

8 The self (*nafs*) and her transformation¹

Introduction

The question ‘What is the self that is transformed?’ has, from the perspective of medieval Arabic literature, an intriguing semantic aspect. The immediate equivalent for ‘self’ in Islamic mystical literature, with which this book is concerned, is *nafs*. This, as dictionaries will testify, is a homonym for a variety of meanings, ranging from ‘soul’ and ‘spirit’ to ‘appetite’ and ‘desire’. It also designates reflexivity; thus, *nafsī* denotes ‘myself’, *bi-nafsihi* – ‘by himself’ and so on. This equivocalness made possible the employment of the term in two disparate meanings by two disciplines, both interested in psychological questions. In the psychophilosophical terminology that was coined during the process of translating Greek into Arabic, *nafs* became the equivalent of Greek *psyche* (or Latin *anima*) and was hence understood as ‘soul’, essentially a subtle and transcendent substance.²

Thus, for example, for Ibn Sīnā, one of the most influential Islamic philosophers of the Middle Ages, “*nafs*, in relation to ‘matter’ in which it resides [...] deserves to be called ‘form’ (*ṣūra*), and in relation to the perfection of a species which it brings about [...] deserves to be called ‘perfection’ (*kamāl*)”.³ In Sūfī psychology, on the other hand, *nafs* became, primarily, the designator of a negative, earth-bound fiery entity that needs to be constantly condemned and watched over.⁴ In addition, the reflexive aspect of the term yielded a discourse on *nafs* that was centred around egocentricity and selfishness. Although classical Sūfism and medieval Islamic philosophy represent two autonomous disciplines, each with its own distinct terminology, neither can be said to have been impervious to the other. Awareness of the two contrasting meanings of *nafs* is evident, for example, from the following definition offered by Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), a prolific popularizer of Sūfism who was well versed in (albeit critical of) philosophy:

The term *nafs* has two meanings. The one relates to that entity in man in which the power of anger and the power of desire are found. This use is the most prevalent among the Sūfīs. For them *nafs* means the element in man that includes all the blameworthy qualities [...] The second meaning is [that of] the subtle entity [...] that is man’s true reality, soul (*nafs* [!]) and essence.⁵

In what follows, I propose to discuss the transformation of *nafs* in the sense “most prevalent among Sūfis”, namely, the inferior aspect of the human psycho-physical constitution. It should be noted that modern scholarship seldom reflects al-Ghazālī’s fine awareness of the ambiguity of *nafs*. Perhaps this is because scholars are often interested in either one or the other of the two disciplines in which *nafs* is used as a *terminus technicus*. To those interested in philosophical psychology, there is nothing odd in rendering *nafs* as ‘soul’ or even as ‘spirit’. In the second edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, for example, the author explains that “since the two concepts of *nafs* and *rūh* are so closely connected, both will be considered here”, namely, under *Nafs*.⁶ For those accustomed to Sūfī vocabulary, however, such rendering fails to convey the overriding negative understanding of *nafs* in Sūfī mystical psychology.⁷ Therefore, it is hardly surprising that most translators of Sūfī texts exhibit inconsistency and uncertainty when they encounter the term *nafs*: Should it be rendered soul, lower soul, carnal soul, appetitive soul, self, lower-self, impulsive self, instinctual self, ego – or any combination of these options?⁸

A negative view of *nafs* is intrinsic not only to Sūfis but also to traditional authors with an ascetic or moralistic leaning. A prophetic tradition often quoted in pietistic literature sums up this attitude succinctly: “Your worst enemy is the *nafs* that lies between your sides” (*a‘dā ‘aduwwika ‘l-nafs bayna janbayka*).⁹ Since *nafs* is considered an enemy, war has to be waged against her. But the *nafs*, in this imagery of battling and enmity, does not stand alone. The scope of pietistic militancy is widened when other ‘enemies’ enter the war zone. These, traditionally, are Satan (*al-shayṭān, Iblīs*), who often, as in Gnostic and Christian writings, is designated the Adversary (*al-‘aduww*), and the base inclination (*al-hawā*).¹⁰ Against this triad, the devout Muslim, Sūfī or otherwise, is urged to wage the ‘greater holy-war’ (*al-jihād al-akbar*).¹¹

Adverse as the *nafs* may be, it is seen by Sūfī authors as a component of human nature that can be transformed. In fact, the ideal of the transformation of the self and her bad qualities is a *sine qua non* in Sūfism. It stems from an outlook that couples the sombre characterization of *nafs* with an optimistic view of change. It is that very culpable nature of man that in the end, when transformed, ennoble him. Static goodness, such as that of angels, is deemed inferior to that which man acquires through repentance and effort.¹²

A simplified, yet adequate, definition of Sūfism could easily be ‘a practical and devotional path that leads to the transformation of the self from its lowly instinctual nature to the ultimate state of subsistence in God – a state in which all blameworthy traits fall away’. It is from this vantage point that Sūfī authors see the transformation of qualities, *tabdīl al-akhlāq*, as the process whereby a holy man, the friend of God (*al-walī*), is forged out of faulty human nature. Significantly, one of the highest ranks in the mystical hierarchy is reserved for the *abdāl*, the ‘Substitutes’. These are holy men and women,¹³ usually forty in number, without whom the world cannot subsist. The term *abdāl* derives from a verbal root, *b d l*, that denotes transposition and substitution. Hence, according to the standard explanation, the *abdāl* are so called because whenever one of

them dies, God substitutes (*baddala*) another for him. Yet, within Šūfī circles, an additional explanation circulated: They are so called because they have transformed (*baddalū*) their base qualities.¹⁴

The idea of the transformation of the self has been understood to rest upon three Qur'ānic verses which address *nafs* explicitly. The first verse addresses the *nafs* as "that which incites to evil" (*al-nafs al-ammāra bi 'l-sū'* – Q. 12:53); in the second, she is designated "the *nafs* that blames" (*al-nafs al-lawwāma* – Q. 75:2); and in the third she is described as "the serene self" (*al-nafs al-muṭma'inna* – Q. 89:27). These three designations, culled from disjoint locations, were seen, when juxtaposed in the foregoing order, as a paradigm for the progressive transformation of the lower-self through effort, discipline, introspection, and, ultimately, divine grace, into the desired state of fulfilment.¹⁵ This Qur'ānic paradigm gave rise to two distinct attitudes. One is eschatological, exhibited mainly in the pietistic literature, in which the apotheosis of *nafs* comes about when, after the death of the body, the serene self, in everlasting paradisiacal bliss, will reap the fruit of its former devotion.¹⁶ The other is mystical, in which the thrust of the transformative process is in what is experienced and achieved during one's lifetime. According to the latter, the image of serenity implies a self, stripped of worldly attachments and empty of fears or hopes, fulfilled simply by its existential, hence timeless, proximity to God.

There has existed in Islam since its formative period a rich literature advocating moral attitudes and ascetic norms of behaviour and, consequently, interested in the topic of harnessing self and desires. This homiletic literature, however, is hardly interested in a deeper psychological transformation of the self, a transformation that will allow an epiphanic experience. Hence, despite many overlaps, one can clearly discern two separate corpora of literature: pietistic and mystical. The extracts chosen to be highlighted and discussed in what follows, mostly from the writings of eighth- and ninth-century authors, exhibit a psycho-mystical discourse on self transformation that allows us to conjecture that mystical disciplines, designed to transform the *nafs* in order to prepare it for a transcendental encounter, existed independently of ascetic streams from very early on.

Since the pioneering studies of Ignaz Goldziher, there has been a tendency in Islamic scholarship to argue that asceticism (*zuhd*), in relation to mysticism (*taṣawwuf*), is an early, lesser stage, thus suggesting a gradual, linear transition from the former type of religious attitude to the latter.¹⁷ I doubt that such an outlook is accurate, either historically or phenomenologically. Rather, a distinction can be made between a pietistic approach that upholds asceticism as an idealized way of life and a mystical approach that sees asceticism as a mere technique, often a temporary technique, whereby inner transformation can be achieved. As an idealized way of life, it is attested in a rich pietistic literature extant in independent works¹⁸ or as part of large compilations.¹⁹ This pietistic literature and the ascetic tendencies that it reflects can hardly be confined to the limits of the early centuries of Islamic history only.²⁰ At the same time, there has existed in Islam, from very early on, a mystical literature in which ascetic vocabulary and imagery have been

used in the service of something that lies beyond the ascetic ideal. Asceticism, in this context, becomes no more than a station, a stage – *manzila*, *maqām* – on a mystical journey (*sayr*) or path (*tarīqa*), whose destination far outreaches it.²¹ It is this early discourse on the progressive stages of self transformation, leading to a mystical mode of existence, that will engage us in what follows.

The physiology of *nafs*

Sūfī authors teach that the *nafs* is a vital energy that resides and operates within the body and is associated with the downward-pulling energies of earth and earthly inclinations. It is identified as an earth-bound force counteracting the spiritual energy (*rūḥ*) that pulls man upward towards his ideal state of being.²² Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, who had a keen interest in the physiology of *nafs*, describes *nafs* as being inherent in the clay from which Adam was created. It interacts with desire (*shahwa*), which also resides in the body, originating in the fire of Hell, and relating to joy (*farah*), attractive loveliness (*zīna*), and the base inclination (*hawā*).²³ He describes it as the life force that enlivened the clay (*tīna*) from which Adam was created. Although it was activated by the breath of God, it is essentially an earthly life force inherent in the clay, or soil, itself. After materializing, it attached itself to the body's hollow interior (*jawf*). There it is located in the lungs, from where it moves about with the breath (*nafas*). It spreads with immense speed throughout the body via the blood vessels and interacts with other organic forces of a similar nature. One such force is desire (*shahwa*), which is seen by al-Tirmidhī as an organic substance with a capacity for growth, movement, and fermentation. The origin of desire is the fire of Hell, whence it retains a kinship to joy (*farah*), attractive loveliness (*zīna*), and the base inclination (*hawā*). Desire, too, takes residence in the body. It is located in the vicinity of *nafs*, within a subtle organ near the lungs. Both *nafs* and desire are characterized as hot, fiery winds that, when mobilized, awaken and kindle one another. The fast movement of *nafs* in the bloodstream produces pleasure (*ladhdha*), another animated energy on which the *nafs* feeds. Pleasure interacts with the base inclination (*hawā*), and this cluster of impulses, filled with vital, organic energy, reaches the bodily organs by means of the fast movement of the *nafs* through the bloodstream. One example of the consequence of such meeting of energies is the gushing forth of the seminal fluid (*mā' al-ṣulb*).²⁴

Al-Tirmidhī's analysis of the dynamics of the *nafs* and its association with pleasure, desire, and the base inclination is consistent, though hardly orderly or formal:

When the clay became alive, the *nafs* emerged, established herself within the interior of the body and exhaled. ... The *nafs* resides in the lungs and from here she breathes (*tatanaffasu*) due to the life force inherent in her. ... Between the heart and the lung God placed a subtle vessel from where a whizzing wind flows through the blood vessels. The origin of this wind is the fire [of Hell], it is created from this fire. ... In this fire joy and loveliness

are located. He called [this wind] desire. ... When, due to an incidental memory, this wind stirs up in its vessel, the *nafs* senses it and her [own] fire is kindled. ... The *nafs* is a turbid wind whose origin is earthy; she spreads within the blood-vessels and fills them up in less than an eye-blink. ... The origin of the base inclination (*hawā*) is the breath (*nafas*) of fire. When this breath emerges from the fire [of Hell], it carries with it desires [with which Hell-fire is surrounded]²⁵ that contain joy (*farah*) and attractive loveliness (*zīna*), and these it delivers to the *nafs*. Joy and loveliness arouse the *nafs*, due to the hot wind that is placed by her side in that subtle vessel [i.e. desire], and, in less than an eye-blink, she spreads within the blood vessels that pervade the whole body, from head to foot. From her movement within the body the *nafs* derives pleasure (*ladhdha*) and is cheered up. Hence her desire and pleasure.²⁶

This explicit description makes it clear that the power of *nafs* in Ṣūfī awareness is far from abstract or lofty. Its reality is seen as an unrelenting aspect of human organic nature, enmeshed in man's physical and psychological make-up. It is part and parcel of every physical activity, in fact, of each exhalation. The indestructibility of this life force captivated the imagination of a later Ṣūfī, Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā (d. 618/1221), a revered visionary from Central Asia who offers the following analogy in his autobiographical *Breaths of Beauty and Revelations of Majesty* (*fawā'ih al-jamāl wa-fawātiḥ al-jalāl*):

The *nafs* is alive (*wal-nafs ḥayya lā tamūtu*),²⁷ she does not die, she resembles a viper (*mithāluḥā mithāl" l-af'ā*). Slaughter it, pulverize its head into tiny bits, take off its skin, cook its flesh, eat it, and then, years later, when you place [the skin] in the heat of the sun – it will move. So also the *nafs*: when she unites with the fires of the base inclination and desire, as well as with the Satanic fires, she, too, moves. And from then on, she contaminates the bodily organs and robs them of their strength and nourishment till she thrives.²⁸

The training of the self: Shaqīq al-Balkhī's *Acts of Worship*²⁹

Descriptions of the means whereby the self is trained and harnessed can be culled from early texts. One of the earliest texts that describe the training of the *nafs* as part of a process of transformation is ascribed to Shaqīq al-Balkhī, a second/eighth-century mystic from Transoxiana.³⁰ In a short treatise titled *Rules of Conduct for Acts of Worship* (*Ādāb al-'ibādāt*),³¹ this early mystic uses rudimentary yet paradigmatic terminology and structure whose focus is a carefully designed discipline of self-transformation. By "acts of worship" (*'ibādāt*), he refers not to ritualistic acts that the religious law requires of all believers, but rather to superegregatory acts that "the people of sincerity" (*ahl al-ṣidq*), those who seek to transform the darkness (*ẓulma*) of their nature into light (*nūr*), take upon themselves voluntarily. Evidently, not all believers are thus inclined.³² Evidently,

too, the religious law by itself does not provide a sufficient transformative discipline.³³ In his treatise, Shaqīq outlines, with precision and authority that reflect sustained experience, the different practices that have to be applied at each of four progressive stages: abstention (*zuhd*), fear (*khawf*), longing for Paradise (*al-shawq ilā 'l-janna*), and, ultimately, love of God (*al-mahabba li 'llāh*).³⁴

A clear pattern that runs through all the stages emerges: (1) The discipline prescribes changes with each phase of the transformative journey; (2) The period assigned for each stage is limited to forty days, at the end of which the practices pertaining to it may be abandoned; (3) The attainment of each practice is described as inner lights located within the heart; (4) Parallel to the inner transformation, each type of practice produces a corresponding change in the practitioner's character and behaviour; (5) The transformative process starts off as an act of will but is complemented and reaches its completion by an act of divine grace; (6) The attainment of higher stages overrides, but does not cancel out, that of lesser ones; and (7) The personal transformation brings about changes in the practitioner's social status.

Abstention

The first step in the stage of abstention is to exercise hunger, or even, for those who are exceptionally keen, total fasting. Hunger is designed to train the self to cut off her desire for superfluous food and drink. By extension, this practice leads to a reduction not only in the consumption of food but also in the self's overall desire for superfluous things (*fuḍūl*). Eventually, when abstention is practised continuously for forty days, the *nafs* becomes detached from its previous attraction to all worldly things. Consequently, the first signs of transformation occur:

When day by day he proceeds to train his self in this manner and to educate her to cut off her desire for superfluous things, [God] plucks this desire out of his heart. On each day that he spends in this fashion, God lifts the darkness out of his heart and replaces it with light. After forty days, no darkness that has not been replaced by light remains in his heart. Then his heart becomes a glowing light, and the light of abstention settles within him.

(18, ll. 6–10)³⁵

The forty-day period is noteworthy. It defines the purposive and practical nature of the ascetic exercise. Going through periods of fasting, eating little, are not in themselves meritorious, and do not convey an ascetic ideal that should be adhered to indefinitely; it is rather a temporary means to an end. Shaqīq's attitude is evinced from the permissive advice he gives:

When [the seeker] reaches the end of this stage, if he wishes he may keep up the practices pertaining to it until the day he dies; or, if he wishes, he may move on to the next stage.

(18, ll. 17–8)³⁶

This is *askesis* or *riyāḍa* – the Arabic equivalent of the Greek term *proper*.³⁷ The training of the *nafs* is modelled upon any course of training, religious or otherwise, that demands a rigorous commitment and temporary abstinence. The merit lies not in the training or in the abstinence per se, but in the objective they are designed to achieve. In terms that have become characteristic of Islamic mysticism, the objective of *askesis* is the transformation of the dark energies governing human nature into luminous ones that herald a spiritual existence. The means whereby this objective is achieved is to deny the self that to which she has been accustomed.³⁸ The preceding extracts state clearly, that, when the inner transformation occurs, the light of abstention (*nūr al-zuhd*), which is an inner rather than outer state, overrides the need for external ascetic practices. Here, in Shāḡīq's words, is the effective result, even at this early stage of the *riyāḍa*, of this transformation:

[The seeker] then abides in the world, but he does not make the world his wish as other people do, he does not compete for it as other people compete, he does not aim to indulge in its pleasures, and he does not find joy in its companionship. It becomes minor in his eyes. He casts it aside. He relaxes from the weariness of pursuing [worldly things] and he causes his self to relax from all such weariness. When you see him, he is always strong, energetic, content, self-sufficient [*ghanī*, lit. rich], non-worrying, dignified. His face radiates the brightness of worshippers and his heart [contains] the light of ascetics. He has no need for the world apart from his basic nourishment. He is better than others.

(18, ll. 11–16)

Why forty days? Forty days is a paradigmatic unit of time allowing a course of training to take effect and changes to occur. It has become institutionalized in the practice of *chilla*, forty days of seclusion and fasting that a disciple is sometimes bidden to commit himself or herself to by his or her master.³⁹ Ascetic practices of forty days are, no doubt, pre-Islamic. The biblical origin of this temporal unit, reflected in the 'Tales of the Prophets', is acknowledged by Ṣūfī authors. Thus, for example, in *Kashf al-Maḥjūb* (*The Unveiling of the Veiled*), a popular Ṣūfī manual of the eleventh century, the author, 'Alī ibn 'Uthmān al-Jullābī al-Hujwīrī, writes:

The forty days' fast (*chilla*) of the saints is derived from the fast of Moses (Q. 7:142).⁴⁰ When the saints desire to hear the word of God spiritually, they remain fasting for forty days. After thirty days have passed, they rub their teeth; then they fast ten days more, and God speaks to their hearts.⁴¹

Al-Hujwīrī's explanation of the effect of the forty days' practice is blatantly physiological, almost medical and therapeutic:

Now, hearing the word of God is not compatible with the subsistence of the natural temperament: Therefore the four humors must be deprived of food

and drink for forty days in order that they may be utterly subdued, and that the purity of love and the subtlety of the spirit may hold absolute sway.⁴²

Fear

After completing the term by which the state of inner *zuhd* is achieved, the seeker moves on to the stage of fear (*khawf*). The practice here begins with contemplating death and educating the *nafs* to fear God intensely.⁴³ This practice results in an immediate softening of the heart.⁴⁴ Moreover, when the practice is done with sincerity and intention, God rewards it by transforming the initial, self-willed fear into fear on another scale, that which Shaqīq calls *mahāba*, awe, an intense emotion that God himself implants within the heart. When awe settles within the heart, it goes on growing and engendering light. After forty days, the effect of the inner light of awe becomes apparent on the practitioner's face, and he, too, becomes an object of awe. Shaqīq implies that the fear that such a man generates is more a feeling of reverence than an anxiety of malevolence.

Awe produces an emotional and behavioural profile which is different from that of abstinence. At this stage in the transformative process, the seeker is overwhelmed with grief. He is tearful, distressed, sleepless, anxious; he prays constantly and finds no pleasure in social engagements or in life in general. At the same time, despite being distraught, he holds on fast to his spiritual practice. In Shaqīq's words:

All this time his remembrance [of God] (*dhikr*) does not abate and his gratitude (*shukr*) does not diminish. Fear has dispelled indolence. He does not get weary, he does not sit idle, he does not tire.

(p. 19, ll. 11–13)

For the beholder, says Shaqīq, this is a very high stage. During these two practices, each maintained for forty days, the sincere seeker has achieved an elevated rank in the public's eye. This social observation suggests, no doubt, that, as a by-product of his effort, the seeker becomes a charismatic, a holy man. Shaqīq reiterates his former advice,

If he wishes, he can hold on to it till the day he dies; if he wishes, he can move on, without losing his former achievements, to the stage of longing for Paradise.

Longing for Paradise

For Shaqīq, this stage, if adhered to for another term of forty days, results in an even loftier transformation. The practice here is to contemplate the everlasting bliss of Paradise and its delights, such as the black-eyed beauties (*al-ḥūr al-ʿīn*), that await the blessed ones. As earlier, here too – when the practitioner, in earnest commitment, disciplines his self to endure the state of longing and its

practical requirements, God rewards him by implanting the light of longing in his heart. The stronger he sustains the practice, the stronger this inner light becomes. Eventually, after forty days,

[God] brings the light of longing in his heart to completion, so that the heart becomes overwhelmed by longing. [This state takes over] and makes him forget his [former state of] fear, so now he does not need to maintain it anymore, although the light of fear does not diminish, nor does it leave him.
(20, ll. 1–4)

The behavioural pattern of the seeker at this stage again changes. His evolving features now are generosity, attentiveness, sincerity, compassion and detachment; life's struggles and vicissitudes do not grieve or bother him. Thus,

When you see him, he is always laughing, rejoicing in what he has. He is neither miserable nor bountiful, he is not a slanderer, he does not indulge in faultfinding, and does not speak ill of people. He is the one [known as] the constantly fasting, the constantly standing up [at night for prayer] (*al-ṣawwām al-qawwām*).
(20, ll. 7–8)

This state exhibits light-hearted features that differ from the gloominess of the previous state of fear. As for its hierarchical position, it is “a stage higher and more noble than the stage of fear” (20, l. 9). But here, too, its temporality is clearly stated in the by now familiar advice,

If he wishes, he may stay in this stage till he dies; and if he wishes, he may move on to the stage of the love of God (*al-maḥabba li 'llāh*).
(l. 10)

Love of God

The highest, most noble, and most splendid is the stage of loving God. Not everyone attains this stage. It is reserved for those whose heart has become strengthened by certitude (*yaqīn*) and whose acts have been purified of blemishes and sins. As in previous stages, the light of love overrides all the lights of the previous stages, though they do not disappear or diminish. The intensity of the love for God that fills the heart outshines the lesser lights of abstention, fear, and longing, so that the seeker becomes oblivious of them. This stage starts with the following practice: the seeker motivates his heart to love all that God loves and to detest all that God detests. The beginning of this stage, too, is a self-willed practice that, when carried out with sincerity, is complemented with a corresponding God-inspired love whose light increases in the heart. Outwardly, this results in the practitioner himself becoming an object of love for both angels and human beings. The consolidation of this state brings about further changes

in character and behaviour: he becomes beloved, noble, intimate, mature, gentle, composed, and magnanimous, and he refrains from vile deeds and avoids leadership (*ri'āsa*).⁴⁵

When you see him, he is always smiling, patient, dignified, courteous, tactful, never gloomy, always bearing good news, avoiding sin, opposing liars, is never heard [to say anything] except what God loves. He is loved by all who hear him or see him. This is due to God's love for him.

(21, ll. 4–7)

Life with God

A short addendum by Shaqīq to *Ādāb al-ʿibādāt*, titled *A Chapter on the Stages of Sincerity* (*Bāb manāzil al-ṣidq*) and described by Nwyia, the editor, as “version abrégée”,⁴⁶ highlights the mystical climax of this discipline. Here, the author emphasizes the fact that not all who follow this path arrive at its ultimate destination. The purpose of this emphasis is to distinguish between three groups of seekers: those who do not go beyond the (combined) stage of abstention and fear – they are apparently attached to their asceticism; those who do not go beyond the stage of longing for Paradise – they seem to remain attached to their eschatological aspirations; and those who move beyond all these stages and reach God. Of the latter, Shaqīq says:

They become [held] in God's repose and mercy. Their hearts become attached to their Lord, and, when immersed in Him, they delight in secret discourse with Him (*munājātihi*). In their hearts they are presented with His mercy and kindness for which they aspire. It is He who takes over their hearts. It is He who, in their lifetime (*fī ʿl-dunyā*) becomes their companion, their peace of mind, their joy and the delight of their hearts.

(21, ll. 20–2)

This last paragraph describes the culmination of the process of transformation in a way that has become characteristic of early and later mystical lore in Islam. In fact, Shaqīq's two treatises as a whole contain most, if not all, of the ingredients of later descriptions. Written in a condensed yet authoritative pattern, they reflect a structured prescription that cannot be seen as simply “immédiate”, as Nwyia would have it.⁴⁷ Shaqīq's description of the stages of transformation, when compared with later compilations, may lack in detail and vocabulary, but does not lack a perspective based on sustained practical experience.

Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī's Ranks of Worshippers

A somewhat more expanded description, based on a terminology similar, though not identical, to Shaqīq's, was presented by al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī in *The Ranks*

of Worshippers According to Their Worship (*Manāzil al-‘ibād min al-‘ibāda*).⁴⁸ In a florid style, and with copious references to Qur’ān and Ḥadīth, al-Tirmidhī outlines seven progressive stages (*manāzil*):⁴⁹ repentance (*tawba*), abstention (*zuhd*), animosity towards the *nafs* (*‘adāwat al-nafs*), love (*maḥabba*), cutting off the base inclination (*qaṭ‘ al-hawā*), fear (*khashya*), and proximity [to God] (*qurba*). He, too, suggests an interaction between human discipline and divine help with emphasis on the latter – this is a sine qua non in any transformational process. For him, too, the ultimate stage is a mystical proximity to God rather than an eschatological bliss. According to al-Tirmidhī’s scheme, too, the locus of inner transformation is the heart in which God invests His lights, and its external manifestation is the changes that take place in character, behaviour, and social esteem. Finally, he, too, suggests that only a few cross all stages and reach the ultimate, mystical, state of nearness to God. Most seekers remain attached to one of the lesser stages. Accordingly, al-Tirmidhī distinguishes between three categories of men: The mystic, whom he describes as “confined by God” (*ḥabīs Allāh*); the “intermingled” (*mukhallat*),⁵⁰ who is confined by desires (*ḥabīs al-shahawāt*), and the infidel, who is confined by Satan (*ḥabīs al-shayṭān*) (103, ll. 9–10). Here is a passage culled from his description of those few who make it to the seventh stage:

God has servants who have crossed the [sixth station] crying out to Him, seeking refuge in Him from the tyranny of the base inclination, for it is alive in them. God then looks at them with respect, since He knows how utterly sincere they are in their devotion to Him. He then lifts the veil from them and reveals to them His Glory, and all intermediaries between Him and them are removed. He pulls down their selves’ desires, and their base inclinations collapse lifeless [...] At this point God takes command over their affairs. He places them under His wing and, for the rest of their lives, makes them in charge of His affairs. He [Himself] educates and watches over them and does not delegate this to anyone of His creation [...] They stand in front of their Lord looking out for His decrees [that unfold in] the vicissitudes [of their lives], and they go through them in joy and cheerfulness, swifter than an arrow. [This is] because after their inclinations and selves had died, they were revived in God. They are free and noble, the freemen of the Compassionate One (*muḥarrarū al-raḥmān*).⁵¹ He has freed them from enslavement to their inclination and has released them from its captivity [...] He joined them, and they became joined, the life [of inner struggle] expired and they stopped observing the self. In the seas of knowledge, fluttering under His government, they surrender to Him seeking His companionship. [They are] in the great Courtyard⁵² till they become strong by Him [...] and glorified in His glory. And they become intoxicated by His favour.⁵³

These prescriptions portray a rather radical outlook on spiritual achievement and moral merit. The beginning of the transformative journey is observed from the

vantage point of its end. Each stage is but a gateway to a higher one. The achievements at each stage are prone to becoming repetitive and as such, from the point of view of their transformative energy, they are mechanical and lifeless. At every stage of the journey the seekers are exposed to the danger of self-identification: the *nafs*, rather than being defeated by the ascetical practices and devotional experiences, ascribes them to herself and consequently becomes gratified and inflated.⁵⁴ Yet an end is envisaged, a stage at which the seeker can relax and give over his constant vigilance and inner struggle for a true mystical experience. He then reaches a stage that is beyond the arena of human effort. In fact, the transformation here is characterized by the ease with which acts of worship that had previously demanded combative effort are now attained. At this stage the practitioner is consumed by the intoxicating power of an intimate relationship with God. This intimacy, which reveals itself in polar feelings of love and awe, manipulates him to such an extent that the constraining physical features and the earthly, or fiery, temptations fall away without effort.

This vision of the apex of the transformative process is apparent also in the following passage by Abū Saʿīd al-Kharrāz, a ninth-century mystic from Baghdad:

Know, that those who have attained God and are near to Him, who have in truth tasted the love of God [...] have [gone through the stages of] piety, abstinence, perseverance, sincerity, truthfulness, trust, love, longing, intimacy and other good qualities [...] All this is with them, dwelling in their natures, hidden in their heart of hearts [...] This is their nourishment and their routine [...] Having attained [all these stages and qualities], they no longer feel worship and practice to be an effort, since it dwells within them at all times and in every state [...] And even in performing their religious duties they experience neither heaviness nor exertion, for their hearts have become overwhelmed by God's nearness. Thus, they worship Him without burden or labor [...] Their hearts are occupied only with God, for they have been overcome by God's nearness and love, by the longing for Him, the fear of Him, their reverence [for Him] and their exaltation of Him.⁵⁵

Formulae of mystical elevation

Beyond the disciplinary stages that address the psychological and ascetic aspects of self-transformation, there exist, according to Sūfī authors, further stages that are experienced, mystically, in the realms of the Divine. These mystical stages, which still retain a progressive outlook, are seldom described in detail, unless in (often later) visionary literature of the type written by Najm al-Dīn Kubrā.⁵⁶ In early writings, however, as well as in the didactic compilatory literature of the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries, there seems to be a tendency to condense these elevated stages into formulae, rather than descriptions. The following

statement by Abū Saʿīd al-Kharrāz, recorded by al-Qushayrī, is a fine example of such a formulaic description:

When God befriends one of His servants, He opens for him the gate of Remembrance (*dhikr*). When he finds pleasure in Remembrance, He opens for him the gate of Nearness (*qurb*). Then He lifts him up to the assemblies of Intimacy with Him (*al-uns bihi*). Then He seats him on the throne of Oneness (*tawhīd*). Then He lifts the veils in front of him and takes him into the abode of Singularity (*fardāniyya*) and reveals to him His Majesty and Might (*al-jalāl wal-ʿaẓama*). When his sight falls on God's Majesty and Might, he remains without inclination (*hawā*). Then the servant becomes chronically lost [in God] (*zamīn^{an} fāniy^{an}*) and he remains within God's protection. He then becomes free from the claims of his self.⁵⁷

The ascending stages according to this formula start with the practice of 'remembrance' (*dhikr*).⁵⁸ Based on a Qur'ānic verse, remembrance of God is understood to motivate God's counter remembrance of the seeker: "Remember Me and I shall remember you" (Q.2:152). From this mindful endeavour 'to remember', ensue, as Divine acts, mystical states, in which the seeker loses all initiative and is totally passive: he is taken effortlessly into the Divine realms of nearness, intimacy, oneness, singularity, majesty, and might. When s/he experiences the numinosity of these states, or stages, the transformation of the self becomes complete. The self and its allies, it appears, are incapable of subsisting in such experiential altitudes. In the preceding citation, the verbs *baqiya* – 'he remains without inclination' – and *faniya* – 'he is lost', allude to the complementary states of *fanā* and *baqā*, annihilation and subsistence, which are, according to most authors, among the highest mystical states to be attained or recorded.⁵⁹

The passive voice is highly suggestive in this type of description. It represents those stages in the transformative journey in which the initiative has been taken away from the seeker. In contrast to the ascetic phases in which an active war with the self is waged by means of determination and effort, the mystic now takes no active part in the powerful process through which he is shifted. He has become, as the Ṣūfī idiom goes, "as a corpse in the hands of the washers". In *The Journey of the Friends of God (Sīrat al-awliyā)*, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī offers a dynamic description of these supreme stages:

[God] places [the friend] at a rank, on condition that he should stay put till he is straightened. When, in the place of Nearness (*maḥall al-qurba*), he adheres to this condition and does not wish to carry out any act, he is transferred to the realm of Might (*mulk al-jabarūt*) to be straightened. There, his self is vanquished and subdued by the power of Might till she withers and becomes humble. From there he is transferred to the realm of Sovereignty (*mulk al-sulṭān*) to be improved [...] From there he is transferred to the realm of Majesty (*mulk al-jalāl*) to be educated, from there he is transferred

to the realm of Beauty (*mulk al-jamāl*) to be cleansed, then to the realm of Might (*mulk al-‘aẓama*) to be purified, then to the realm of Splendor (*mulk al-bahā’*) to be perfumed, then to the realm of Joy (*mulk al-bahja*) to be expanded, then to the realm of Awe (*mulk al-hayba*) to be reared, then to the realm of Compassion (*mulk al-raḥma*) to be moistened and strengthened and encouraged, then to the realm of Singularity (*mulk al-fardiyya*) to be nourished – Kindness nourishes him, Gentleness embraces him and holds him, and Love draws him near. Longing brings him close and then draws him near, then brings him close. [God’s] will brings him to Him, and then the most Gracious and Powerful welcomes him. He brings him near, then draws him close, then brings him near, then draws him close, then rejects him, then educates him, then communes with him, then lets go of him, then grips him. [From then on], wherever he is, he is in His Grip [...] When he reaches this place, all attributes end, and all discourse and expressions end. This is the ultimate arrival place of the hearts and minds.⁶⁰

Although this can be seen as a somewhat expanded description of a mystical ascent, it is still a schematic one that condenses the last transformative mystical phases of the journey into a formulaic sequence. The transposition from one divine realm to another does not seem to be capricious or random. It is designed, through a combination of shock and affection, to bring about a fundamental change in the seeker’s mode of existence. Each realm has its specific transformative impact. But throughout the duration of these vacillating experiences, the seeker must remain completely passive. His own self cannot participate in the process, because, in these last stages of transformation, she becomes annulled and powerless, taken over by a transcendent agent.

As for the new mode of existence in the wake of such a lofty experience, mystical literature claims that, for the few who reach the ultimate stages, the ordinary and the transcendent come together. These few are the ‘friends of God’, the *awliyā’*.⁶¹ This mode of being is exemplified by a *ḥadīth qudsī*, an extra-Qur’ānic divine dictum, which is probably the most frequently recorded tradition in *Šūfī* literature. According to this well-documented tradition, God says:

My servant does not come near to me by performing [anything but?] my commandments, but he comes [ever] near[er] to me by performing voluntary acts of worship (*nawāfil*) so that I love him. And when I love him, I become his ear, his sight, his tongue, his hand, his foot and his heart. He hears by Me, he sees by Me, he speaks by Me, he strikes by Me, he walks by Me, he grasps by Me. This is a servant whose mind has died away in the Supreme Mind and his greedy movements have calmed down in His grip.⁶²

When full transformation is attained, even the most elementary and ordinary activities are carried out through God and not through the *naḥs*. This, in sum, is the nucleus of the teaching of self-transformation: practice and discipline have a necessary but insufficient role to play; ultimately, it is a rare manifestation of the

blend of human effort with divine grace. The following aphorism (*ḥikma*, word of wisdom) of Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, a thirteenth-century Egyptian Ṣūfī, may aptly sum up and seal this chapter:

If you were to be united with Him
only after the extinction of your vices
and the effacement of your pretensions,
you would never be united with Him!
Rather, when He wants to unite you to Himself,
He covers your attribute with His Attribute
and hides your feature with His Feature.
Thus He unites you to Himself
by virtue of what comes from Him to you,
not by virtue of what goes from you to Him.⁶³

Notes

- 1 An earlier version of this chapter was published in David Shulman and Guy G. Stroumsa (eds), *Self and Self-Transformation in the History of Religions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 195–215.
For the use of the grammatical feminine to ‘self’ (*nafs*), see Chapter 2, n. 41; Chapter 12, n. 50 and the Introduction, n. 47.
- 2 On *nafs* in Islamic philosophy, see, for example, Ya‘qūb ibn Ishāq al-Kindī, *Risāla fī al-naḥs*, in *Rasā’il al-Kindī al-falsafīyya*, ed. M.‘A.H. Abu Rīḍah, Vol. 1 (Cairo, 1950), 273–80; al-Fārābī in Richard Walzer, *Al-Fārābī on the Perfect State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 165ff., 382ff.; Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’, *Rasā’il ikhwān al-ṣafā’ wa-khillān al-wafā’*, ed. Kh. Al-Zirikli, Vol. 2 (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-‘Arabiyyah, 1928), 325ff. (The 23rd epistle); Ibn Sīnā, *Kitāb al-naḥs [al-fann al-sādis min Kitāb al-shifā’]*, eds I. Madkur, G.C. Anawati and S. Zayd (Cairo, 1395/1975); al-‘Āmirī in E.K. Rowson, *A Muslim Philosopher on the Soul and Its Fate: Al-‘Āmirī’s Kitāb al-amad ‘alā l-abad* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1988), 106–7 *et passim*; Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ibn Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb al-akhlāq* (Beirut: al-Jāmi‘ah al-Amrīkiyyah fī-Bairut, 1966), 2ff. [=Zurayk (ed.), Beirut 1968, 5ff.], also in ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī, *Dirāsāt wa-nuṣūṣ fī ‘l-falsafa wa-l-‘ulūm ‘inda ‘l-‘arab* (Beirut: Dār al-madār al-islāmī, 1981), 59 (Arabic text); see also Alexander Altmann and S.M. Stern, *Isaac Israeli: A Neoplatonic Philosopher of the Early Tenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1958), 39ff., 108ff. *et passim*. For *nafs* as equivalent to *psyche*, see the Arabic translations of Aristotle’s *De Anima* in ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī, *Aristūtālīs fī al-naḥs* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Naḥḍah al-Miṣrīya, 1954), 3–88; also, Ibn al-Nadīm in Bayard Dodge, *The Fihrist of al-Nadīm: A Tenth-Century Survey of Muslim Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970), 604–5; F.E. Peters, *Aristoteles Arabus: The Oriental Translation and Commentaries of the Aristotelian Corpus* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), 40–5; Helmut Gätje, *Studien zur Überlieferung der aristotelischen Psychologie im Islam* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1971); Rafael Ramón Guerrero, *La recepción arabe del DE ANIMA de Aristoteles: Al-Kindī y Al-Fārābī* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1992); Rüdiger Arnzen, *Aristoteles’ DE ANIMA: Eine verlorene spätantike Paraphrase in arabischer und persischer Überlieferung* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1998). On the semantic complexity of the term ‘psyche’, see the discussion of A.M. Lorca, “Prologo”, in Salvador Gómez Nogaes, *La Psicología de Averroes: Commentario*

al-Libro sobre el Alma De Aristóteles (Madrid: Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia, 1987), 33ff.

- 3 Ibn Sīnā in F. Rahman, *Avicenna's De Anima* (Arabic Text), *Being the Psychological Part of Kitāb al-Shifā'* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 6; cf. Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', *Rasā'il*, ed. al-Zirikli, Vol. 3, 278–9: "As for the *nafs*, namely, the spirit (*rūh*), it is a celestial luminous substance ... it does not die nor is it annihilated, it subsists eternally."
- 4 Note that medieval philosophy, too, recognizes inferior aspects of soul. For the tripartite division of soul/*nafs* in philosophical literature, see, for example, Ikhwān al-Ṣafā', *Rasā'il*, ed. al-Zirikli, Vol. 1, 241–3 and Vol. 2, 325ff.; also, L.E. Goodman (trans.) *Ibn Ṭufayl's Ḥayy Ibn Yaqzān: A Philosophical Tale* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972), 170; Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn 'Abd al-Malik Ibn Ṭufayl, *Risālat Ḥayy ibn Yaqzān fī asrār al-ḥikma al-mushriqiyya*, ed. and trans. L. Gauthier (Beirut: 1936), 65–6 (= Goodman 1972, 124).
- 5 See Abū Ḥamid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ghazālī, *Rawḍat al-tālibīn wa-'umdat al-sālikīn* (Beirut: Dār al-Nahḍah al-Ḥadīthah, 1966), 60 (Ch. 6); also, al-Ghazālī *Ihyā' 'ulūm al-dīn*, Vol. 3 (Beirut: Dār al-qalam, n.d.), 5 (= *Bayān ma'nā al-nafs wa 'l-rūh wa 'l-qalb wa 'l-aql*); cf. al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla* (Beirut: 1410/1990), 86–7: "The *nafs* of a thing, in ordinary language, means its existence (*wujūd*). But [...] the [Ṣūfīs] [...] mean by *nafs* those characteristics of man that are deficient and those of his qualities and deeds that are condemnable." Note the tendency of some later Ṣūfī authors to synthesize philosophical and Ṣūfī terminologies in their discourse on *nafs* – see, for example, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191), *Kitāb al-lamaḥāt*, ed. E. Maalouf (Beirut: Dār al-nahār li-al-nashr, 1969), 116ff.; Muhyī al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn 'Alī Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 638/1240), *Kitāb 'uqlat al-mustawfiz*, in *Kleinerer Schriften des Ibn al-'Arabī*, ed. H.S. Nyberg (Leiden: Brill, 1919), 95–6.
- 6 See E.E. Calverley, "Nafs", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, especially 881, sec. 5. This article is a reprint, with bibliographical updating by I.R. Netton of the first edition of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* – see *Et*¹, Vol. 3, 827–30; see also Calverley, "Doctrines of the Soul (*nafs* and *rūh*) in Islam", *Muslim World* 33 (1943): 254–64.
- 7 See, however, the fine discussion on the complexity of the term *nafs* in the mystical teaching of Sahl al-Tustarī, a third/ninth-century Ṣūfī, in Gerhard Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam: The Qur'ānic Hermeneutics of the Ṣūfī Sahl al-Tustarī* (d. 283/896) (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), 243ff., and note the references cited in nn 48–50; see also Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 112ff. *et passim*; for a 'negative' *psyche* versus a 'positive' *pneuma* in Gnosticism, see Josef van Ess, *Die Gedankenwelt des Ḥārīt al-Muḥāsibī* (Bonn: Orientalisches Seminar der Universität Bonn, 1961), 31ff., and cf. Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion: The Message of the Alien God and the Beginnings of Christianity* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1963), 124.
- 8 See, for example, B.R. Von Schlegell (trans.), *Principles of Sufism by al-Qushayrī* (Berkeley, CA: Mizan Press, 1990), 97, also Sara Sviri, review of "B. R. von Schlegell, trans. *Principles of Sufism by al-Qushayrī*", *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 19 (1995), 280; note also n. 5 above, the translation of al-Ghazālī, *Rawḍat al-tālibīn*, 60.
- 9 See Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-zuhd al-kabīr*, ed. 'Amir Aḥmad Ḥaydar (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-kutub al-thaqāfiyya, 1987), 156–7 and cf. 163: "He who fights a holy war is he who fights his self" (*al-mujāhid man jāhada nafsahu*); see also al-Ḥārīt b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī, *Risālat al-mustashhidīn*, ed. 'Abd al-Fattāḥ Abū Ghadda (Halab: Maktabat al-Maṭbū'āt al-Islāmiyya, 1964), 47; al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-riyāḍa wa-adab al-nafs*, eds A.J. Arberry and A.H. Abdel-Kadir (Cairo: Maṭba'at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1947), 26, and al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Manāzil*

al-‘ubbād min al-‘ibāda, ed. ‘Abd al-Raḥīm al-Sā’ih (Cairo: al-Maktab at-Taḳāfi, 1988), 76, and the references cited there.

- 10 See, for example, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-riyāḍa*, 44: “Accordingly, ‘Umar said in his sermon: ‘The Adversary is with this world; he lies in ambush with the base inclination and employs his craftiness by means of desires’”; cf. van Ess, *Die Gedankenwelt des Hārīt al-Muḥāsibī*, 57ff. For a comparative study of Satan as the Adversary, see J.B. Russell, *The Devil: Perception of Evil from Antiquity to Primitive Christianity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 200ff.; Alexander Altmann, “The Gnostic Background of the Rabbinic Adam Legends”, *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 35 (1945): 371–91; P.J. Awn, *Satan’s Tragedy and Redemption: Iblis in Sufi Psychology* (Leiden: Brill, 1983).
- 11 For the prophetic tradition on which the distinction between the lesser holy war (al-jihād al-aṣḡhar) and the greater war relies, see R. Gramlich (trans.), *Die Nahrung der Herzen: Abū Ṭālib al-Makkīs Qūt al-Qulūb*, Vol. 2 (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1994), 32 (32.46–47); also, ‘Alī ibn ‘Uthmān al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, trans. R.A. Nicholson (London: Luzac & Co., 1976 [1936]), 200; cf. A.J. Arberry (trans.), *The Doctrine of the Sufis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979 reprint), 88 (Ch. 40); on Ṣūfī ‘psychomachia’ and its antecedents in Late Antiquity, see Bernd Radtke, “Psychomachia in der Sufik”, in *Recurrent Patterns in Iranian Religions from Mazdaism to Sufism*, ed. P. Gignoux (Paris, 1992), 135ff.
- 12 See, for example, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-riyāḍa*, 78:

Angels are devoid of desires, limbs, bodies, hollow [parts] and needs. They need no food, no drink, and no clothes [...] They are thus liberated from the harms and needs that beset human beings, as well as from the tricks of the Adversary. In accordance with [divine] governance (*tadbīr*), God created them by means of His saying, ‘Be!’ His dealings with them are in the realm of Might (*mulk al-jabarūt*) and their locations (*maqāwim*) are in the realm of Majesty (*mulk al-jalāl*). As for us, He brought us into creation by His hand, and His dealings with us are in the realm of Compassion and Mercy (*mulk al-ra’fa wa ‘l-rahma*), and our locations are in the realm of Love (*mulk al-maḥabba*). Angels are bound by one state only which they never leave nor are they ever moved out of. But human beings [...] are moved from one state to another, and all their states are service [to God].

(for the unusual plural form *maqāwim*, cf. al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Sīrat al-awliyā’*, 37 (=Bernd Radtke and John O’Kane [trans. and eds], *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism: Two Works by al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī* [Richmond: Curzon Press, 1996, 96–9]); cf. also al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Nawādir al-uṣūl fī ma’rifat Ahādīth al-rasūl* (Istanbul, 1294/1878), 16, and note the prophetic tradition (l. 5), “The believer is nobler [in the eyes] of God than the [most] intimate angels” (*inna ‘l-mu’min akram ‘alā ‘llāh min al-malā’ika al-muqarrabīn*), for a version of which, see A.J. Wensinck, *Concordance et indice de la tradition Musulmane* (Leiden: Brill, 1933–1969), 6, 3; see also al-Hārith ibn Asad al-Muḥāsibī, *Kitāb al-Ri’āya li-ḥuqūq Allāh*, ed. Margareth Smith (London: Luzac, 1940), 208–9; ‘Alī ibn ‘Uthmān al-Jullabī al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, trans. R.A. Nicholson (London: Luzac, 1936 [1976]), 239–41; cf., however, al-Ghazālī, *al-Maṣṣad al-asnā fī sharḥ ma’ānī asmā’ Allāh al-ḥusnā*, ed. F.A. Shehadi (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1971), 45 [=Nazih Daher and David B. Burrell (trans), *Al-Ghazālī: the ninety-nine beautiful names of God* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1992), 3], also Ikhwān al-safā’ *Rasā’il*, Vol. 1, 359–60.

- 13 For women as *abdāl*, see, for example, Ibn al-‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkīyah*, ed. ‘Uthmān Yahya, Vol. 13 (Cairo: al-Hay’ al-miṣriyya al-‘amma lil-kitāb, 1990), 46–7; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī, “*al-Khabar al-dāll ‘alā wujūd al-ḡuṭb wal-awṭād wal-mujabā’ wal-abdāl*” in *al-Ḥawī lil-fatāwī* (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmiyya, 1403/1983), 10–11.

- 14 See, for example, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Nawāddir al-‘usūl*, 70 (bottom):

They are named *abdāl* for two reasons: firstly, because whenever one of them dies God replaces him with another (*abdala makānahu*) to complete the forty. And secondly, because they have transformed (*baddalū*) their bad qualities and have trained their selves till the beauty of their qualities have become the ornaments of their actions.

cf. Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb fī mu‘āmalat al-maḥbūb* (Cairo: al-Maṭba‘a al-Maymūniya, 1310/1893), 86, ll. 12–14:

The seeker does not become a ‘substitute’ (*badal*) unless he substitutes (*yubaddilu*) the attributes of sovereignty (*rubūbiyya*) with the attributes of servanthood (*‘ubūdiyya*), the qualities of demons with the characteristics of believers, the nature of beasts (*bahā‘im*) with the characteristics of pneumatics (*rūḥāniyyūna*) [...] [Only] then he becomes a close substitute (*fā-‘indahā kāna badal^{an} muqarrab^{an}*).

- 15 See, for example, Abū ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sulamī, *Jawāmi‘ ādāb al-ṣūfiyya* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Jerusalem Academic Press, 1976), 70–2, and the sources mentioned in the footnotes there; also, al-Makkī, *Qūt al-qulūb*, 86, ll. 9–14 (Ch. 25); al-Ghazālī, *Ihyā’ ‘ulūm al-dīn*, 5; for a striking visionary’s description, see Najm al-Dīn al-Kubrā, *Fawā’ih al-Ġamal*, ed. Fritz Meier (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1957), 25–6:

The *nafs inciting to evil* [...] is dark. If remembrance [of God] falls on her, it becomes like a lamp shedding light in a dark house. Then she becomes *blaming*, for she sees that the house is full of polluted creatures, such as dogs, pigs, cheetahs, leopards, asses, oxen and elephants—all the hateful things in existence. Then she strives to chase them away [...] To do so, she needs to practice the remembrance of God and to repent continuously, till the remembrance of God overpowers them and chases them away. Then she becomes close to the *serene self*, yet she must never stop striving [...] When the divine power descends, and Truth is revealed, then the *nafs* calms down.

- 16 See A.J. Wensinck, *The Muslim Creed: Its Genesis and Historical Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1932), 129 *et passim*; also, Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *Man ‘āsha ba‘da al-mawt*, ed. ‘A.A. Jab Allah (Beirut: Dār al-kutub al-‘ilmiyya, 1987); Ikhwān al-safā’ 1928, 3, 278; al-Ghazālī 1407/1987, 27–9; al-Suyūṭī, *Kitāb al-Durar al-ḥisān fī al-ba‘ath wa-na‘im al-jinān* (n.d.), 23ff.
- 17 See, for example, I. Goldziher, *Vorlesungen über den Islam* (Heidelberg: C. Winter, 1910), 154–5 (Ch. 4/5); Christopher Melchert, “The Transition from Asceticism to Mysticism at the Middle of the Ninth Century C.E.”, *Studia Islamica* 83 (1996): 51–70, and note esp. 51: “A transition from Islamic asceticism to Islamic mysticism has now become a scholarly commonplace.” See also, Introduction and Chapter 1.
- 18 See, for example, Ibn al-Mubārak (d. 181/797), *Kitāb al-Zuhd wa-l-raqā‘iq*, ed. Ḥabīb al-Raḥman al-A‘zami (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1386H); Wakī‘ ibn al-Jarrāḥ (d. 196/812) – see F. Sezgin, *GAS*, Vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 96–7; Asad ibn Mūsā (d. 211/827), *Kitāb al-zuhd*, ed. R.G. Khoury (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1976); Ibn Ḥanbal (d. 240/855), *Kitāb al-zuhd*, ed. M.J. Sharaf (Alexandria: Dār al-Fikr al-Jāmi‘ī, 1980); Ibn Abī al-Dunyā (d. 280/894), *Kitāb Dhamm al-Dunyā*, ed. Ella Almāgor (Jerusalem: Hebrew University, 1984). For more bibliographical data, see Sezgin, *GAS*, Vol. 1, 97, 145, 153, 355f.; also, al-Bayhaqī, *Kitāb al-zuhd al-kabīr*, ed. Ḥaydar, 47ff. (editor’s Introduction).
- 19 For sections and traditions on *zuhd* in canonical Ḥadīth compilations, see Wensinck 1943, 2, 348–9; for *zuhd* in non-Sūfī compilations, see, for example, al-Jāhiz (d. 255/869), *Kitāb al-Bayān wa al-tabyīn*, ed. Ḥārūn ‘Abd al-Salām Muḥammad (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1367/1948), 3, 125–202; Ibn Qutayba (d. c.270/884), *‘Uyūn al-akhbār* (Cairo: al-hay‘a al-‘amma lil-kuttāb, 1346/1928), 2, 261–375.

- 20 For later works on *zuḥd*, see, for example, al-Bayhaqī (d. 458/1066), *Kitāb al-zuḥd al-kabīr*, ed. Ḥaydar; Ibn al-Jawzī (d. 597/1201), *Dhamm al-hawā*, ed. A.‘A. al-Salām ‘Aṭā (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyah, 1987).
- 21 For asceticism and early mysticism, see Chapters 1, 2, 3 and the Introduction in this monograph.
- 22 See, for example, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Sīrat al-awliyā*, 145: “Know, that the *nafs* is a consort to the spirit (*rūḥ*) in the body. Both are winds (*rīḥānī*), the one heavenly, the other earthly. The spirit is a heavenly energy (lit. wind) [emanating] from the energy of life, and the *nafs* is an earthly energy [emanating] from the life [force] that was given to the earth”; cf. Radtke, *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism*, 187ff.
- 23 See also Chapter 2.
- 24 See, for example, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-riyāḍa*, 37–8.
- 25 According to the well-known *ḥadīth*, “Hell-fire is surrounded by desires” (*huffat al-nār bi ‘l-shahawāt*) – see A.J. Wensinck, *Concordance et indices de la tradition Musulmane*, Vol. 1 (Leiden: Brill, 1936–1988), 479; see also Abū Sa‘īd al-Kharrāz, *Kitāb al-ṣīd* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), 62; al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Sīrat al-awliyā*, 145; Ali Hassan Abdel-Kader, *The Life, Personality, and Writings of al-Junayd: A Study of a Third/Ninth Century Mystic with an Edition and Translation of his Writings* (London: Luzac, 1962), 58 (Arabic text = 179 English trans.).
- 26 Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-riyāḍa*, 34–9, and cf. 1975, 3; cf. Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam*, 253ff.
- 27 Note that *ḥayya* means both ‘alive’ and ‘snake’; hence, anticipating the image of ‘a viper’ (*al-af‘ā*), Kubrā’s expression contains a double nuance: the *nafs*, which is like a snake, or a viper, never dies (with thanks to GRG).
- 28 See al-Kubrā, *Fawā‘ih al-Ġamal*, 81 (Arabic text, para. 164).
- 29 See more, Chapter 2.
- 30 On him, see Abū ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Ṣūfiyah*, ed. Johannes Pedersen (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960), 54–9; Paul Nwyia, *Exégèse coranique et langage mystique: nouvel essai sur le lexique technique des mystiques Musulmans* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1970), 213–31. According to al-Sulamī, a fourth–fifth/tenth–eleventh-century hagiographer, Shaqīq may have been “the first in the region of Khurāsān who talked on the science of the changing states (*aḥwāl*)” (54, 1.5).
- 31 This treatise was edited by Paul Nwyia in 1973, based on a Topkapı unicum manuscript. For bibliographical data and analysis, see Nwyia, *Exégèse coranique et langage mystique*, 213–31.
- 32 Hence the distinction that is often made in mystical literature between “the general public” or “the masses” (*al-‘amma*) and the Ṣūfis, sometimes referred to as the gnostic elite (*al-khāṣṣa*, *ahl al-ma‘rifa*) – see, for example, Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-luma’*, ed. R.J. Nicholson (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1914), 11ff. (=Eng. Abstract, 4f.); also, al-Suhrawardī, Abū al-Najīb ‘Abd al-Qādir *Kitāb ādāb al-murīdīn*, ed. Menahēm Milson (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University, 1978), 13–15, and Menahem Milson (trans), *A Sufi Rule for Novices: Kitāb ādāb al-murīdīn* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 1975), 34–5.
- 33 Hence the accusation, often levelled against Ṣūfis and ascetics by Orthodox writers, of indulging in exaggerated practices above and beyond the prophetic *sunna*—see, for example, Ibn al-Jawzī, *Naqd al-‘ilm wa-al-‘ulamā’*, aw, *Talbīs Iblīs*, eds M.A. al-Khānjī and M.M. al-Dimashqī (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Sa‘ādah, 1340/1921), 152ff., 159ff., 174ff., and note there the admonition of a ninth-century Ḥanbalī master against reading books by al-Muḥāsibī: “These are books of innovations and errors. Follow the tradition [of the prophet], in it you will find what will suffice you” (177). For more details, see Margaret Smith, *An Early Mystic of Baghdad: A Study of the Life and Teaching of Ḥārith b. Asad al-Muḥāsibī*, A.D. 781–A.D. 857 (London: Sheldon Press, 1935 [1977]), 256.

- 34 Note that there exists an even earlier sketch of a progressive discipline, attributed to Ibrāhīm ibn Adham (d. c.159/776), who, according to al-Sulamī, was Shaiqī's teacher. Ibrāhīm ibn Adham's formula of transformation runs as follows:

Know, that you will never reach the rank of the pious (*ṣāliḥūn*) unless you overcome six obstacles. First, that you close the gate of pleasure and open the gate of constriction; second, that you close the gate of pride and open the gate of humility; third, that you close the gate of leisure and open the gate of effort; fourth, that you close the gate of sleep and open the gate of sleeplessness; fifth, that you close the gate of wealth and open the gate of poverty; sixth, that you close the gate of expectation and open the gate of readiness for death.

(See al-Sulamī, *Tabaqāt*, 21–2; also, al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla*, 98–9)

- 35 For Sūfī teachings on hunger and its merits, see, for example, al-Makkī 1893, 1, 73, ll. 11–12: “Fasting is the key to abstaining from the world, for by it the *nafs* is denied the food and drink that she desires and enjoys” (see also Gramlich 1994, 4, 112, analytischer Index, “Fasten”); al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla*, 140–4 (= von Schlegell, *Principles of Sufism*, 79–84); cf. van Ess, *Die Gedankenwelt des Hārīt al-Muḥāsibī*, 115ff.
- 36 Cf. al-Kharrāz, a third/ninth-century Sūfī from Baghdād, in al-Kharrāz, *The Book of Truthfulness (Kitāb al-ṣidq)*, trans. A.J. Arberry (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), 75 (Arabic text): “Don’t you know [...] that all states and qualities are but stations (*manāzil*) in which worshippers stay for a while before they move on to other stations?” (cf. Arberry 1937 trans., 61).
- 37 It may also be associated with the Syriac term *athliḥūtā*, whose meanings range from contest and struggle to martyrdom, see J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary*, 32 in Dukhrana online searchable version, Dukhrana Biblical Research 2006–2011.
- 38 That ascetic practices are performed in order to break behavioural patterns transpires from a saying attributed to Abū ‘Alī al-Rūdhabārī (d. 322/934): “Know, that the root and foundation of the war with the *nafs* is to wean her of that to which she has become accustomed” – see al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla*, 99; cf. al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb al-riyāḍa*:

If you wean the *nafs*, she will break and will stop pestering you [...] For the *nafs* has become used to pleasure and desire and to acting jointly with the inclination; but if you wean her, she will become weaned. (105)

Note, however, that further on, al-Tirmidhī adds a note of caution: “If, after training the *nafs*, you stop observing her, she might, as long as the desires are alive in her and the inclination is upright, return to her previous habits” (120).

- 39 Cf. al-Suhrawardī, *‘Awārif al-ma‘ārif*, eds ‘A.Ḥ. Maḥmūd and M.B. al-Sharīf (Cairo: Dār al-ma‘ārif, n.d.) Chs. 26 and 27, 123ff. (= Richard Gramlich, *Die Gaben Der Erkenntnis Des ‘umar As-Suhrawardī* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1978), 193ff.); also, al-Kubrā, *Fawā’ih al-Ġamal*, 59f. (Arabic text, para. 125); see Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 101 and 103; for an interesting experience of *chilla* carried out and documented recently by a modern woman, see Michaela M. Özelsel, *Forty Days: The Diary of a Traditional Solitary Sufi Retreat with an Accompanying Interdisciplinary Scientific Commentary*, trans. Andy Gaus (Boston, MA: Shambala, 1996).
- 40 Based on Ex. 24:18 and 34:28; cf. Jesus’s forty days’ fast in the wilderness – Matthew 4:1–11; Mark, 1: 12–13; Luke 4: 1–13.
- 41 Al-Hujwārī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, 324. Abraham Maimonides (d. 1237), the son of Moses Maimonides, observes, too, that the Sūfī practice of forty days’ abstention from food and sleep has been modeled upon biblical figures such as David, Joshua, and in particular Moses, who says (Deut. 9:25), “So I fell down before the Lord the forty days and forty nights that I fell down”; see Samuel Rosenblatt, *The High Ways to Perfection of Abraham Maimonides* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1935), 2, 322–3 and 394–5.

- 42 Al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, 324; cf. Böwering, *The Mystical Vision*, 259–60, citing Sahl al-Tustarī (d. 282/896):

One who starves his carnal soul (*nafs*) diminishes his blood proportionately. In proportion to his blood that is diminished by hunger (*jūʿ*) the whispering [of the Adversary?] (*waswasa*) is cut off from the heart (*qalb*). If a fool (*majnūn*) were to starve his carnal soul he would become healthy (*ṣaḥīḥ*) [!]

cf. Ibn al-ʿArabī, *al-Futuḥāt al-makkīyah*, ed. ʿUthmān Yahya, Vol. 13 (Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-miṣriyya al-ʾamma li al-kitāb, 1990), 641–2.

- 43 For an early collection of traditions advocating the remembrance of death, see, for example, Ibn al-Mubārak, *Kitāb al-zuhd al-kabīr*, ed. Ḥaydar, 90ff.
44 Cf. al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Nawādir al-uṣūl* (Istanbul: 1878), 343 (bottom): “The heart of the human being is dense and coarse, and his *nafs*, due to her innate arrogance, is impudent and defiant. When the lights of mystical knowledge (*maʿrifā*) descend, density melts away, impudence and coarseness are wiped out, and the heart becomes soft and tender”. Cf. also al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Sīrat al-awliyāʾ*, 139, ll. 1–4:

When [the seeker] stops the continuous [practice of the] remembrance of God, his heart hardens. This is because remembrance includes compassion from God [...] When compassion comes, the heart becomes moist and soft, the heat of the *nafs* dies down and that compassion which descends upon the heart pulls her up. Thus, the heart’s hardness and coarseness and roughness melt away.

- 45 For a critical description of ascetics who, in spite of their austere practices, have succumbed to, rather than harnessed, their self’s desire for leadership and renown (*riʿāsa*), see al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Sīrat al-awliyāʾ*, 116–17 (=Radtke and O’Kane, *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism*, 93ff.); cf. Ibn al-Jawzī, *Naqḍ al-ʿilm = Talbīs Iblīs* 161; cf. the following saying attributed to Ruwaym ibn Aḥmad (d. 302/915): “The self has a share in abstention from the world, because abstention entails also relaxation, praise, laudation and eminence in the eyes of people” (see al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-lumaʾ*, 47).
46 Nwyia, *Exégèse coranique et langage mystique*, 215, and 1973, 21.
47 Cf., however, Paul Nwyia, *Trois œuvres inédites de mystiques Musulmans: Ṣaḥīḥ al-Balḥī, Ibn ʿAṭā, Niffarī* (Beirut: Dar el-Machreq, 1973) [Introduction, 15]: “il nous permet de remonter [...] à une époque où ce langage traduit l’expérience d’une façon immédiate [...] sans aucune reconstruction”; see also Nwyia, *Exégèse coranique et langage mystique*, 214.
48 This work, known also under the title *Manāzil al-qāsidīn ilā ʾllāh*, has been published in Cairo twice – first in 1977 by Muḥammad Ibrāhīm al-Juyūshī, and then in 1988 by Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Raḥīm al-Sāʾih. References in this chapter are to the 1988 edition.
49 The term *manzila*, employed by early writers, although never totally discarded, has been conventionally replaced by the term *maqām* (plural form *maqāmāt*). The latter has become the technical term for a stage on the mystical path achieved through effort. It is usually contrasted with *ḥāl*, a mystical state that descends as divine favour; see, for example, al-Sarrāj, *Kitāb al-lumaʾ*, 41–72; al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Maḥjūb*, 180–3; al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla*, 56–8; al-Suhrawardī, *Kitāb ādāb al-murīdīn*, 20–1 (=Milson, *A Sufi Rule*, 38–9); cf. Nwyia, *Exégèse coranique et langage mystique*, 223; also, Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 109ff.; see also Chapter 7 in this monograph.
50 This term is frequently used by al-Tirmidhī to denote a seeker in whose effort the influence of the self and its associates commingles with spiritual aspirations; see, for example, al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Sīrat al-awliyāʾ*, 48 (=Radtke and O’Kane, *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism*, 115), and 1878, 260 (bottom), where al-Tirmidhī states that “a little [religious] work [performed by an accomplished

man] is far better than many years of toiling of the *mukhallaf*”; see also Chapter 12 in this monograph, [n. 51]. For an interesting equivalent in the vocabulary of early Christian pietists (in Greek), and, in particular, of Pseudo-Macarius, see Columba Stewart, *Working the Earth of the Heart: The Messalian Controversy In History, Texts, and Language to A.D. 431* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 169ff., and esp. 175–7; cf. also “the mixing of the two soils” (*ikhṭilāṭ al-ṭīnatayn*) in Shī‘ism, see M.A. Amir-Moezzi, “‘Seul l’homme de dieu est humain’: Théologie et anthropologie mystique à travers l’exégèse imamite ancienne (aspects de l’imamologie duodéciraine IV)”, *Arabica* 45 (1998): 203.

- 51 This is an intriguing, ‘reversed’ association to the Qur’ānic idiom ‘*ibād al-rahmān*, ‘the slaves of the Compassionate’ (Q.25:63); cf. al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Masā’il ahl Sarakhs*, fifth question in Radtke (ed.), *Drei Schriften Schriften des Theosophen von Tirmid* (Beirut: Steiner, 1992), 144, 1.20. For *al-aḥrār al-kirām*, see Chapter 11.
- 52 The Arabic idiom al-Tirmidhī uses here should probably be read *al-finā’*, which is orthographically identical with *al-fanā’*, a term conventionally meaning a mystical experience of ‘annihilation’ (see n. 53). Contrary to the editor’s explanatory note on p. 95, *fanā’* is not current in al-Tirmidhī’s vocabulary; for *finā’*, cf. al-Niffārī in Nwyia, *Trois œuvres inédites de mystiques Musulmans*, 300.
- 53 Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Kitāb manāzil al-‘ibād min al-‘ibāda*, ed. A.‘A. al-Sā’ih (Cairo: 1988), 93–5.
- 54 On the rigorous, introspective, and controversial path of blame, *malāma*, that was designed to ceaselessly fight this tendency of the *naḥs*, see Chapters 4 and 5 in this monograph.
- 55 Al-Kharrāz, *The Book of Truthfulness*, trans. Arberry, 76–7 (Arabic text) and 61–2 (English trans.—modified and slightly paraphrased); cf. al-Tirmidhī’s simile of an easy floating ship in Chapter 9, [n. 40].
- 56 See note 15; for descriptions of mystical experiences, see, for example, Henry Corbin, *The Man of Light in Iranian Sufism*, trans. Nancy Person (Boulder, CO: Shambhala, 1978), 76ff. and 112; on the visions and experiences of Rūzbihān Baqlī (d. 605/1209), see C.A. Ernst, *Rūzbihān Baqlī: Mysticism and the Rhetoric of Sainthood In Persian Sufism* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 1996), 66ff. *et passim*.
- 57 See al-Qushayrī, *al-Risāla*, 263.
- 58 On *dhikr*, see, for example, L. Gardet, “Dhikr”, *EF*, Vol. 2 (1965): 230–3; S. de Beaurecueil, “Memoire de l’homme ou memoire de Dieu? (Le *dhikr* chez ‘Abdullāh Ansārī)”, *MIDEO* 22 (1994): 73–94; Sara Sviri, *The Taste of Hidden Things: Images on the Sufi Path* (Inverness, CA: Golden Sufi Center, 1997), 124–44; Muḥammad Isa Waley, “Contemplative Disciplines in Early Persian Sufism”, in *The Heritage of Sufism*, ed. Leonard Lewisohn, Vol. 1 (Oxford: One-world, 1999), 497–548.
- 59 See, for example, al-Hujwīrī, *Kashf al-Mahjūb*, 242ff., and note that, according to al-Hujwīrī, al-Kharrāz was the first to explain these mystical states; cf. al-Kubrā, *Fawā’ih al-Ḡamal*, 36f., 40f., and esp. 48 (paras 78–9, 86 and 98, Arabic section) *et passim*; and see Chapter 7.
- 60 Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, 1992, 35–6 (cf. Radtke and O’Kane, 1996, 94–5). For more on this, see Chapter 10.
- 61 See, for example, the saying attributed to Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī (d. 260/874):

What is the most wondrous sign of the mystic? That he eats with you, drinks with you, jests with you, buys from you, sells to you, while his heart is in the Holy Kingdom. This is the most wondrous sign.

(al-Sulamī 1945, 91–2)

- 62 Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, *Sīrat al-awliyāʾ*, 34 (cf. Radtke and O’Kane, *The Concept of Sainthood in Early Islamic Mysticism*, 92–3); cf. al-Junayd in Abdel-Kader, *The Life, Personality and Writing of al-Junayd*, 33 (Arabic text=154, English trans.); see also Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions*, 43 *et passim*; for canonical sources, see Wensinck 1967, 6, 529.
- 63 Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Ibn ‘Aṭā’ Allāh, *The Book of Wisdom*, trans. Victor Danner (London: SPCK, 1978), 79 (with slight modifications).