that there is no god but God, and I bear witness that Muhammad is his servant and his messenger)
- ◆ [70 times:] *Astaghfiru ‘Llāh* (I seek forgiveness from God)
- ◆ *Astaghfiru ‘Llāhi ‘Azīm alladhī lā ilāha illā hū al Ḥayyu ‘Qayyūm wa atūbu ilayh. Innahu Hūwa ‘Tawwābu ‘Raḥīm min kulli dhanbin wa ma‘ṣiyatin min kulli mā yukhālifu dīn al-Islām yā Arḥama ‘Rāḥimīn min kulli mā yukhālifu ‘sharī‘ata min kulli mā yukhālifu ‘ṭarīqata min kulli mā yukhālifu ‘ma‘rifata min kulli mā yukhālifu ‘ḥaqīqata min kulli mā yukhālifu ‘Azīmata yā Arḥama ‘Rāḥimīn.* (I seek forgiveness from God, the Incomparably Great, other than whom there is no God: the Living, the Existing One; and I repent to Him. Truly He is the Eternally Loving, Embracer of Repentance⁹²¹ from all sins and disobedience; from all that opposes the way of divine servanthood—O Most Merciful of the merciful!—from all that opposes the way of sacred living; from all that opposes spiritual development; from all that opposes spiritual knowledge; from all that opposes spiritual reality; from all that opposes Your Greatness; O Most Merciful of the merciful!)
- ◆ [Zikr leader recites:] *Yā Wahhāb, yā Wahhāb, yā Wahhāb,⁹²² yā Musabbib al-asbāb, yā Mufattiḥ al-abwāb yā Muqallib al-qulūb wa ‘abṣār yā dalīl al-mutaḥayyirīn yā Ghīyāth al-mustaghīthīn yā Ḥayyu yā Qayyūm yā dha ‘Jalāli wa ‘Ikrām. Wa ufawwiḍu amrī ilā ‘Llāh. Inna ‘Llāha baṣīrun bi ‘‘ibād.* (O Endless Giver, O Endless Giver, O Endless Giver;

⁹²¹ *Al-tawwāb* is “One who returns [much or often] to forgiveness towards His servant who returns unto him,” but also the One who inspires repentance and makes it possible, and “who forgives much, and saves from acts of disobedience.” (Lane 1984: 321; al-Ghazali 1995; Bayrak 2000)

⁹²² Another version begins instead with *Allāhumma*, “O God”.

O Appointer of causes, O Opener of doors, O Changer of hearts and eyes, O Guide to the lost and confused, O Aider of all who seek rescue; O Living, O Existing One, O The One of Majesty and Generosity. I commit my affair to God. Truly God sees His servants.)

- ◆ *Rābiṭatu 'l-sharīfa* [Connection of the heart to the heart of the *sulṭānu 'l-Awliyā'*, from him to the heart of the Prophet, from him to the Divine presence]
- ◆ [7 times:] The *Fātiḥa*
- ◆ [10 times:] *Allāhumma ṣalli 'alā Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa 'alā āli Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa sallim.* (O God, bless our lord Muhammad, and the family of our lord Muhammad, and keep them safe.)
- ◆ [7 times:] The chapter of Expansion
- ◆ [11 times:] The chapter of Sincerity.
- ◆ [7 times:] The *Fātiḥa*
- ◆ [10 times:] *Allāhumma ṣalli 'alā Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa 'alā āli Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa sallim.* (O God, bless our lord Muhammad, and the family of our lord Muhammad, and keep them safe.)
- ◆ [A person nominated by the zikr leader recites:] *Rabbi qad ātaytanī min al-mulki wa 'allamtanī min ta'wīli 'l-aḥādīth. Fāṭir al-samāwāti wa 'l-arḍ. Anta waliyyī fi 'l-dunyā wa 'l-ākhirati. Tawaffānī musliman wa alḥiqnī bi 'l-ṣāliḥīn.*⁹²³ (My Lord, You have given me of dominion, and taught me of the interpretation of events.⁹²⁴ Creator of the Heavens and the Earth: You Manage my affairs in this world and the next. Receive me as a wholly sincere person, and unite me with the righteous.)
- ◆ [A person nominated by the zikr leader recites:] *Āmantu bi 'Llāhi ṣadaqa 'Llāhu 'l-ʿAzīm. Subḥāna Rabbika Rabbi 'l-ʿizzati ʿammā yaṣifūn. Wa salāmun ʿalā 'l-mursalīn. Wa 'l-ḥamdu li 'Llāhi Rabbi 'l-ʿālamīn. Al-Fātiḥa!* (I believe in God. God the Incomparably Great

⁹²³ This prayer is the Prophet Joseph's in the Koran 12: 101.

⁹²⁴ *Aḥādīth*, translated here as "events", also means "narratives" (Lane 1984: 529).

has spoken the truth. Glory to your Lord, Lord of honour, far beyond what they ascribe. And may peace light and abide on all the messengers; and the praise is to God, Lord of all the worlds. The *Fātiḥa*)⁹²⁵

- ◆ The *Fātiḥa*.
- ◆ [Zikr leader recites:] *Allāhumma balligh thawāba mā qara'nāhū wa nūra mā talawnāhū hadiyyatan wāsilatan minnā ilā rūḥi Sayyidinā wa Nabiiyīnā wa Mawlānā Muḥammadin, ṣalla 'Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam; wa ilā arwāḥi ikhwānihi min al-anbiyā'i wa 'l-mursalīna wa 'l-khudamā'i sharā'iḥim; wa ilā arwāḥi 'l-a'immati 'l-arba'a; wa ilā arwāḥi mashāyikhinā fi 'l-ṭarīqati 'l-naqshbandiyyati 'l 'aliyya: khaṣṣatan ilā imāmi 'l-ṭarīqati wa ghawṭhi 'l-khalīqati, Khwāja Bahā'u 'd-dīn Naqshband, Muḥammad al-Uwaysī 'l-Bukhārī; wa ilā Haḍrati Sulṭāni 'l-Awliyā' Shaykh 'Abdullāh al-Fā'iz al-Dāghistānī; wa ilā Sayyidinā wa Mawlānā Shaykh Muḥammad Nāzim al-Haqqānī Mu'ayyadī 'd-dīn; wa ilā Shaykh Muḥammad al-Rabbānī qaddas Allāhu sirrahu; wa ilā Sayyidinā Muḥammad al-Mahdī 'alayhi 'l-salām; wa ilā sā'iri sādātinā wa 'l-ṣiddiqīn. Al-Fātiḥa!* (O God, send the reward of what we have recited and the light of what we have followed as a gift and a loving connection from us to the spirit of our lord and prophet and protector Muhammad, may God bless him and keep him safe; and to the spirits of his brothers among the prophets and the messengers, and the servants of his ways of spiritual living; and to the spirits of the four Imams; and to the spirits of the shaykhs of the exalted Naqshbandi order, in particular to the Imam of the order and deliverance of creation, Master Bahauddin Naqshband, Muhammad the Uwaysi of Bukhara; and to the Presence, Sultan of Saints Shaykh Abdullah Faiz of Dagestan; and to our lord and protector Shaykh Muhammad Nazim al-Haqqani, divinely strengthened in the way of obedience; and to Shaykh Muhammad al-Rabbani, may God increase his spirit in holiness; and to our master

⁹²⁵ The last three sentences, before “*al-Fātiḥa*”, are from the Koran 37: 180–82.

Muhammad the Mahdi, may peace light and abide on him; and to our other masters and the truthful ones. The *Fātiḥa!*)

- ◆ The *Fātiḥa*.
- ◆ [100 times:] *Lā ilāha illa 'Llāh* (No god but God.)
- ◆ [Zikr leader recites:] *Allāhumma balligh thawāba mā qara'nāhū wa nūra mā talawnāhū hadiyyatan wāsilatan minnā ilā rūḥi Sayyidinā wa Nabiyyinā wa Mawlānā Muḥammadin, ṣalla 'Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam; wa ilā arwāḥi ikhwānihi min al-anbiyā'i wa 'l-mursalīna wa 'l-khudamā'i sharā'ihim; wa ilā arwāḥi 'l-a'immati 'l-arba'a; wa ilā arwāḥi mashāyikhinā fi 'l-ṭarīqati 'l-naqshbandiyyati 'l 'aliyya: khaṣṣatan ilā imāmi 'l-ṭarīqati wa ghawṭhi 'l-khalīqati, Khwāja Bahā'u 'd-dīn Naqshband, Muḥammad al-Uwaysī 'l-Bukhārī; wa ilā Haḍrati Sultāni 'l-Awliyā' Shaykh 'Abdullāh al-Fā'iz al-Dāghistāni; wa ilā Sayyidinā wa Mawlānā Shaykh Muḥammad Nāzim al-Haqqāni Mu'ayyadi 'l-dīn; wa ilā Shaykh Muḥammad al-Rabbāni qaddas Allāhu sirrahu; wa ilā Sayyidinā Muḥammad al-Mahdi 'alayhi 'l-salām; wa ilā sā'iri sādātinā wa 'l-ṣiddiqīn. Al-Fātiḥa!* (O God, send the reward of what we have recited and the light of what we have followed as a gift and a loving connection from us to the spirit of our lord and prophet and protector Muhammad, may God bless him and keep him safe; and to the spirits of his brothers among the prophets and the messengers, and the servants of his ways of spiritual living; and to the spirits of the four Imams; and to the spirits of the shaykhs of the exalted Naqshbandi order, in particular to the Imam of the order and deliverance of creation, Master Bahauddin Naqshband, Muhammad the Uwaysi of Bukhara; and to the Presence, Sultan of Saints Shaykh Abdullah Faiz of Dagestan; and to our lord and protector Shaykh Muhammad Nazim al-Haqqani, divinely strengthened in the way of obedience; and to Shaykh Muhammad al-Rabbani, may God increase his spirit in holiness; and to our master Muhammad the Mahdi, may peace light and abide on him; and to our other masters and the truthful ones. The *Fātiḥa!*)

- ◆ The *Fātiḥa*.
- ◆ *Ilā sharafi 'l-nabī ṣalla 'Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam wa ālihi wa ṣaḥbihi wa ilā arwāḥi sā'iri sādātina wa 'l-ṣiddiqīn. Al Fātiḥa!* (For the honour of the Prophet, may God bless and protect him, and his family and disciples; and for the spirits of our other masters and the truthful ones: the *Fātiḥa!*)
- ◆ The *Fātiḥa*.
- ◆ [100 times:] *Allāh*. (God)
- ◆ *Ḥasbun Allāh wa ni'ma 'l-Wakīl ni'ma 'l-Mawlā wa ni'ma 'l-Naṣīr. Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi 'Llāhi 'l-'Alīyyi 'l-'Azīm.* (God is enough for us, and the best of Guardians; the best of Protectors, and the best of Helpers. There is no strength nor power except with God, the Most High, the Incomparably Great.)
- ◆ [33 times:] *Hū*. (He)
- ◆ *Ḥasbun Allāh wa ni'ma 'l-Wakīl ni'ma 'l-Mawlā wa ni'ma 'l-Naṣīr. Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi 'Llāhi 'l-'Alīyyi 'l-'Azīm.* (God is enough for us, and the best of Guardians; the best of Protectors, and the best of Helpers. There is no strength nor power except with God, the Most High, the Incomparably Great.)
- ◆ [33 times:] *Ḥaqq*. (Truth)
- ◆ *Ḥasbun Allāh wa ni'ma 'l-Wakīl ni'ma 'l-Mawlā wa ni'ma 'l-Naṣīr. Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi 'Llāhi 'l-'Alīyyi 'l-'Azīm.* (God is enough for us, and the best of Guardians; the best of Protectors, and the best of Helpers. There is no strength nor power except with God, the Most High, the Incomparably Great.)
- ◆ [33 times:] *Ḥayy*. (The Ever-Living)
- ◆ *Ḥasbun Allāh wa ni'ma 'l-Wakīl ni'ma 'l-Mawlā wa ni'ma 'l-Naṣīr. Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi 'Llāhi 'l-'Alīyyi 'l-'Azīm.* (God is enough for us, and the best of Guardians; the best of Protectors, and the best of Helpers. There is no strength nor power except with God, the Most High, the Incomparably Great.)

- ◆ [10 times:] *Allāh hū, Allāh Ḥaqq* (God, He; God, Truth)
- ◆ [10 times:] *Allāh hū, Allāh Ḥayy* (God, He; God, Ever-Living)
- ◆ [10 times:] *Allāh Ḥayy, yā Qayyūm* (God, the Ever-Living; O Existing One)
- ◆ *Ḥasbun Allāh wa niʿma ʾl-Wakīl niʿma ʾl-Mawlā wa niʿma ʾl-Naṣīr. Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi ʾllāhi ʾl-ʿAlīyyi ʾl-ʿAzīm.* (God is enough for us, and the best of Guardians; the best of Protectors, and the best of Helpers. There is no strength nor power except with God, the Most High, the Incomparably Great.)
- ◆ [3 times:] *Yā hū, yā hū, yā Dāʾim* (O He, O He, O Eternal One)
- ◆ *Allāh, yā hū, yā Dāʾim* (God, O He, O Eternal One)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Dāʾim, yā Dāʾim, yā Dāʾim, yā Allāh.* (O Eternal One, O Eternal One, O Eternal One, O God)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Ḥalīm, yā Ḥalīm, yā Ḥalīm, yā Allāh.* (O Measurelessly Forbearing One, O Measurelessly Forbearing One, O Measurelessly Forbearing One, O God)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Ḥafīz, yā Ḥafīz, yā Ḥafīz, yā Allāh.* (O Guardian, O Guardian, O Guardian, O God)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Laṭīf, yā Laṭīf, yā Laṭīf, yā Allāh.* (O Gently Insightful One, O Gently Insightful One, O Gently Insightful One, O God)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Ghaffār, yā Ghaffār, yā Ghaffār, yā Allāh.* (O Forgiver, O Forgiver, O Forgiver, O God.)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Sattār, yā Sattār, yā Sattār, yā Allāh.* (O Concealer of faults, O Concealer of faults, O Concealer of faults, O God.)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Fattāḥ, yā Fattāḥ, yā Fattāḥ, yā Allāh.* (O Opener, O Opener, O Opener, O God.)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Mujīb, yā Mujīb, yā Mujīb, yā Allāh.* (O Responder, O Responder, O Responder, O God)

- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Muʿizz, yā Muʿizz, yā Muʿizz, yā Allāh.* (O Honourer, O Honourer, O Honourer, O God)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Muʿīn, yā Muʿīn, yā Muʿīn, yā Allāh.* (O Giver of aid, O Giver of aid, O Giver of aid, O God)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Wadūd, yā Wadūd, yā Wadūd, yā Allāh.* (O Warmly Loving, O Warmly Loving, O Warmly Loving, O God)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Raḥmān, yā Raḥmān, yā Raḥmān, yā Allāh.* (O Infinitely Caring, O Infinitely Caring, O Infinitely Caring, O God)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Raḥīm, yā Raḥīm, yā Raḥīm, yā Allāh.* (O Eternally Loving, O Eternally Loving, O Eternally Loving, O God)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Ḥannān, yā Ḥannān, yā Ḥannān, yā Allāh.* (O Lovingly Merciful, O Lovingly Merciful, O Lovingly Merciful, O God)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Mannān, yā Mannān, yā Mannān, yā Allāh.* (O Abundantly Giving, O Abundantly Giving, O Abundantly Giving, O God)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Dayyān, yā Dayyān, yā Dayyān, yā Allāh.* (O Most Just One, O Most Just One, O Most Just One, O God)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Subḥān, yā Subḥān, yā Subḥān, yā Allāh.* (O Most Perfect One, O Most Perfect One, O Most Perfect One, O God)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Sulṭān, yā Sulṭān, yā Sulṭān, yā Allāh.* (O Monarch, O Monarch, O Monarch, O God)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Allāh, yā Allāh, yā Allāh, yā Allāh.* (O God, O God, O God, O God)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Amān, yā Amān, yā Amān, yā Allāh.* (O Giver of Security, O Giver of Security, O Giver of Security, O God)
- ◆ [2 times:] *Yā Salām, yā Salām, yā Salām, yā Allāh.* (O Peace, O Peace, O Peace, O God)
- ◆ *Ḥasbun Allāh wa niʿma ʾl-Wakīl niʿma ʾl-Mawlā wa niʿma ʾl-Naṣīr. Lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi ʾLlāhi ʾl-ʿAlīyyi ʾl-ʿAzīm.* (God is enough for us, and the best of Guardians;

the best of Protectors, and the best of Helpers. There is no strength nor power except with God, the Most High, the Incomparably Great.)

◆ *Inna ‘Llāha wa malā’ikatahu yuṣallūna ‘āla ‘l-nabī. Yā ayyuha ‘l-ladhīna āmanū ṣallū ‘alayhi wa sallimū taslīma.* (Truly God and His angels bless the Prophet. O people who believe, bless him and pray for his safety.)⁹²⁶

◆ [10 times:] *Allāhumma ṣalli ‘alā Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa ‘alā āli Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa sallim.* (O God, bless our lord Muhammad and the family of our lord Muhammad, and keep them safe.)

◆ Zikr leader prays as he is inspired to pray.

◆ *‘Alā aṣhrafī ‘l-‘ālamīna Sayyidinā Muḥammadini ‘l-ṣalawāt (ṣalla ‘Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam).*
‘Alā afḍalī ‘l-‘ālamīna Sayyidinā Muḥammadini ‘l-ṣalawāt (ṣalla ‘Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam).
‘Alā akmalī ‘l-‘ālamīna Sayyidinā Muḥammadini ‘l-ṣalawāt (ṣalla ‘Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam).
*Ṣalawātu ‘Llāhi ta‘ālā wa malā’ikatihī wa anbīyā’ihī wa rasūlihī wa jamī‘i khalqihī ‘alā Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa ‘alā āli Sayyidinā Muḥammadin ‘alayhi wa ‘alayhimu ‘l-salām wa raḥmatu ‘Llāhi ta‘ālā wa barakātuhu. Wa raḍīya ‘Llāhu tabāraka wa ta‘ālā ‘an sādātīnā aṣḥābi rasūli ‘Llāhi ajma‘īn wa ‘ani ‘l-tābi‘īna bihim bi iḥsānin wa ‘ani ‘l-a‘immati ‘l-mujtahidīna ‘l-māḍīn wa ‘ani ‘l-‘ulamā’i ‘l-muttaqīn wa ‘ani ‘l-awliyā’i ‘l-ṣāliḥīn wa ‘an mashāyikhīnā fī ‘l-tarīqati ‘l-naqshbandiyyati ‘l-‘aliyya qaddas Allāhu ta‘ālā arwāḥahuma ‘l-zakiyya wa nawwar Allāhu ta‘ālā aḍriḥatahumu ‘l-mubāraka wa a‘ād Allāhu ta‘ālā ‘alaynā min barakātihim fuyūḍātihim dā’iman wa ‘l-ḥamdu li ‘Llāhi Rabbi ‘l-‘ālamīn. Al-Fātiḥa.*⁹²⁷

(On the most noble in the universes, our lord Muhammad, send blessings; may God bless him and keep him safe. On the most favoured in the universes, our lord Muhammad, send blessings; may God bless him and keep him safe. On the most perfect in the universes, our lord Muhammad, send blessings; may God bless him and keep him safe. May God the

⁹²⁶ Koran 33: 56.

⁹²⁷ This prayer is known as the *Sayyid al-Ṣalawāt*, the “Chief of Prayers for the Prophet”. It was reportedly received from the Prophet by Shaykh Sharafuddin, 38th on the Golden Chain, in a vision (Shaykh Hisham, *Salawat*, 2012: 21).

Exalted, and His angels, and His prophets, and His Messengers, and the whole of creation bless our lord Muhammad and the family of our lord Muhammad: may peace light and abide on him and them, and the mercy of God the Most Exalted, and His blessings. And may God, the Blessed and Most Exalted, be most pleased with our masters, all the disciples of the Messenger of God; and those who followed them in excellence; and the foremost, tireless and incisive interpreters of sacred law; and the God-conscious scholars; and the righteous friends of God; and the shaykhs of the exalted Naqshbandi order. May God the Most Exalted increase their pure spirits in holiness; and may God the Most Exalted illuminate their blessed graves; and may God the Most Exalted give to us from their blessings and bounty eternally. And all praise is to God, Lord of the universes. The *Fātiḥa*!)

◆ The *Fātiḥa*

- ◆ [Zikr leader recites:] *Allāhumma balligh thawāba mā qara'nāhū wa nūra mā talawnāhū hadiyyatan wāsilatan minnā ilā rūḥi Sayyidinā wa Nabiyinā wa Mawlānā Muḥammadin, ṣalla 'Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam; wa ilā arwāḥi ikhwānihi min al-anbiyā'i wa 'l-mursalīna wa 'l-khudamā'i sharā'iḥim; wa ilā arwāḥi 'l-a'immati 'l-arba'a; wa ilā arwāḥi mashāyikhinā fi 'l-ṭarīqati 'l-naqshbandiyyati 'l-'aliyya: khaṣṣatan ilā imāmi 'l-ṭarīqati wa ghawṭhi 'l-khaliqati, Khwāja Bahā'u 'l-dīn Naqshband, Muḥammad al-Uwaysī 'l-Bukhārī; wa ilā Haḍrati Sulṭāni 'l-Awliyā' Shaykh 'Abdullāh al-Fā'iz al-Dāghistānī; wa ilā Sayyidinā wa Mawlānā Shaykh Muḥammad Nāzim al-Haqqānī Mu'ayyadī 'l-dīn; wa ilā Shaykh Muḥammad al-Rabbānī qaddas Allāhu sirrahu; wa ilā Sayyidinā Muḥammad al-Mahdī 'alayhi 'l-salām; wa ilā sā'iri sādātinā wa 'l-ṣiddiqīn. Al-Fātiḥa!* (O God, send the reward of what we have recited and the light of what we have followed as a gift and a loving connection from us to the spirit of our lord and prophet and protector Muhammad, may God bless him and keep him safe; and to the spirits of his brothers among the prophets and the messengers, and the servants of his ways of spiritual living; and to the spirits of the four Imams; and to the spirits of the shaykhs of the exalted Naqshbandi order, in

particular to the Imam of the order and deliverance of creation, Master Bahauddin Naqshband, Muhammad the Uwaysi of Bukhara; and to the Presence, Sultan of Saints Shaykh Abdullah Faiz of Dagestan; and to our lord and protector Shaykh Muhammad Nazim al-Haqqani, divinely strengthened in the way of obedience; and to Shaykh Muhammad al-Rabbani, may God increase his spirit in holiness; and to our master Muhammad the Mahdi, may peace light and abide on him; and to our other masters and the truthful ones. The *Fātiḥa*!)

◆ The *Fātiḥa*.

Grand transmitted supplication

Bismi 'Llāhi 'l-Raḥmāni 'l-Raḥīm (In the name of God, the infinitely Caring, the eternally Loving.)

Allāhumma ṣalli 'alā Sayyidinā Muḥammadin al-nabiyyi 'l-mukhtār 'adada man ṣalla 'alayhi min al-akhyār, wa 'adada man lam yuṣalli 'alayhi min al-aṣhrār, wa 'adada qaṭarāti 'l-amṭār, wa 'adada amwāji 'l-bihār, wa 'adada 'l-rimāli 'l-qifār, wa 'adada awrāqi 'l-ashjār, wa 'adada anfāsi 'l-mustaghfirīna bi 'l-ashār, wa 'adada akmāmi 'l-athmār, wa 'adada mā kāna wa mā yakūnu ilā yawmi 'l-ḥaṣhri wa 'l-qarār. Wa ṣalli 'alayhi mā ta'āqabu 'l-laylu wa 'l-nahāru wa ṣalli 'alayhi mā 'khtalafu 'l-malawān wa ta'āqabu 'l-āṣrān wa karrara 'l-jadīdān wa 'staqbala 'l-farqadān, wa balligh rūḥahu wa arwāḥa ahli baytihi minnā taḥiyyatan wa 'l-taslīm wa 'alā jamī'i 'l-anbiyā'i wa 'l-mursalīn wa 'l-ḥamdu li 'Llāhi Rabbi 'l-ālamīn. (O God, bless our lord Muhammad, the chosen Prophet, to the number of those who bless him among the good, and to the number of those who do not bless him among the evil; and to the number of drops of the rains, and to the number of waves of the oceans, and to the number of grains of sand in the barren wastes, and to the number of leaves of the trees, and to the number of breaths⁹²⁸ of those who seek Your forgiveness in the mornings, and to the number of buds that bear fruit, and to the number of what was and what is,

⁹²⁸ Or “souls”.

to the Day of Gathering and Conclusion. And bless him to the turning of nights and days,⁹²⁹ and bless him as long as the colours succeed each other in turn, and time cycles, and the night and the day return,⁹³⁰ and the guiding stars remain;⁹³¹ and send to his spirit, and to the spirits of the people of his house, greetings and blessings of peace from us; and to all the prophets and messengers. And the praise is to God, Lord of all the worlds.)

Allāhumma ṣalli ʿalā Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa ʿalā āli Sayyidinā Muḥammadin bi ʿadadi kulli dharratin alfa alfa marrah. Allāhumma ṣalli ʿalā Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa ʿalā āli Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa ṣaḥbihī wa sallim. Subbūḥun Quddūsun Rabbunā wa Rabbu ʿl-malāʾikati wa ʿl-rūḥ. Rabbi ḡhfir wa rḥam wa tajāwaz ʿammā taʿlamu innaka Anta ʿl-Aʿazzu ʿl-Akram. (O God, bless our lord Muhammad and the family of our lord Muhammad, to the number of all particles in creation, a million times over. O God, bless our lord Muhammad and the family of our lord Muhammad, and his disciples, and keep them safe. Glorious and Holy are You, our Lord, and the Lord of the angels and the spirit. Lord, forgive us, and have mercy on us, and leave unpunished what you know; truly you are the Mighty, the Most Noble.)

*Bismillāhi ʿl-Raḥmāni ʿl-Raḥīm.*⁹³² (In the name of God, the infinitely Caring, the eternally Loving.)

Allāhumma innī astaghfiruka min kulli mā tubtu ʿanhu ilayka thumma ʿudtu fihi. Wa astaghfiruka min kulli mā aradtu bihi wajhaka fa khāḷaṭanī fihi mā laysa fihi riḍāka. Wa astaghfiruka li ʿl-niʿami ʿl-latī taqawwaytu bihā ʿalā maʿṣiyatika. Wa astaghfiruka min al-dhunūbi ʿl-latī lā yaʿlamuhā ḡhayruka wa lā yaṭṭaliʿu ʿalayhā aḥadun siwāka wa lā tasiʿuhā illā raḥmatuka wa lā tunjī minhā illā

⁹²⁹ *Tāʿāqab*, from the root ʿ-q-b, refers to things “following each other”, or “alternating... one coming and the other going.” (Lane 1984: 2099–100) I have translated it as “turning” and “cycling”. *Mā khtalaf* is a contraction of *Mā akhtalaf*: *akhtalaf*, from the root *kh-l-f*, means “following reciprocally”, “alternating” (Lane 1984: 795). I have translated it as “succeed each other in turn”.

⁹³⁰ Or, “as cut-off things return.”

⁹³¹ The *fārqaḍān* are “two stars that never set, revolving around the pole star... β and γ of Ursa Minor... by which one directs his course by sea and by land.” (Lane 1984: 2387) The pole star, or *quṭb*, is a symbol of the Sufi teacher of the age (see Glossary).

⁹³² This line and the two paragraphs that follow constitute the prayer of Awli Abbas, who, for Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, is the Saint of Rajab.

maghfirataka wa ĥilmuka. La ilāha illā Anta subḥānaka innī kuntu min al-ẓālimīn. (O God, truly I ask Your Forgiveness for everything I turned from to You, then returned to. And I ask You to forgive everything with which I sought Your Face, then mixed with it what does not please You at all. And I ask Your forgiveness for the gifts I used to strengthen myself in rebellion against You. And I ask you to forgive the sins that no-one knows but You, and from which no-one but You perceives a way out, and nothing encompasses except Your Mercy, and nothing delivers from except Your Forgiveness and Forbearing. There is no God except you—Perfection is Yours!—truly I have been of the oppressors.)

Allāhumma innī astaghfiruka min kulli ẓulmin ẓalamtu bihī ‘ibādaka. Fa ayyumā ‘abdin min ‘ibādika aw amatin min imā’ika ẓalamtu fī badanihi aw ‘irdihi aw mālihi fa a‘ṭihi min khazā’inika ‘l-latī lā tanquṣ. Wa as’aluka an tukrimanī bi raḥmatika ‘l-latī wasi‘at kulla shay’in. Wa lā tuhīnanī bi ‘adhābika wa tu‘ṭiyānī mā as’aluka fa innī ḥaqīqun bi raḥmatika ya Arḥama ‘l-Rāḥimīn. Wa ṣalla ‘Llāhu ‘alā Sayyidinā Muḥammadin wa ālihi wa ṣaḥbihi ajma‘īn wa lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi ‘Llāhi ‘l-‘Alīyyi ‘l-‘Azīm. (O God, truly I seek Your forgiveness for every injustice with which I have wronged Your servants. Whomever of Your servants I have wronged, male or female,⁹³³ in their bodies or their souls or their belongings, give them of Your treasures that never fall short. And I ask You to honour me with Your Mercy, that encompasses all things. And do not abase me with Your Punishment, and grant me what I ask of You, for truly that is most fitting to Your Infinite Mercy, O Most Merciful of the merciful. And God bless our lord Muhammad and his family and all his disciples. And there is no power nor might except with God, the Exalted, the Incomparably Great.)

Bismillāhi ‘l-Raḥmāni ‘l-Raḥīm. (In the name of God, the Infinitely Caring, the Eternally Loving.)

Bismillāhi ‘l-nūr, nūrun ‘alā nūr. Al-ḥamdu li ‘Llāhi ‘l-ladhī khalaqa ‘l-samāwāti wa ‘l-arḍ wa ja‘al al-ẓulumāti wa ‘l-nūr wa anzala ‘l-tawrāta ‘alā jabali ‘l-ṭūr fī kitābin mastūr. (In the name of Light,

⁹³³ ‘*Abd* and *amat* both mean “slave” or “servant”; ‘*abd* is masculine and *amat* feminine. Word for word, this phrase could be translated as, “Whichever male servants from Your male servants, or female servants from Your female servants...”

Light upon Light. All praise is to God, the One who has created the heavens and the earth, and brought into being the darkness and the light, and sent the Torah on Mount Sinai in a written book.)

Wa 'l-ḥamdu li 'Llāhi 'l-ladhī huwa bi 'l-ghinā madhkūr wa bi 'l-ʿizzi wa 'l-jalāl mashhūr, wa 'l-ḥamdu li 'Llāhi 'l-ladhī khalaqa 'l-samāwāti wa 'l-arḍ wa jaʿal al-zulumāti wa 'l-nūr thumma 'l-ladhīna kafarū bi rabbihim yaʿdilūn. Kāf, Hā, Yā, ʿAyn, Ṣād. Ḥā, Mīm, ʿAyn, Sīn, Qāf. Iyyāka naʿbudu wa Iyyāka nastaʿīn. Yā Ḥayyu yā Qayyūm. Allāhu laṭīfun bi ʿibādihī. Yarzuqu man yashāʾu wa huwa 'l-Qawiyyu 'l-ʿAzīz. Ya Kāfi kulla shayʾin ikfinī wa ʿarif ʿanī kulla shayʾin innaka Qādirun ʿalā kulli shayʾin bi yadika 'l-khayr innaka ʿalā kulli shayʾin Qadīr. (And the praise is to God, the one Who is remembered with freedom from want, and renowned in might and majesty; and the praise is to God, the One who created the heavens and the earth, and made the darkness and the light; then those who cover the truth put others equal with their Lord. *Kāf, Hā, Yā, ʿAyn, Ṣād. Ḥā, Mīm, ʿAyn, Sīn, Qāf.*⁹³⁴ You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help. O Living, O Existing One! God is Gently Insightful with His servants. He sustains whom He wills, and He is the Mighty, the Almighty. O Sufficer in all things, suffice me, and turn all things away from me.⁹³⁵ Truly You have Power over all things, in Your hand is all good; truly You have Power over all things.)

Allāhumma yā Kathīr al-nawāli wa yā Dāʾim al-wiṣāli wa yā Ḥusna 'l-fiʿāli wa yā Razzāq al-ʿibādi ʿalā kulli ḥāl. (O God, O Abundant Giver of good, and O Eternal One of the loving connection, and O Goodness of all actions, and O Sustainer of Your servants in all states.)

Allāhumma in dakhāl al-shakku fī imānī bika wa lam aʿlam bihi tubtu ʿanhu wa aqūlu lā ilāha illa 'Llāh Muḥammadu 'l-Rasūlu 'Llāh (ṣalla 'Llāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam). (O God, if doubt entered my

⁹³⁴ The Arabic letters K, H, Y, ʿ, Ṣ; H, M, ʿ, S, Q.

⁹³⁵ This has been translated as “turn all harmful things from me.” Another interpretation is that, in this context, “all things” are things other than God, or things that detract from the supplicator’s awareness of the Divine presence.

faith in You and I did not know, I repent and say, there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God bless and protect him.)

Allāhumma in dakhāl al-shakku wa 'l-kufr fi tawhīdī Iyyāka wa lam a'lam bihi tubtu 'anhu wa aqūlu lā ilāha illa 'Llāh Muḥammadu 'l-Rasūlu 'Llāh (ṣalla 'Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam). (O God, if doubt and covering of the truth entered my awareness of Your unity and I did not know, I repent and say, there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God bless him and keep him safe.)

Allāhumma in dakhāl al-shubhatu fi ma'rifatī Iyyāka wa lam a'lam bihi tubtu 'anhu wa aqūlu lā ilāha illa 'Llāh Muḥammadu 'l-Rasūlu 'Llāh (ṣalla 'Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam). (O God, if any likening of You to another entered my knowing of You and I was unaware,⁹³⁶ I repent and say, there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God bless him and keep him safe.)

Allāhumma in dakhāl al-'ujbu wa 'l-riyā' wa 'l-kibriyā wa 'l-sum'atu fi 'ilmī wa lam a'lam bihi tubtu 'anhu wa aqūlu lā ilāha illa 'Llāh Muḥammadu 'l-Rasūlu 'Llāh (ṣalla 'Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam). (O God, if vanity, insincerity, pride, and ostentation⁹³⁷ entered my knowledge and I was unaware, I repent and say, there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God bless him and keep him safe.)

Allāhumma in jarā 'l-kadhibu 'alā lisānī wa lam a'lam bihi tubtu 'anhu wa aqūlu lā ilāha illa 'Llāh Muḥammadu 'l-Rasūlu 'Llāh (ṣalla 'Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam). (O God, if lies flowed from my tongue⁹³⁸ and I did not know, I repent and say, there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God bless him and keep him safe.)

⁹³⁶ The roots *ʿ-r-f* (hence *maʿrifā*) and *ʿ-l-m* (hence *aʿlam*) both refer to knowledge, with subtle differences. *ʿ-r-f* tends to be used for knowledge acquired by reflection and consideration (Lane 1984: 2013), and also for spiritual knowledge.

⁹³⁷ *Riyāʿ* and *sumʿa* (hence *sumʿatu*) both mean “ostentation”: *riyāʿ* refers to love of being seen, and *sumʿa* to love of being heard. They both, in particular *riyāʿ*, have connotations of insincerity (Lane 1984: 999, 1429).

⁹³⁸ Literally, “if lying ran [or flowed] on my tongue.”

Allāhumma in dakhāl al-nifāqu fī qalbī min al-dhunūbi 'l-saghā'iri wa 'l-kabā'iri wa lam a'lam bihi tubtu 'anhu wa aqūlu lā ilāha illa 'Llāh Muḥammadu 'l-Rasūlu 'Llāh (ṣalla 'Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam). (O God, if hypocrisy entered my heart, from sins little or grave, and I did not know, I repent and say, there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God bless him and keep him safe.)

Allāhumma mā asdayta ilayya min khayrin wa lam ashkuruka wa lam a'lam bihi tubtu 'anhu wa aqūlu lā ilāha illa 'Llāh Muḥammadu 'l-Rasūlu 'Llāh (ṣalla 'Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam). (O God, whatever good you granted me, and I did not thank you, and I did not know that, I repent and say, there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God bless him and keep him safe.)

Allāhumma mā qaddarta lī min amrin wa lam arḍāhu wa lam a'lam bihi tubtu 'anhu wa aqūlu lā ilāha illa 'Llāh Muḥammadu 'l-Rasūlu 'Llāh (ṣalla 'Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam). (O God, whatever you apportioned for me from Your decree and I was not happy with it, and I was unaware, I repent and say, there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God bless him and keep him safe.)

Allāhumma mā an'amta 'alayya min ni'matin fa 'aṣaytuka wa ghafaltu 'an shukrika wa lam a'lam bihi tubtu 'anhu wa aqūlu lā ilāha illa 'Llāh Muḥammadu 'l-Rasūlu 'Llāh (ṣalla 'Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam). (O God, whatever You gave me from Your bounty, and I rebelled against you and neglected to thank you, and I did not know that, I repent and say, there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God bless him and keep him safe.)

Allāhumma mā mananta bihi 'alayya min khayrin fa lam aḥmaduka 'alayhi wa lam a'lam bihi tubtu 'anhu wa aqūlu lā ilāha illa 'Llāh Muḥammadu 'l-Rasūlu 'Llāh (ṣalla 'Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam). (O God, whatever goodness you have given me and I did not praise You for it, and I did not know that, I repent and say, there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God bless him and keep him safe.)

Allāhumma mā ḍayyaʿtu min ʿumrī wa lam tarḍā bihi tubtu ʿanhu wa aqūlu lā ilāha illa ʿLlāh Muḥammadu ʿl-Rasūlu ʿLlāh (ṣalla ʿLlāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam). (O God, whatever of my life I have wasted, and you were not pleased with that, I repent and say, there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God bless him and keep him safe.)

Allāhumma bimā awjabta ʿalayya min al-naẓari min maṣnūʿātika fa ḡhafaltu ʿanhu wa lam aʿlam bihi tubtu ʿanhu wa aqūlu lā ilāha illa ʿLlāh Muḥammadu ʿl-Rasūlu ʿLlāh (ṣalla ʿLlāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam). (O God, whatever You made me see of Your Works and I let it slip from my mind, and I was unaware, I repent and say, there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God bless him and keep him safe.)

Allāhumma mā qaṣartu ʿanhu āmālī fī rajʿika wa lam aʿlam bihi tubtu ʿanhu wa aqūlu lā ilāha illa ʿLlāh Muḥammadu ʿl-Rasūlu ʿLlāh (ṣalla ʿLlāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam). (O God, whatever I fell short of in my hope of returning to You, and I was unaware, I repent and say, there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God bless him and keep him safe.)

Allāhumma mā aʿtamadtū ʿalā aḥadin siwāka fī ʿl-shadāʿidi wa lam aʿlamu bihi tubtu ʿanhu wa aqūlu lā ilāha illa ʿLlāh Muḥammadu ʿl-Rasūlu ʿLlāh (ṣalla ʿLlāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam). (O God, whatever other than You I relied on in afflictions,⁹³⁹ and I was unaware, I repent and say, there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God bless him and keep him safe.)

Allāhumma mā astaʿantu li ḡhayrika fī ʿl-shadāʿidi wa ʿl-nawāʿibi wa lam aʿlam bihi tubtu ʿanhu wa aqūlu lā ilāha illa ʿLlāh Muḥammadu ʿl-Rasūlu ʿLlāh (ṣalla ʿLlāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam). (O God, whatever I sought help from, other than you, in afflictions and disasters, and I was unaware, I repent and say, there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God bless him and keep him safe.)

⁹³⁹ *Shadāʿid* means “afflictions”, “calamities”, “seditions”, and can refer specifically to the “*rigours*, or *pangs*, of death.” (Lane 1984: 1518)

Allāhumma in zalla lisānī bi ‘I-su‘ālī li għayrika wa lam a‘lam bihi tubtu ‘anhu wa aqūlu lā ilāha illa ‘Llāh Muḥammadu ‘I-Rasūlu ‘Llāh (ṣalla ‘Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam). (O God, if my tongue slipped by asking from other than You, and I was unaware, I repent and say, there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God bless him and keep him safe.)

Allāhumma mā ṣaluḥa min shā‘nī bi faḍlika fa ra‘aytuḥu min għayrika wa lam a‘lam bihi tubtu ‘anhu wa aqūlu lā ilāha illa ‘Llāh Muḥammadu ‘I-Rasūlu ‘Llāh (ṣalla ‘Llāhu ‘alayhi wa sallam). (O God, whatever was put right in my affairs⁹⁴⁰ through Your Grace, and I saw it as coming from other than You, and I was unaware of that, I repent and say, there is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God bless him and keep him safe.)

Allāhumma bi ḥaqqi lā ilāha illa ‘Llāh wa bi ‘izzatihi (O God, by the right of *Lā ilāha illa ‘Llāh* and by its honour)

Wa bi ḥaqqi ‘I-‘arshi wa ‘azamatihi (And by the right of the Throne and its might)

Wa bi ḥaqqi ‘I-kursī wa sa‘ātihi (And by the right of the Divine Court and its vastness)

Wa bi ḥaqqi ‘I-qalami wa jiryatihi (And by the right of the Pen and its running)

Wa bi ḥaqqi ‘I-lawḥi wa ḥafazatihi (And by the right of the Tablet and its guardians)

Wa bi ḥaqqi ‘I-mīzāni wa khiffatihi (And by the right of the Scales and their precision)

Wa bi ḥaqqi ‘I-ṣirāṭi wa riqqatihi (And by the right of the Path and its narrowness)

Wa bi ḥaqqi Jibrīl wa amānatihi (And by the right of Gabriel and his trust)

Wa bi ḥaqqi Riḍwān wa jannatihi (And by the right of Ridwan and his Garden)

Wa bi ḥaqqi Mālik wa zabānīyatihi (And by the right of Malik and his avenging angels)

Wa bi ḥaqqi Mikā‘īl wa shafaqatihi (And by the right of Michael and his gentle kindness)

⁹⁴⁰ *Shā‘n* can mean “affair” or “state, condition” (Lane 1984: 1491).

Wa bi ḥaqqi Isrāfīl wa nafkhatihī (And by the right of Israfil and his blowing [of the Last Trumpet])

Wa bi ḥaqqi ‘Azrā’īl wa qabdatihī (And by the right of Azrael and his seizing [of the soul].)

Wa bi ḥaqqi Ādam wa ṣafwatihī (And by the right of Adam and his purity)

Wa bi ḥaqqi Shu‘ayb wa nubūwwatihī (And by the right of Jethro and his prophethood)

Wa bi ḥaqqi Nūḥ wa safīnatihī (And by the right of Noah and his ark)

Wa bi ḥaqqi Ibrāhīm wa khullatihī (And by the right of Abraham and his friendship)

Wa bi ḥaqqi Ishāq wa diyānatihī (And by the right of Isaac and his belief)

Wa bi ḥaqqi Ismā‘īl wa fidyatihī (And by the right of Ishmael and his ransom)

Wa bi ḥaqqi Yūsuf wa ghubatihī (And by the right of Joseph and his being far from home)

Wa bi ḥaqqi Mūsā wa āyātihī (And by the right of Moses and his Signs)

Wa bi ḥaqqi Hārūn wa ḥurmatihī (And by the right of Aaron and his sanctity)

Wa bi ḥaqqi Hūd wa haybatihī (And by the right of Hud and his majesty)

Wa bi ḥaqqi Ṣāliḥ wa nāqatihī (And by the right of Salih and his camel)⁹⁴¹

Wa bi ḥaqqi Lūṭ wa jīratihī (And by the right of Lot and those who sought refuge with him)

Wa bi ḥaqqi Yūnus wa da‘watihī (And by the right of Jonah and his invocation)

Wa bi ḥaqqi Dānyāl wa karāmatihī (And by the right of Daniel and his miracle)

Wa bi ḥaqqi Zakariyyā wa ṭahāratihī (And by the right of Zechariah and his purity)

⁹⁴¹ In traditional accounts, the Prophet Salih’s people demanded a miracle from him as proof of his teaching: that a camel emerge from inside a rock. He prayed for this, and it was granted. (Hajjah Amina, *Lore 1*, 2008)

Wa bi haqqi 'Īsā wa siyāḥatihi (And by the right of Jesus and his wandering)

Wa bi haqqi Sayyidinā Muḥammadin (ṣalla 'Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam) wa shafā'atihi (And by the right of our lord Muhammad, may God bless him and keep him safe, and his intercession.)

An taghfir lanā wa li wālidinā wa li 'ulamā'inā wa an ta'khudha bi yadī wa tu'tiyānī su'ālī wa tuballighānī āmālī wa an taṣrifā 'annī kulla man 'ādānī bi raḥmatika yā Arḥama 'l-Rāḥimīn wa taḥfaznī min kulli sū'in lā ilāha illā Anta subḥānaka innī kuntu min al-zālimīn. (That You forgive us, and our parents, and our learned ones, and that You take me by the hand and give me what I ask and make me reach what I hope for, and that You avert from me all who wish to harm me, by Your Mercy, O Most Merciful of the merciful; and protect me from all evil; there is no god but You—glory to you!—truly I have been of the oppressors.)

Yā Hayyu yā Qayyūm. Lā ilāha illā Anta yā Allāh. Astāghfiruka wa atūbu ilayk. Fastajabnā lahū wa najjaynāhu min al-ghamm wa kadhālika nunji 'l-mu'minīn. Wa ḥasbun Allāhu wa ni'ma 'l-Wakīl. Ḥasbiya 'Llāhu lā ilāha illā Hūwa. 'Alayhi tawakkaltu wa Hūwa Rabbu 'l-'arshi 'l-'azīm. Wa lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi 'Llāhi 'l-'Alīyyi 'l-'Azīm. (O Living, O Existing One. There is no god but You, O God. We ask forgiveness of You, and return to You. “So We answered him, and delivered him out of grief; even so do We deliver the believers.”⁹⁴² And God is enough for us, and the best of Guardians. God is enough for me; no god but Him. I trust in Him, and He is the Lord of the mighty Throne. And there is no power nor might except with God, the Exalted, the Incomparably Great.)

Wa ṣalla 'Llāhu 'alā Sayyidinā Muḥammad wa 'alā ālihī wa ṣaḥbihī wa sallim ajma'in. Subḥānā Rabbika Rabbi 'l-'Izzati 'ammā yaṣifūn wa salāmun 'alā 'l-mursalīn wa 'l-ḥamdu li 'Llāhi Rabbi 'l-'Ālamīn. (And may God bless our lord Muhammad, and his family and disciples, and keep them all safe. Glory is Yours, Lord, Lord of Honour, far beyond what they ascribe. And may peace light and abide on all the Messengers; and all praise is to God, Lord of all the worlds.)

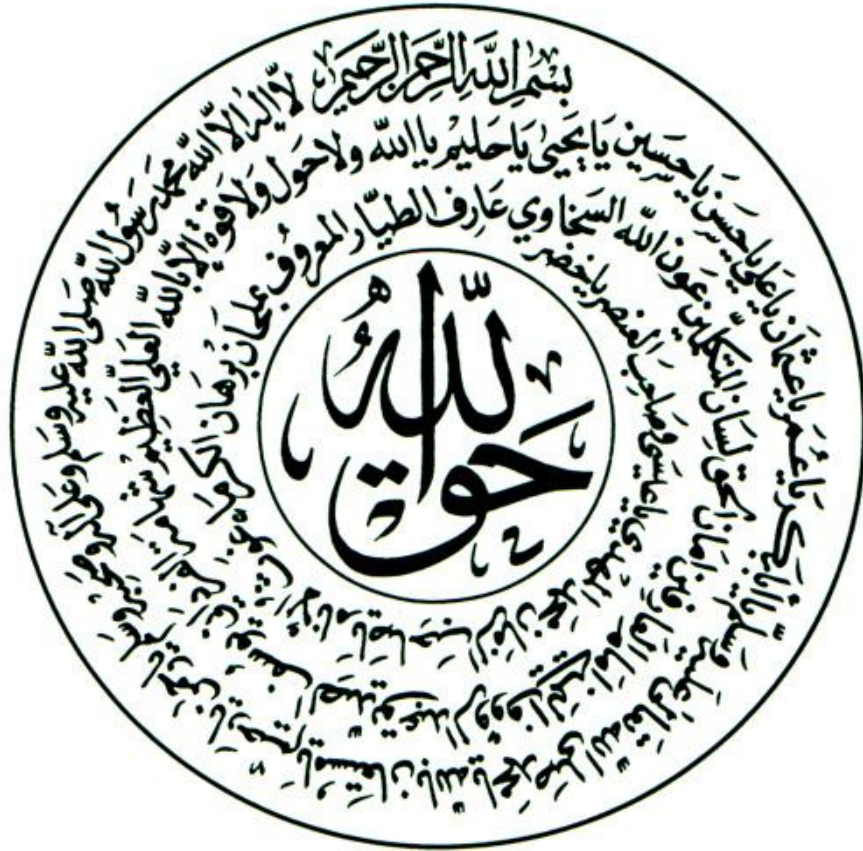
⁹⁴² Koran 21: 88: the response to the Prophet Jonah's prayer inside the whale.

Bismillāhi 'l-Raḥmāni 'l-Raḥīm. Allāhumma innī asʿaluka bi mushāhadati asrāri 'l-muḥibbīn wa bi 'l-khalwati 'l-lati khaṣṣa bihā Sayyida 'l-mursalīn ḥīna asrayta bihi laylata 'l-sābʿi wa 'l-ʿishrīn an tarḥam qalbi 'l-ḥazīn wa tujīb daʿwati yā Akram al-Akramīn ya Arḥam al-Raḥīmīn. Wa ṣalla 'Llāhu ʿalā Sayyidinā Muḥammad wa ʿalā ālihī wa ṣaḥbihī wa sallim ajmaʿīn. (In the name of God, the Infinitely Caring, the Eternally Loving. O God, truly I ask You by the witnessing of the secrets [innermost souls] of the lovers, and by the seclusion by which You distinguished the master of the Messengers, when You transported him on the night of the 27th; have mercy on my griefstruck heart and answer my prayer, O Most Noble of the noble, O Most Merciful of the merciful. And may God bless our lord Muhammad, and his family and disciples, and keep them all safe.)

Bismillāhi 'l-Raḥmāni 'l-Raḥīm. Lā ilāha illa 'Llāh Muḥammadu 'l-Rasūl Allāh. Yā Raḥmān yā Raḥīm yā Mustaʿān yā Allāh yā Muḥammad ṣalla 'Llāhu ʿalayhi wa sallam. Yā Abā Bakr yā ʿUmar yā ʿUthmān yā ʿAlī yā Ḥasan yā Ḥusayn yā Yahyā yā Ḥalīm yā Allāh wa lā ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi Llāhi 'l-ʿAlīyyi 'l-ʿAzīm. (In the name of God, the Infinitely Caring, the Eternally Loving. No god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God. O Infinitely Caring, O Eternally Loving, O the One Whose help is sought, O God; O Muhammad, may God bless and protect him. O Abu Bakr, O Umar, O Uthman, O Ali, O Hasan, O Husayn, O John [the Baptist], O Infinitely Forbearing One, O God; and no power nor might but with God, the Most High, the Almighty.)

Astagfiru 'Llāha dhu 'l-Jalāli wa 'l-Ikrām min jamīʿi 'l-dhunūbi wa 'l-āthām. (I ask forgiveness from God, the One of Majesty and Generosity, from all wrong and all sin.)

Āmīn. (Amen.)



Centre:

- ◆ *Allāh Ḥaqq* (God, Truth).

Periphery:

- ◆ *Bismillāhi 'l-Raḥmāni 'l-Raḥīm. Lā ilāha illa 'Llāh Muḥammadu 'l-Rasūlu 'Llāh ṣalla 'Llāhu 'alayhi wa sallam wa 'alā ālihi wa ṣaḥbihi wa sallam. Yā Raḥmān yā Raḥīm yā Musta'ān yā⁹⁴³ Allāh. Yā Muḥammad ṣalla 'Llāhu ta'ālā 'alayhi wa sallam. Yā Abā Bakr yā 'Umar yā 'Uṭhmān yā 'Alī yā Ḥasan yā Ḥusayn yā Yahyā. Yā Ḥalīm yā Allāh. Wa lā*

⁹⁴³ The talisman says *bā* (one dot) rather than *yā* (two dots); this seems to be a misprint.

ḥawla wa lā quwwata illā bi ‘Llāhi ‘l-‘Alīyyi ‘l-‘Azīm. Shahāmat al-Fardānī, Yūsuf al-Ṣiddīq, ‘Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Yamanī, Imām al-‘Ārifin Amān al-Ḥaqq, Lisān al-Mutakallimīn ‘Awnu ‘Llāh al-Sakhāwī, ‘Ārif al-Ṭayyār al-Ma’rūf bi mulhān, Burhān al-Kuramā’ Ghawth al-Anām. Yā Ṣāhib al-Zamān Muḥammad al-Mahdī ya ‘Īsā wa Ṣāhib al-‘Unṣur. Yā Khidr!

(In the name of God, the Infinitely Caring, the Eternally Loving. There is no god but God; Muhammad is the Messenger of God, may God bless and protect him and his family and disciples. O Infinitely Caring, O Eternally Loving, O the One Whose help is sought, O God; O Muhammad, may God the Most Exalted bless and protect him. O Abu Bakr, O Umar, O Uthman, O Ali, O Hasan, O Husayn, O John, O Infinitely Forbearing One, O God; and there is no strength nor power save with God, the Most Exalted, the Immeasurably Great. Shahamat al-Fardani, Yusuf as-Siddiq, Abd al-Ra’uf al- Yamani, Imam al-Arifin Aman al-Haqq, Lisan al-Mutakallimin Awnallah al-Sakhawi, Arif al-Tayyar al-Ma’ruf bi Mulhan, Burhan al-Kurama Ghawth al-Anam. O Master of the Era, Muhammad the Mahdi; O Jesus, and Master of the Elements; O Khidr!)

The seven people listed after John the Baptist are the seven deputies of the Mahdi.⁹⁴⁴ Their names may be descriptions of their spiritual qualities; they can be (tentatively) translated:

<u>Shahāmat</u> ⁹⁴⁵ al-Fardānī ⁹⁴⁶	The active and efficient, solitary one.
Yūsuf al-Ṣiddīq	Yusuf [Joseph] the truthful
‘Abd al-Ra’ūf Al-Yamanī	Abdul Rauf [servant of the Most Merciful God] the Yemeni
Imām al-‘Ārifin Amān al-Ḥaqq	Head of the knowers, Safeguard of the Truth
Lisān al-Mutakallimīn ‘Awnu	Voice of the [true] theologians, bountiful helper of God

⁹⁴⁴ Shaykh Hisham, *Guidebook*, 2004: 189–90.

⁹⁴⁵ I could not find Shahāmat in Lane’s lexicon, but did locate it in Redhouse’s Ottoman lexicon (1978: 1143) as shahāmet: “1. A being active and efficient. 2. Courage, valo[u]r.” The Arabic root sh–h–m has connotations of valour, insight, effectiveness, and forbearing (Lane 1984: 1613–14).

⁹⁴⁶ Fardān is something separate or solitary (Lane 1984: 2364; Redhouse 1978: 1374); ferdaniyyet (Ottoman Turkish, from Arabic) is uniqueness or solitariness (Redhouse 1978: 1374).

‘Lāh al-Sakhāwī	
‘Ārif al-Ṭayyār ⁹⁴⁷ al-Ma‘rūf bi mulhān ⁹⁴⁸	The knower of those who “fly”, well known among those who understand subtle meanings
Burhān al-Kuramā’ Ghawth al-Anām ⁹⁴⁹	Proof of the magnanimous ones, Deliverance of creation

Shaykh Nazim was called *La Preuve de la Générosité* by his representative in France,⁹⁵⁰ perhaps hinting that he might be the seventh deputy of the Mahdi listed above. I heard a rumour that Shaykh Hisham was called ‘*Awnu ‘Llāh al-Sakhāwī*, a name of the fifth deputy. Shaykh Nazim’s statement that Shaykh Mehmet is one of Mahdi’s viziers indicates that he might be among these deputies. Shaykh Nazim briefly described a meeting between ‘*Abd al-Ra’ūf al-Yamanī* and Grandshaykh Abdullah that took place in the mid-20th century.

⁹⁴⁷ The root *t-y-r* centres on the idea of flying. Redhouse (1978: 1265–66) gives seven meanings for *ṭayyār*, of which three could apply to people: “given to flying”, “extremely volatile”, and “of a volatile, mercurial temperament”. Lane (1984: 1904) gives three meanings, of which one could apply in this context: “a company” of people. Rumi’s teacher, Shamsuddin of Tabriz, was reportedly “styled... the Flier, because he travelled about so much” (el Eflaki 1976: 90): hence, I have translated *ṭayyār* as “those who ‘fly’”. However, another possibility is “the group”.

⁹⁴⁸ The translation of *bi mulhān* is especially tentative. The root *l-h-n* focuses on the concept of speech that is debatably intelligible: either because it is incorrect, or because it is ambiguous or intended only for some to understand (Lane 1984: 3009). Hence I have translated *mulhān* as “those who understand subtle meanings”.

⁹⁴⁹ *Anām* is most commonly translated as “mankind” (Lane 1984: 118; Redhouse 1978: 207). It can, however, mean mankind and jinns, “all that is on the face of the earth”, everything that needs sleep, or everything that has a spirit (Lane 1984: 118; italics removed). I have translated it as “creation”, because of the salvific role dervishes believe Shaykh Nazim to hold.

⁹⁵⁰ de Vos 1997.

APPENDIX 4: NAQSHBANDI - HAQQANI OBITUARIES

Both obituaries are reproduced courtesy of Guardian News & Media Ltd.

Shaykh Nazim: *The Guardian*, 21 August 2014 (modified 11 November)



Photo: Sarbhjit Kaur

Shaykh Nazim, who has died aged 92, was an influential spiritual teacher and head of a branch of the Naqshbandi order of Sunni Islamic Sufism. He led about 300 Sufi centres in more than 30 countries as diverse as Chile and Japan; his followers ranged from heads of state to the homeless and troubled people in search of solace.

The spiritual training of Sufism is intended to help people to love, honour, understand, and be true to themselves and others. Shaykh Nazim taught that Sufi ways were universal, and his methods were grounded in everyday living.

I first visited him in 2009 as an anthropologist interested in healing. He used naturopathic and psychological methods to treat physical and mental illness, but was primarily regarded as a spiritual

healer. Intrigued, I returned. I stayed with him several times, and came to regard him as the kindest of people and the best of friends.

Anyone, from any background, was welcome to stay with Shaykh Nazim at his base in Cyprus, and be fed and sheltered among the cats and the orange groves. Spiritual healing could sometimes be quite painful, as people confronted their hidden fears and selfishness, but most participants I spoke to felt that self-knowledge allowed them to live more complete and rewarding lives.

Nazim Adil was born in Larnaca. Both his grandfathers were spiritual teachers. His mother, Khadijeh, was a descendant of the Sufi poet Rumi. His father, Adil, was a civil servant. Nazim took a degree in chemical engineering from Istanbul University, and was invited to study for a doctorate; but his main interest was in spirituality. He studied and became a shaykh, or teacher, in several Sufi orders, before travelling to Damascus, where he met his spiritual master, Grandshaykh Abdullah.

Abdullah was known for his inspired simplicity: he taught love and respect for all things, and once reprimanded Nazim for kicking a stone to the side of the road, rather than putting it there gently. He died in 1973, having nominated Nazim to be his successor as head of the order.

Nazim's message and practice were of universal love; he condemned sectarianism and terrorism, describing humankind as one family, and the earth as our mother. He was often “the Sufi other Sufis went to”; but he worked with, and taught, people from diverse backgrounds. To many, he was simply a spiritual grandfather, who, with his kindness, cups of tea and insight, helped people make sense of their lives.

His wife, Amina (or Anne), a Russian writer and spiritual teacher, died in 2004. He is survived by two sons, Mehmet and Bahauddin, and two daughters, Nazihe and Rukiye. Mehmet succeeds him as head of the Sufi branch.

Zero Quensel: *The Guardian*, 30 June 2015 (modified 02 July; in print edition 03 July)



Photo: Veronika Wand-Danielsson

My friend Zero Quensel, who has died of cancer aged 63, led a colourful life characterised by her commitment to environmental causes, her charitable works and her Sufi faith.

She was born Thyra Quensel in Stockholm to Torsten, a theatre director and journalist, and Dagny (née Helander), a ballet teacher. Her parents were divorced when she was two, and her mother then married a German diplomat, Karl Wand, who was posted to several African countries, including Nigeria.

After leaving her Lagos secondary school as head girl, Thyra completed her education in Germany and, having struck up a relationship with a member of Paul McCartney's Wings, toured with the band in the 1970s, teaching French to McCartney's young daughter, Stella, while they were on the road. Eventually Thyra settled down as a teacher in Berlin, where she became part of a circle of people around the influential German environmentalist Rudi Dutschke. Present at the meeting in Offenbach that established the German Green party in 1979, she went on to represent the party internationally, including in Egypt, where she met President Anwar Sadat. She was also on the Greenpeace flagship, *Sirius*, which entered Leningrad in 1982 as part of an anti-nuclear protest.

Dutschke had died in late 1979 as a result of health problems resulting from injuries sustained in an assassination attempt, and his death deeply affected Thyra, who was left feeling a strong need for faith. In 1983 she met Shaykh Nazim, a Sufi spiritual teacher from Cyprus, and she became his secretary, driver and student, before moving to London.

In the mid-1990s Nazim gave Thyra the name Zero, explaining that her ego had been reduced to nothing. Inspired by him, she moved to Glastonbury in Somerset, where she opened a shop opposite the abbey, raising money for the Healing Hearts Sufi charity. She also became involved in shipping unwanted wheelchairs from Britain to west Africa, where severe shortages existed, and later helped disabled people in Gambia and Mali to set up their own businesses, in the process providing some of the poorest and most remote communities with wells, schools and places to pray. Zero was utterly conscientious in this work, and was undaunted by any personal risk, ensuring that resources went exactly where they were needed and were not misappropriated.

Well known and liked in Glastonbury, where she supported many vulnerable people, Zero had few possessions and fewer pretensions. Partly through her charisma, organisation and care for others, a lively Sufi community developed in Somerset.

She is survived by her mother and by her three sisters, Veronika, Ulrika and Eleonora.

G L O S S A R Y

1 . N A M E S O F G O D

The names of God are listed in many Sufi and general theological texts. I have listed only the names that occur in the main text and appendices.

Allah (phonetically *Allāh*)

The One God.

Ahad (*Aḥad*)

The One, incomparable God; the single reality.

Akbar (*Akbar*)

Great beyond measure or comparison; most great.

Ali (*ʿAlī*)

Exalted.

Aman (*Amān*)

The One who provides safety, and freedom from fear.

Azim (*ʿAzīm*)

Great, above all need.

Aziz (*ʿAzīz*)

Mighty, victorious.

Da'im (*Dā'im*)

Eternal.

Dalil (*Dalīl*)

The Guide.

Dayyan (*Dayyān*)

The "Requiter, who neglects not any deed, but requites it, with good and with evil".⁹⁵¹ The One Who is intimately responsive to all his servants; the Judge; the One Who does not let disorder reign.

Fattah (*Fattāh*)

Opener.

Ghaffar (*Ghaffār*)

Ever-forgiving.

Ghani (*Ghanī*)

Rich beyond measure, self-sufficient, not in need of help; ever-generous in all relationships.

Ghiyath (*Ghiyāth*)

Deliverer, rescuer.

Hafiz (*Hafīz*)

Preserver, guardian.

⁹⁵¹ Lane 1984: 944.

Halim (*Ḥalīm*)

Forbearing, gentle.

Hamid (*Ḥamīd*)

Praised and praiseworthy.

Hannan (*Ḥannān*)

Measurelessly gentle, caring.

Haqq (*Ḥaqq*)

Truth.

Hayy (*Ḥayy*)

Ever-living.

Jalal (*Jalāl*)

Majestic.

Kafi (*Kāfi*)

More than sufficient.

Karim (*Karīm*)

Infinitely noble and generous.

Latif (*Laṭīf*)

Gentle, profound, insightful, subtle.

Majid (*Majīd*)

“Noble in essence, beautiful in actions, and bountiful in gifts.”⁹⁵²

Malik al mulk (*Mālika ‘l-mulk*)

Lord of all dominion.

Mannan (*Mannān*)

Infinitely giving.

Mawla (*Mawlā*)

Protector.

Mu’afi (*Mu‘āfi*)

Freer, exempter.

Mughith (*Mughīth*)

Rescuer.

Mu’in (*Mu‘īn*)

Giver of aid.

Mu’izz (*Mu‘izz*)

Honourer.

Mujib (*Mujīb*)

⁹⁵² al-Ghazali 1995: 120.

Acceptor of prayer.

Musta'an (*Musta'ān*)

One whose help is sought in times of need.

Nasir (*Naṣīr*)

Helper.

Nur (*Nūr*)

Light.

Qadir (*Qadīr*)

All-powerful.

Qawi (*Qāwī*)

Mighty. Possessor of all strength; untiring.

Qayyum (*Qayyūm*)

Truly existing, uncaused.

Rabb (*Rabb*)

Lord, sustainer.

Rahim (*Raḥīm*)

Eternally and absolutely loving and nurturing.

Rahman (*Raḥmān*)

Infinitely caring, loving, and compassionate.

Ra'uf (*Ra'ūf*)

Most merciful, caring for those who are weak or astray.

Razzaq (*Razzāq*)

Infinitely bounteous and generous.

Sabur (*Ṣabūr*)

Measurelessly patient.

Samad (*Ṣamad*)

The One God, “of Whom nothing is independent, and Whose unity everything indicates”.⁹⁵³

Sattar (*Ṣattār*)

Infinitely kind coverer of sin and fault.

Shafi (*Shāfi*)

Healer.

Subhan (*Subhān*)

Glorious, Perfect.

Sultan (*Sulṭān*)

Sole monarch.

⁹⁵³ Lane 1984: 1727.

Wadud (*Wadūd*)

Warmly Loving.

Wahhab (*Wahhāb*)

Endlessly Giving.

Wahid (*Wāhid*)

The One, unique God.

Wakil (*Wakīl*)

The One trusted to manage all affairs: the Trustee, the Guardian.

Wali (*Walī*)

Sole Manager and Governor of all creation. Protector, Guardian, Friend.

2. NAMES OF THE PROPHET & HIS FAMILY & DISCIPLES

I have listed only people named in the main text and accompanying footnotes.

Muhammad (*Muḥammad*)

The first spirit created, and the last prophet.

Abu Bakr (*Abū Bakr*)

The Prophet Muhammad's closest follower and immediate political successor: the first caliph.

Buried next to the Prophet in Medina. His spiritual influence is said to characterise the Naqshbandi order.

Abu 'l-Darda (*Abū 'l-Dardā'*)

Spiritual brother of **Salman**. Governor of Damascus under the Caliph Omar.

Abu Hurayra (*Abū Hurayra*)

Transmitted more Hadith than anyone else. Called Abu Hurayra (literally, “father of the little cat”), because he was always caring for kittens.⁹⁵⁴

Aisha (*ʿĀʾisha*)

Daughter of **Abu Bakr**; wife of the **Prophet Muhammad**. Polymath and prolific Hadith narrator.

Ali (*ʿAlī*)

One of the Prophet Muhammad’s closest followers, and his son-in-law. The fourth caliph. His spiritual teachings are said to influence Sufi orders strongly. Known to Shaykh Nazim as *Shāh-i mardān* (Shah of heroes, Shah of mankind).

Awli Abbas (*Awlī ʿAbbās*)

A highwayman with a pure heart.

Bilal (*Bilāl*)

An Ethiopian man, kept as a slave in Mecca, who was severely tortured by his owner for believing in the Prophet Muhammad. During his torture, he cried out, “*Aḥad, Aḥad*”, calling on and remembering the One God. Freed by Abu Bakr. Became the first **muezzin**.

Fatima (*Fāṭima*)

⁹⁵⁴ Lings 1991: 280.

The Prophet's youngest daughter. Regarded as one of the four holiest women: the others being **Khadija**, Pharaoh's wife Asiya, and the Virgin Mary.

Hasan (*Hasan*)

The older son of Ali and Fatima. Renounced the worldly caliphate for spiritual reasons. The ancestor of most people today who are descended from the Prophet.

Husayn (*Husayn*)

The younger son of Ali and Fatima. Martyred at Karbala, Iraq.

Khadija (*Khadija*)

The Prophet's first and only wife, until she passed away shortly before the migration to Medina. Mother of all his children who survived infancy (four daughters: Zaynab, Ruqaiyya, Umm Kulthum, and Fatima).

Salman (*Salmān*)

Persian Christian who became a follower of the Prophet Muhammad. First person to translate part of the Koran from Arabic into another language (Persian). Third on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain (see Appendix 2).

Umar (*Umar*)

The second caliph. Conqueror of Jerusalem. Known for his rigour and integrity. Buried with the Prophet and Abu Bakr in Medina.

Umm Hiram (*Umm Hiram*)

The Prophet's aunt, honorifically if not necessarily by blood; also known as Hala Sultan or Hala Sultana. Buried near Larnaca, Cyprus.

Uthman (*ʿUthmān*)

Married the Prophet Muhammad’s second daughter, Ruqaiyya; after she died, married the Prophet’s third daughter, Umm Kulthum. The third caliph. Known for his gentleness and generosity.

Uways (*Uways*)

A shepherd who longed to visit the Prophet but, instead, stayed at home looking after his mother. As a result, became spiritually very close to the Prophet. Spiritual meetings with a holy person, without a meeting in the physical world, are known as **Uwaysi**.

3. OTHER NOTABLE SUFIS

I have listed only people named in the main text and accompanying footnotes. The predominance of men reflects the gendered nature of most societies, rather than a dearth of holy women.

Transliterations are from Arabic unless otherwise stated.

Shaykh Nazim (1922–2014)

◆ *Shaykh Nāzīm* (Arabic), *Şeyh Nazım* (Turkish)

40th Sufi master on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain.

Jafar al-Sadiq (d 765)

◆ *Jaʿfar al-Şādiq*

5th Sufi master on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain; 6th Shi’a Imam. “Often viewed as a unifying figure of Shi’a, since he appeared before the split into the ‘seven’ and the ‘twelve’ branches.”⁹⁵⁵ A descendant of Abu Bakr and of Ali.

⁹⁵⁵ Çakır 1998: 64.

Abu Hanifa (d 767)

◆ *Abū Ḥanīfā*⁹⁵⁶

A Persian student of Jafar al-Sadiq and pioneer of **fiqh**. The Hanafi school of Islamic law is named after him, and reflects his character and insight.

Bayazid Bistami (d 875)

◆ *Bāyazīd Bisṭāmī*

6th Sufi master on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain. His reported prayers included, “Let me be the one person to go into Your fire, and let everyone else be saved.” Reportedly commented, “If God gave me permission for intercession, first I would intercede for those who harmed me and those who denied me.”⁹⁵⁷ Exiled many times, and eventually martyred.

Junayd (d 910)

◆ *Junayd*

A Sufi of Baghdad, renowned for his sobriety.

Hallaj (d 992)

◆ *Mansūr al-Ḥallāj*

Saint and poet, executed for saying “I am the Truth,” a statement that reflected his nothingness before God.

Ali Hujwiri (d 1070), known in South Asia as **Data Ganj Baksh**, “the Generous Giver”

◆ *‘Alī al-Hujwīrī* (Arabic), *Dātā Ganj Bakhsh* (Urdu)

⁹⁵⁶ *Abū* means “father of”. Hanifa was the Imam’s daughter, who famously solved a *fiqh* problem that he could not.

⁹⁵⁷ Shaykh Hisham, *NSW*, 1995: 100–02 (first translation slightly altered).

Writer of *Unveiling the hidden (Kashf al-Mahjūb)*: the first major Sufi text in Persian, and a pioneering textbook of Sufi studies.

(Muhammad) Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d 1111)

◆ *(Muhammad) Abu Hāmid al-Ghazālī*

Professor of Jurisprudence at the Nizami University of Baghdad, who left his post to travel and study as a dervish. He subsequently wrote classic spiritual and philosophical works, of which the best-known is *Revival of the Religious Sciences (Ihyā' ʿulūm al-dīn)*.

Widely known as the “proof of Islam”, he is regarded by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis as a “king-sized” saint; he was reportedly granted sainthood when, writing an urgent letter, he compassionately broke off to let a fly have its fill of his ink.⁹⁵⁸

Yusuf Hamadani (d 1140)

◆ *Yūsuf Hamadānī*

9th Sufi master on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain. Influential in the development of the Qadiri and Yasavi Sufi orders.

Abd al-Qadir Jilani (d 1166)

◆ *ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī*

Renowned spiritual guide after whom the Qadiri order is named. As a young man, was a junior associate of Yusuf Hamadani.

Abd al-Khaliq al-Ghujdawani (d 1179)

◆ *ʿAbd al-Khālīq al-Ghujdawānī*

⁹⁵⁸ Shaykh Hisham, *PC* 2, 2006: 131–32.

11th Sufi master on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain. Established the use of silent zikr, that is considered characteristic of the Naqshbandi order, and described eight principles of spiritual training, which are also considered characteristically Naqshbandi.

Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi (d 1192)

◆ *Shihāb al-Dīn Suhrawardī*

Influential philosopher, perhaps especially among Shi'as. Executed in Aleppo.

Fariduddin Attar (died c 1230)

◆ *Farīd al-dīn 'Attār*

Persian Sufi poet. Also compiled, in prose, *Memorial of the Saints*, reportedly inspired by a dictum of Yusuf Hamadani (ninth on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain) that people should try to read sayings of saints who had passed away.⁹⁵⁹

Ibn Arabi, often referred to as **Shaykh al Akbar**, the greatest Shaykh (d 1240)

◆ *Ibn al-ʿArabī; Shaykh al-akbar*

Writer of advanced practical books on Sufi studies, including the *Meccan Revelations*, that are used by contemporary Sufi masters. Also compiled the *Niche of Lights* (*Mishkāt al-Anwār*), a collection of Holy Hadith.⁹⁶⁰

Jalaluddin Rumi, often referred to as **Mevlana**, our protector (d 1273)

◆ *Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī* (Arabic); *Mevlānā* (Turkish).

⁹⁵⁹ Attar 1990.

⁹⁶⁰ In this context, a “niche” is a “*hollow, in a wall...* in which a lamp, placed therein, gives more light than it does elsewhere.” (Lane 1984: 1500) The *Mishkāt* has been translated into English as *101 Diamonds* (Hixon and al-Jerrahi 2002).

Sufi master, writer, and enduringly popular poet, whose teachings shaped the Mevlevi order, named in his honour.

Sari Saltuk (died c 1297)

◆ *Sari Saltuk* (Bosnian); *Sarı Saltık* or *Sarı Saltuk* (Turkish)

Sufi from Bukhara, influential in Romania and former Yugoslavia. In one account, he was a student of Ahmed Yasavi, who was a successor to **Yusuf Hamadani**, the ninth master on the Naqshbandi Golden Chain. Naqshbandi-Haqqanis helped to restore his tomb in Blagaj, Bosnia.

Bahauddin Shah Naqshband (d 1388)

◆ *Bahāʾ al-Dīn Shāh Naqshband*

17th Sufi Master on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain. His spiritual influence was such that the order was named after him. Asked by a scholar how to reach the Divine presence in his prayer, he reportedly replied, “By eating from the hard-earned sweat of your brow and by remembering God, Almighty and Exalted, inside your prescribed prayer and outside your prescribed prayer, in every ablution and in every moment of your life.”⁹⁶¹

Muhammad al-Jazuli (d 1465)

◆ *Muḥammad al-Jazūlī*

Inspired to write *Dalāʾilu ʾl-Khayrāt*, a widely used book of prayers for the Prophet, after meeting a young girl who raised the level of a well through her prayers.⁹⁶²

Khwaja Ubaydallah Ahrar (d 1490)

◆ *Khawāja ʿUbaydu ʾLlāh Aḥrār*

⁹⁶¹ Shaykh Hisham, *NSW*, 1995: 177.

⁹⁶² Larson 2005.

20th Sufi master on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain. A man of considerable political and cultural influence, notably on the Mughal Empire.

Imam Sharani (d 1565)

◆ *ʿAbd al-Wahhāb al-Shaʿrānī*

Egyptian Sufi and scholar of **fiqh**.

Ahmad of Sirhind (d 1624)

◆ *Aḥmad Sirhindī*

25th Sufi master on the Naqshbandi Golden Chain. Regarded as one of the highest of all saints, and a major renewer of the Naqshbandi order.

Khalid of Baghdad (d 1827)

◆ *Khālīd al-Baghdādī*

31st Sufi master on the Naqshbandi Golden Chain. Kurdish polymath, notable for his excellence in jurisprudence, astronomy, and poetry. Widely regarded as a spiritual renewer of the Naqshbandi order. Reportedly died of the plague after praying, “Whomever the plague touches, let it strike me instead and spare everyone in Damascus.”⁹⁶³

Jamaluddin Ghumuqi Husayni (d 1869)

◆ *Jamāl al-Dīn al-Ghumūqī al-Husaynī*

35th Sufi master on the Naqshbandi Golden Chain. Physicist, mathematician, polyglot, healer, Hadith master, writer, and survivor of torture.

⁹⁶³ Shaykh Hisham, *NSW*, 1995: 280–81.

[A governor] asked him to accept the position of religious authority. He refused, saying, “I will not work for oppressors.” Then the governor ordered him to take the position, but he ignored him and simply walked away. The governor then ordered that he be hanged. Shaykh Jamaluddin stood with the rope around his neck and was about to be executed, when the governor came running to the balcony shouting, “Stop! Stop! Don’t hang him!” In full view of the people [the governor] then threw himself off the balcony and died in the street below. They immediately removed the noose from Jamaluddin’s neck and let him go.⁹⁶⁴

Emir Abdel Kader (d 1883)

◆ *‘Abd al-Qādir*

Algerian resistance fighter and Sufi master. Buried next to Ibn Arabi, in Damascus.

Shaykh Sharafuddin (d 1936)

◆ *Sharaf al-Dīn*.

38th Sufi master on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain. Scholar and calligrapher.

Abd al-Qadir Siddiqi (d 1962)

◆ *‘Abd al-Qādir Ṣiddīqī*

Sufi healer and professor of theology of Hyderabad, India.

Grandshaykh Abdullah Dagestani (d 1973)

◆ *‘Abd Allāh* (Arabic) *Dāghistānī* (Ottoman Turkish, from Persian)

39th Sufi master on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain. Reportedly known from childhood for having “no veils on his heart”, for healing, and for insight into people’s character and destiny. An illiterate man who was nonetheless consulted by scholars. Naqshbandi-Haqqanis say that, on the Day of Judgement, the Scales for weighing people’s good and bad deeds will be on the site of Grandshaykh Abdullah’s mosque, in Damascus.

⁹⁶⁴ Shaykh Hisham, *NSW*, 1995: 311.

Bawa Muhaiyaddeen (d 1986)

◆ *Bāwā Muḥyī al-Dīn*

Sri Lankan Sufi, who settled in the USA. Spoken of highly by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, who believe Shaykh Nazim to be his spiritual inheritor.

Amma (d 1998)

◆ *Ammā*

Sufi healer of Hyderabad, India. Studied by Joyce Flueckiger.

Zindapir (d 1999)

◆ *Zinda Pīr*

Pakistani Naqshbandi-Mujaddidi Sufi master, studied by Prina Werbner.

Hajjah Amina, known as **Anne** (d 2005)

◆ *Hājja Āmina*. *Anne* is Istanbul dialect for “mother”. In modern Turkish, it also means “protector, patroness”, and is an “appellation of respect for elderly women or female saints.”⁹⁶⁵

Shaykh Nazim’s wife; a scholar and spiritual teacher in her own right.

Mahdi (born c 1930)

◆ *Mahdī*

Muhammad, son of Abdullah: called Mahdi, the rightly guided one. A just ruler and holy man who will battle the Antichrist in the Last Days. Has not yet manifested to mankind at large.

Shaykh Izz al-Arab al-Hawari (b 1942 or 1943)

⁹⁶⁵ Redhouse Büyük Elsozlüğü, 2004, p 37 in Turkish-English section.

◆ *ʿIzz al-ʿArab al-Hawārī*

Egyptian Shadhili shaykh; mentor to Valerie Hoffman.

Shaykh Hisham Kabbani (b 1945)

◆ *Hishām Qabbānī*

Longstanding deputy to Shaykh Nazim. Shaykh Nazim’s son-in-law. Prolific writer of books of spiritual instruction.

Shaykh Adnan Kabbani (1947–2018)

◆ *ʿAdnān Qabbānī*

Shaykh Hisham’s brother. Longstanding deputy to Shaykh Nazim.

Shaykh Mehmet (b 1957)

◆ *Şeyh Mehmet* (Turkish)

41st Sufi master on the Naqshbandi-Haqqani Golden Chain.

4. PEOPLE AND PLACES

Akhira, akhoret, ahiret

◆ Arabic *ākhirā*, Ottoman Turkish *ākhiret*, modern Turkish *ahiret*.

The afterlife.

Alawi

◆ Arabic *ʿalawī*

A Sufi order, a branch of the Darqawi order.

A Shi'a sect, unrelated to the Sufi order.

Alim

◆ Arabic *ʿālim*

A scholar, particularly in religion.

Aql

◆ Arabic *ʿaql*

Intellect.

Arsh

◆ Arabic *ʿarsh*

Throne; specifically, the heavenly Throne.

Awliya

◆ Arabic *awliyāʾ*

Plural of **wali** (see below). Sometimes used, by British dervishes, as the singular form.

Azazil

◆ Arabic *ʿAzāzīl*

Satan's name before he fell from his heavenly stations through pride.

Ba Alawi

◆ Arabic *bā ʿalawī*, Yemeni dialect for *banī ʿalawī*, "descendants of the family of Ali".

A Sufi order in which Yemeni **Sayyids** have been prominent teachers. Active in the Indian Ocean littoral.

Bayt al ma'mur

◆ Arabic *bayt al-ma'mūr*

The first house of worship at Mecca, taken up to the heavens at the time of Noah's flood.⁹⁶⁶

Buraq

◆ Arabic *burāq*

A heavenly creature. The Prophet Muhammad rode on one to the heavens.

Caliph

◆ Arabic *khalīfa*.

Spiritual deputy, vicegerent.

Dajjal

◆ Arabic *masīh al-dajjāl*, "false Messiah".

The Antichrist.

Darqawi

◆ Arabic *darqāwī*

A Sufi order; a branch of the **Shadhili** order.

Dede

◆ Turkish *dede*, grandfather.

Spiritual elder. Used for **shaykhs** in the **Mevlevi** order.

⁹⁶⁶ Hajjah Amina, *Lore 1*, 2008.

Dergah

◆ Persian *dargā*, “the king’s court... a mosque.”⁹⁶⁷ Turkish *dergah*.

A place graced by the spiritual presence of a holy person, and used for prayer and meditation.

Dervish

◆ Persian *darvesh*, Ottoman Turkish *dervish*.

A follower of **Sufi** teachings.

Dunya

◆ Arabic *dunyā*

The material world; the world of appearances.

Efendi

◆ Turkish *efendi*.

A form of address indicating respect.

Ghawth

◆ Arabic *ghawth*

The Deliverance; a saint who intercedes on behalf of mankind.

Haqqani

◆ Arabic *ḥaqqānī*, from *ḥaqq*: truth, reality, someone’s right.

The quality of hearing and obeying the truth, and acting in accordance with justice and the rights of all.

⁹⁶⁷ Steingass 2008: 513.

Hu

◆ Arabic *hū*, “He”.

Used by Sufis to refer to God (though God has no gender).

Iblis

◆ Arabic *Iblīs*: some grammarians claim a derivation from *ablasa*, “he despaired”.⁹⁶⁸

The devil. Previously known as **Azazil**.

Imam

◆ Arabic *imām*.

An exemplar, typically a leader.

For Shi’as: a spiritual inheritor of Ali.

For Sunnis: one of the four teachers after whom the **madhhabs** are named.

Jinn

◆ Arabic *jinn*.

A being made of “smokeless fire”. Like human beings, jinns have intellect and conscience.

Ka’ba

◆ Arabic *ka’ba*

The cubic structure built by Abraham and Ishmael in Mecca, on the former site of the **Bayt al-Ma’mur**. Rebuilt in the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Prayed towards by Muslims. Said to be a place where God’s mercy descends to earth.

Kafir

⁹⁶⁸ Lane 1984: 248.

◆ Arabic *kāfir*

One who covers up the truth; sometimes translated as “unbeliever”.

Kursi

◆ Arabic *kursī*

Throne, including the heavenly throne, the **Arsh**.

The “Divine Court.”

Lata’if

◆ Arabic *latā’if*

Plural of **latifa**

Latifa

◆ Arabic *latīfa*

An energy centre in the human body.

Madad, meded

◆ Arabic *madad*; Turkish *meded*.

Help.

Majdhub

◆ Arabic *majdhūb*

A holy madman: someone overwhelmed by spiritual attraction.

Majnun

◆ Arabic *majnūn*.

Madman.

Masjid

◆ Arabic *masjid*, “place of prostration”.

Mosque.

Mawlana

◆ Arabic *mawlānā*, “our protector”.

Sufi masters are sometimes spoken of or addressed as “Mawlana”.

Mevlevi

◆ Turkish *mevlevi*, from Arabic *mawlānā*.

A Sufi order named after Mevlana (Mawlana) Jelaluddin Rumi (d 1273). Shaykh Nazim was reportedly a teacher in the Mevlevi order before he began his Naqshbandi training.

Mubtadi

◆ Arabic *mubtadi*?

A beginner on the Sufi path (more advanced than a **muhibb**).

Muezzin

◆ Arabic *mu'adh^hdhin*.

Someone who chants the **azan**, the call to prayer.

Muhibb

◆ Arabic *muhibb*

One who loves his Sufi master, but has not yet learnt to “listen and obey”.

Mujaddid

◆ Arabic *mujaddid*

Spiritual renewer.

Murid

◆ Arabic *murīd*

A true disciple of a Sufi master. Also used by dervishes to describe any follower of a Sufi master.

Murshid

◆ Arabic *murshid*.

Spiritual guide.

Mushrik

◆ Arabic *mushrik*.

Someone who commits **shirk**.

Muslim

◆ Arabic *muslim*

Someone who has submitted to God; a sincere person.

Musta'id

◆ Arabic *musta'id*, "prepared"

A Sufi student who is not yet a **murid**, but is no longer a beginner.

Nabi

◆ Arabic *nabī*

A prophet. Prophecy is characterised not primarily by foretelling, but by submission to God leading to insight and inspiration.

Nafs, nafs al-ammara

◆ Arabic *nafs*, “self”; *nafs al-ammāra*, “inciting self”.

The ego; an “inciting ego” is one that controls the personality and leaves little room for selfless love or objectivity. The *nafs* can, however, be tamed and used to ascend to the heavens.

Naqshbandi

◆ Arabic (and hence Persian) *naqsh*, pattern, painting, engraving, map. Persian *band*, fastening.⁹⁶⁹

A Sufi order, probably the largest and most influential. Aims to connect people spiritually to God, whose Name is engraved on the heart.

Nasama, nasma

◆ Arabic *nasama*

The subtle (or energetic) body.

Pir

◆ Persian *pīr*.

A (spiritual) elder.

Qadir

◆ Arabic *qādirī*

⁹⁶⁹ *Band* has many meanings and connotations, including “desire” (Steingass 2008: 201).

An influential and widespread Sufi order, named after **Grandshaykh Abd al-Qadir Jilani** (d 1166). Shaykh Nazim was reportedly a teacher in the Qadiri order before he began his Naqshbandi training.

Qalb

◆ Arabic *qalb*

The heart.

Qutb

◆ Arabic *qutb*, “pole star”.

The pole star is fixed with all other stars revolving around it. The Qutb is fixed with all the other saints revolving around him also. The Qutb is the **Sultan of the Awliya**, the real Caliph and representative of Allah on earth...

Since the time of Adam (peace be upon him), and up until the Last Day, Allah Almighty has given four great saints the task of governing and looking after the whole world. When one goes, another comes to take his place...

Qutb al Bilal (*qutb al-bilād*) is in control of all countries. Qutb Irshad (*qutb irshād*) sends everyone to their destinies. The Pole of the Poles is Qutb Aktab (*qutb aqtāb*); he is responsible for the other Qutbs, and his spiritual body is in the Ka’aba. Qutb Mu[ta]ssarif (*qutb mutaṣarrif*) is the ‘treasurer’. He has the power to make everything in accordance with Allah’s will... They are unknown persons; perhaps the man pushing a cart in the market place is one of them!⁹⁷⁰

Rabbani

◆ Arabic *rabbānī*, from *rabb*, lord.

Someone who is a servant of his Lord and, therefore, of all creation; and, through humility, has a will at one with God’s.

Rasul

⁹⁷⁰ Shaykh Nazim, *MO I*, 1980: 6, 16. Descriptions of the poles vary.

◆ Arabic *rasūl*

Messenger. Used specifically for Divine Messengers, the most exalted prophets.

Rifa'i

◆ Arabic *rifāʿī*

A Sufi order. Shaykh Nazim is reportedly a master in it.

Ruh

◆ Arabic *rūḥ*

The spirit.

Sahaba

◆ Arabic *ṣaḥāba*, plural of *ṣāhib*, companion, although the singular form generally used in this context is *ṣaḥābī* (male) or *ṣaḥābiya* (female).

Disciples of the Prophet Muhammad.

Salafi

◆ Arabic *salafī*, from *salaf*, predecessor.

Someone who believes that, through bypassing classical scholarship and spirituality, including **madhhabs** and **tasawwuf**, they are following the path of the Prophet's disciples and their immediate successors.

Sayyid, sayyida

◆ Arabic *sayyid, sayyida*: "Lord", "Lady".

A spiritual master.

Also: a descendant of the Prophet.

Sayyidina, sayyidatina

◆ Arabic *sayyidinā, sayyidatinā*: “Our Lord”, “Our Lady”.

Our (spiritual) Master. Used to describe the Prophet Muhammad: *Sayyidinā Muḥammad*.

Shadhili

◆ Arabic *shādhilī*

A Sufi order. Shaykh Nazim is reportedly a master in it.

Shaykh

◆ Arabic *shaykh*.

An elder. Used by Sufis to refer to spiritual elders and teachers.

Shaytan

◆ Arabic *shayṭān*.

A devil. *Al-Shayṭān*, “the **Shaytan**”, is the Devil.

Siddiq

◆ Arabic *ṣiddīq*.

Truthful one. The title of **Abu Bakr**.

Silsila

◆ Arabic *silsila*

A chain of spiritual teaching.

Sufi

◆ Arabic *ṣūfī*.

Follower of an Islamic spiritual path; also used to describe a person who has reached holiness through following such a path.

Also used as an adjective to describe Islamic spirituality.

Sultan

◆ Arabic *sultān*.

Monarch.

Sultan ul-Awliya

◆ Arabic *sultānu 'l-Awliyā'*, “monarch of the friends”.

The highest of saints: a person who is so completely self-effacing and compassionate that he represents the Prophet. Grandshaykh Abdullah Dagestani and Shaykh Nazim are both referred to by this title.

Tekke, tekye

◆ Modern Turkish *tekke*, Ottoman Turkish *tekye*.

Dergah.

Ulama, ulema

◆ Arabic *‘ulamā'*

Plural of **alim**.

Umma

◆ Arabic *umma*

A nation. The *umma* of the Prophet Muhammad is often said by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis to be mankind; or all of creation.

Wahhabi

◆ Arabic *wahhābī*.

Followers of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (d 1792), who aimed to renew Islam by eliminating **bid'a** and **shirk** (as he understood them).

Wali

◆ Arabic *walī*, “friend”.

Saint, “friend of God.”

Zawiya

◆ Arabic *zāwiya*, “corner”.

Dergah.

5. PRAYERS, PRACTICES, & RELATED TERMS

Adab

◆ Arabic *adab*.

Good manners, right conduct.

Ahadith

◆ Arabic *aḥādīth*

Plural of **hadith**.

Asr

◆ Arabic *‘aṣr*

The mid-afternoon prayer, traditionally prayed around halfway between noon and sunset. The third of the five standard daily **namaz** prayers. the others being **fajr**, between dawn and sunrise; **zuhr**, noon to mid-afternoon; **maghrib**, sunset; and **isha**, prayed between last and first light. Naqshbandi-Haqqanis are encouraged to pray each prayer as soon as its time begins.

Awwabin

◆ Arabic *awwābīn*, “foremost”.

A **namaz** of up to three sets of two prayer cycles, prayed between **Maghrib** and **Isha**; see Appendix 3.

Awrad

◆ Arabic *awrād*.

Plural of **wird**.

Baraka

◆ Arabic *baraka*

Blessing, abundance.

Basmala

◆ Arabic *basmala*

Bismi ‘Llāhi ‘l-Raḥmāni ‘l-Raḥīm, “In the name of God, the Infinitely Caring, the Eternally Loving”: a statement with which Naqshbandi-Haqqanis are advised to begin all things.

Bay'a

◆ Arabic *bay'ā*

Vow of allegiance given to a Sufi.

Bid'a

◆ Arabic *bid'ā*

Innovation. Sufis are sometimes accused of **bid'a**: for instance, for using the **tasbih**. Naqshbandi-Haqqanis say that their practices can be traced to the Prophet: either through traditional records of the **Sunna**, or through being passed directly from the Prophet to Naqshbandi saints, by **Uwaysi** communication.

Dala'il ul-Khayrat

◆ Arabic *Dalā'ilu 'l-khayrāt*, "Guide to Good Works".

A book of **salawat** composed by Muhammad al-Jazuli (d 1465).

Darood

◆ Persian *durūd*.

A blessing or eulogy, in particular a prayer for the Prophet.

Du'a

◆ Arabic *du'ā*

Prayer. Used to describe prayers other than **namaz** or standard **zikrs**.

Duha

◆ Arabic *duḥā*

A **namaz** prayed in the late morning, of up to four sets of two prayer cycles (or two of four); see Appendix 3.

Edeb, edep

◆ Turkish *edeb, edep*, from Arabic *adab*.

Adab.

Edeb ya hu

◆ Turkish *edeb*; Turkish *yahu*, “See here!” or “Oh God!”; or Arabic *yā hū*, “O He!”, where *hū* refers to God.

“Mind your manners” or “Remember that all comes from God, and behave accordingly”.

Fajr

◆ Arabic *fajr*.

The first of the five standard daily **namaz** prayers, prayed between dawn and sunrise.

Fana

◆ Arabic *fānā*?, “annihilation”.

Utter absorption, through self-effacement, in holiness.

Fatiha

◆ Arabic *Fātiḥa*, “opening”.

The first chapter of the Koran.

Fatwa

◆ Arabic *fatwā*.

Legal opinion.

Fiqh

◆ Arabic *fiqh*.

The academic discipline and corpus of Islamic law.

Hadith

◆ Arabic *ḥadīth*

A saying of the Prophet Muhammad.

Hadith Qudsi

◆ Arabic *ḥadīth qudsī*

A “holy **hadith**”: a **hadith** sent by God to the Prophet Muhammad, and communicated in the Prophet’s own words.

Hadra

◆ Arabic *ḥadra*, “presence”, “place of presence”, or “vicinity”.

A form of **zikr** associated with the **Qadiri** and **Shadhili** Sufi orders, but practised by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, reportedly through Shaykh Nazim’s mastership in the Qadiri and Shadhili orders.

Hajj

◆ Arabic *hajj*

Pilgrimage to Mecca, with specific prayers done at Mecca, Arafat, Mina, and Muzdalifa, on specific days of the Islamic lunar year. Naqshbandi-Haqqanis consider it remiss to do Hajj without visiting the Prophet in Medina.

Halvet

See **Khalwa**

Hanafi

◆ Arabic *Ḥanafī*, from Imam Abu Hanifa.

One of the four surviving schools of Sunni **fiqh**. The most active and widespread. Followed by Shaykh Nazim and by most Naqshbandi-Haqqanis.

Haram

◆ Arabic *ḥaram*, “sacred place”.

Used to describe the holy sanctuaries of Mecca and Medina.

◆ Arabic *ḥarām*, “out of bounds”.

Practices that are forbidden by God.

Hawa

◆ Arabic *hawā*

Lust, selfish desire. Unrelated to *Ḥawwāʾ*?, Eve.

Hijra

◆ Arabic *hijra*

Migration: specifically, the Prophet’s migration, accompanied by Abu Bakr, from Mecca to Medina.

Ijaza

◆ Arabic *ijāza*

Permission from an appropriate authority.

Ilham

◆ Arabic *ilhām*

Inspiration.

Iman

◆ Arabic *imān*.

Faith.

Irfan

◆ Arabic *ʿirfān*.

A term used by Shi'as to describe mystical knowledge.

Isha

◆ Arabic *ʿishāʾ*

The fifth of the five daily standard **namaz** prayers, prayed at night.

Ishraq

◆ Arabic *ishrāq*

A **namaz** of two cycles, prayed at the start of the working day, from around 10 minutes after sunrise.

Ism-i Azam, Ismu 'l-Azam

◆ Persian *ism-i aʿzam*, Arabic *ismu 'l-aʿzam*

The Greatest Name of God.

Isnad

◆ Arabic *isnād*

A chain of transmission of Hadith.

Isra

◆ Arabic *isrāʾ*?

The Prophet Muhammad's Night Journey to Jerusalem.

Janaza

◆ Arabic *janāza*

Funeral. *Ṣalātu 'l-janāza* is the funeral prayer.

Jihad

◆ Arabic *jihād*

The fight against evil: which, for Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, is essentially the fight against the ego's urging to selfishness and self-centredness. *Jihād* can occasionally be military, but, for Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, most war falls ethically and spiritually well short of *jihād*: even a "just war" can be an excuse to unleash the ego, rather than train it.

Juma

◆ Arabic *jumʿa*

Friday; specifically, the Friday congregational **namaz**.

Juz

◆ Arabic *juzʿ*?, a part.

One-thirtieth of the **Koran**.

Kalam

◆ Arabic *kalām*

Theology.

Kalima

◆ Arabic *kalima*, “word”.

The statement of faith, *lā ilāha illa ‘Llāh Muḥammadun ‘I-Rasūlu ‘Llāh*: “[There is] no god but God; Muhammad is His Messenger”. Additionally, Jesus is *kalimatu ‘Llāh*, the “word of God.”

Khalwa

◆ Arabic *khalwa*

Seclusion prescribed by a **Sufi** teacher.

Khalwat dar anjuman

◆ Persian (from Arabic) *khalwat*, Persian *dar anjuman*, “in the crowd”.

“Seclusion in the crowd”: being with God and the spiritual master in the midst of everyday life.

Khatm al-Khwajagan

◆ Arabic (and hence Persian) *khatm*, “seal” or “completion”; Persian *khwājagān*, masters.

“Seal of the [Sufi] masters”: the weekly **zīkr** done by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis in congregation.

Khayr

◆ Arabic *khayr*

Good.

Koran

◆ Arabic *Qurʿān*

God's word, as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. For Naqshbandi-Haqqanis, a person wishing to make good use of the Koran needs a guide: the Prophet, and the saints serving the Prophet.

Kufr

◆ Arabic *kufr*

Covering up the truth. Someone who commits *kufr* is a *kāfir*.

Lawh-i Mahfuz

◆ Persian, from Arabic *lawḥ*, "tablet", *maḥfūz*, "guarded", "preserved".

The heavenly tablet on which each person's destiny is written. Can be read by the highest saints.

Madhhab

◆ Arabic *madhhab*.

A school of *fiqh*. Four active schools of Sunni *fiqh* are said to exist: the Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki, and Hanbali schools. Salafis, more or less by definition, claim to be without *madhhabs*.

Maghrib

◆ Arabic *maghrib*

The fourth of the five daily standard **namaz** prayers, prayed at sunset.

Miraj

◆ Arabic *miʿrāj*

The Prophet's ascent through the heavens to the Divine Presence.

Miswak

◆ Arabic *miswāk*.

Toothbrush made from a thin, fairly straight, chewed twig.

Mufti

◆ Arabic *muftī*.

A Sunni scholar who heads a legal system. Shaykh Nazim was the Mufti of Cyprus.

Muraqaba

◆ Arabic *murāqaba*

Sufi meditation, which includes connection of the dervish's heart to the Shaykh's, and through him to the Prophet.

Najat

◆ Arabic *najāt*, "salvation".

A version of **tahajjud**; see Appendix 3.

Namaz

◆ Persian *namāz*

Characteristic "Islamic prayer" with body movements. See Appendix 3.

Rabita

◆ Arabic *rābiṭa*

The spiritual bond between the Shaykh and the student.

Rahma

◆ Arabic *rahma*

Mercy, grace, pity, love, care.

Raka, rakat

◆ Arabic *rakʿa*, Turkish and Urdu *rakat*.

A cycle of **namaz**; see Appendix 3.

Sadaqa

◆ Arabic *ṣadaqa*

Charity.

Salat

◆ Arabic *ṣalāt*

Prayer, specifically **namaz**.

Salawat

◆ Arabic *ṣalawāt* (plural of *ṣalāt*)

Prayers for the wellbeing of the Prophet; and often, in addition, his family, disciples, the Prophet Abraham and his family, and so on through widening circles of grace.

Blessings.

Saltanat

◆ Ottoman Turkish *salṭanat*, from Arabic *sulṭān*

Lordship, dominion.

Shafi'i

◆ Arabic *shāfiʿī*, from Imam Shafi'i.

One of the four surviving schools of Sunni **fiqh**.

Shariah

◆ Arabic *sharīʿa*

Code of ethics and conduct, often externalised as (and misleadingly limited to) **fiqh**.

Sharr

◆ Arabic *sharr*

Evil.

Shirk

◆ Arabic *shirk*

Treating others (and, at root, one's own ego) as though they were God.

Silat

◆ Malay *silat*. Etymology debated, but some dervishes associate *silat* with **salat**.⁹⁷¹

A martial art.

Sohbet

◆ Turkish *sohbet*, from Arabic *ṣuḥba*, companionship or mastery.

An association or conversation; specifically, a talk given by a Sufi master, or time spent with a Sufi master.

Sunna, Sunnah

⁹⁷¹ Stjernholm (2005: 44) noted a folk etymology from *silāḥ*, Arabic for “weapon” (a word with connotations of self-defence: Lane, 1984: 1402).

◆ Arabic *sunna*.

Way of conduct or life. Usually refers to the life-example of the Prophet Muhammad.

Sura, Surah

◆ Arabic *sūra*.

One of the 114 “chapters” of the Koran.

Tahajjud

◆ Arabic *tahajjud*

A **namaz** prayed on waking in the night (between last and first light), preferably in the last third of the night. Much emphasised by Naqshbandi-Haqqanis.

Tajalli

◆ Arabic *tajallī*

Manifestation of the grace or attributes of God.

Tariqa

◆ Arabic *ṭarīqa*

The Sufi spiritual path; or, one of the Sufi orders intended to help people follow that path.

Tasawwuf

◆ Arabic *taṣawwuf*

Sufi practice and training. Often translated as “Sufism”, which, misleadingly, implies a creed rather than a discipline.

Tasbih

◆ Arabic *tasbīḥ*

A set of prayer beads. Also *ṣalātu 'l-tasbīḥ*, a type of **namaz**; see Appendix 3.

Tawba

◆ Arabic *tawba*, “turning back”.

Repentance.

Uwaysi

◆ Arabic *Uwaysī*, from *Uways*, a disciple of the Prophet.

A spiritual connection to the Prophet, or to a **sultan ul awliya**, made in the absence of physical meeting.

Wazifa

◆ Arabic *wazīfa*.

A personally prescribed **wird**.

Wird (plural **Awrad**)

◆ Arabic *wird*, *awrād*

Regular **zīkr**.

Wudu

◆ Arabic *wuḍūʿ*?

Washing before prayer.

Zīkr

◆ Arabic *dhīkr*, “remembrance”.

Prayers characteristic of Sufis.

Zuhr

◆ Arabic *zuhr*

The second of the five standard daily **namaz** prayers, prayed between noon and mid-afternoon.

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N E W S L E T T E R S , & S E L E C T E D W E B S I T E S

Lichtblick. "Weekly from the Black Forest."⁹⁷³

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⁹⁷³ I read edition 19, dated 17 September 1999.

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