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Source: *Studia Islamica*, No. 83 (1996), pp. 51-70

Published by: Maisonneuve & Larose

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1595736>

Accessed: 29/07/2010 06:13

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The transition from asceticism to mysticism at the middle of the ninth century C.E.

Muslims seem to insist so strongly on divine transcendence, to stress so highly the element of morality in religion, that the development of an Islamic mystical tradition has sometimes been attributed to foreign influences⁽¹⁾. Louis Massignon argued, largely on the evidence of terminology, that Islamic mysticism developed out of an earlier, thoroughly Islamic ascetical tradition⁽²⁾. A transition from Islamic asceticism to Islamic mysticism has now become a scholarly commonplace⁽³⁾. No one has gone further, though, by way of 1) precisely defining “ascetical” and “mystical” and 2) showing just where and when the transition took place. I think I can demonstrate that the extant record is overwhelmingly ascetical, not mystical, until Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī. Thereafter, truly mystical schools emerged at about the same time in Khurasan (Abū Yazid and especially the less famous Abū Ḥafṣ al-Naysābūrī) and Baghdad (al-Kharrāz, al-Nūrī). There was soon trouble with old-style ascetics, and seventy-odd Sufis were arrested in the Inquisition of Ghulām Khalīl. Then Islamic mysticism found the apologist it needed in al-Junayd, who devel-

Kevin Reinhart commented helpfully on an earlier draft of this article.

(1) See, for example, Reynold A. Nicholson, “A Historical Enquiry Concerning the Origin and Development of Sufism”, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1906, 303-348, esp. 306. It is accurate to equate Islamic mysticism with Sufism in discussing the perceptions of Western scholars early in this century; however, Jacqueline Chabbi has demonstrated that Sufism, by that name, was only one of several mystical traditions until at least the eleventh century C.E.: “Réflexions sur le soufisme iranien primitif”, *Journal asiatique*, 266 (1978): 37-55.

(2) See above all Louis Massignon, *Essai sur les origines du lexique technique de la mystique musulmane*, rev. edn. (Paris: J. Vrin, 1954).

(3) E.g., see *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987), s.v. “Sufism”, by Peter J. Awn.

oped a new language to treat mystical experience without unduly alarming ascetics.

I. The Emergence of Mysticism at the Middle of the Ninth Century

The opposition of ascetical to mystical religion goes back above all to Max Weber⁽⁴⁾. It has been developed by numerous others, notably the Neo-Orthodox theologian Paul Tillich, and skillfully summarized by Gert H. Mueller⁽⁵⁾. Schematically, ascetical piety emphasizes obedience to a transcendent God; imposing God's will on the natural world. Mystical piety, by contrast, is about communion with an immanent God; about finding God revealed in the objects of nature. God can be obeyed at any time, in any place (indeed, must be obeyed at all times and in all places); therefore, the ascetic will pay less regard than the mystic to special times and places. Ascetics characteristically perceive more personality in divinity than mystics, for whom divinity may seem very diffuse. Ascetics tend to be pessimists, and may alternate personally between fear and chosenness. Mystics, by contrast, tend to be optimists, confident of abundant grace.

"Asceticism" is commonly used to denote a program of self-discipline and austerity, and as such may well characterize the practice of mystics⁽⁶⁾; however, that is emphatically not the sense in which I use it here. Rather, I use "asceticism" in contrast to "mysticism", as have Weber, Massignon, and the others who have bequeathed the term. Similarly, a Muslim need not be a Sufi for there to be distinctly mystical elements in his or her outlook. Neither will there be found a Muslim mystic whose piety is without strong ascetical elements. On the contrary, elements of both asceticism and mysticism will be found in every religion and every individual's worldview; however, note well, in different proportions that can be measured.

Islamicists in particular have often used "asceticism" to translate the Arabic *zuhd*, "mysticism" to translate "*taṣawwuf*". I use "asceticism"

(4) Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, ed. Guenther Roth & Claus Wittich, 2 vols. Berkeley: Univ. of Calif. Press, 1978), 544-551.

(5) My debt to Mueller is great: "Asceticism and Mysticism. A Contribution Towards the Sociology of Faith", in *International Yearbook for the Sociology of Religion 8: Sociological Theories of Religion/Religion and Language*, ed. Günter Dux, Thomas Luckmann, & Joachim Matthes (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1973), 68-132, with appendices summarizing earlier dichotomies by Nietzsche, Otto, Tillich, & al.

(6) E.g., *Encyclopedia of Religion*, s.v. "Asceticism", by Walter O. Kaelber. Cf. Mueller, 97 f.

rather than *zūhd* for the sake of precision, to indicate an ideal type identified by students of religion in the twentieth century rather than the conscious ethical ideal of medieval Muslims (7). I use “mysticism” both for the sake of precision, as the opposite of “asceticism”, and because it is now clear that classical Sufism, the *taṣawwuf* of the late ninth century and after, was not the only variety of Islamic mysticism (8).

We may conveniently take our chronology of Islamic mysticism from the biographical dictionary of ‘Abd al-Rahmān al-Sulamī (d. AH 412/AD 1021), *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyah* (9). Al-Sulamī divides the Sufis up to his time into five generations each comprising twenty names. For each Sufi, he gives name, dates, a short characterization, a sample of the prophetic hadith reports he related, and then a collection of his sayings, usually attached to chains of transmitters. My method is to examine these figures’ sayings, looking for evidence of the ascetical or mystical worldview. Further sayings can be found in other guides to Sufism like Abū Naṣr al-Sarrāj (d. 378/988), *Kitāb al-Luma’ fī al-taṣawwuf*, and Abū Nu’aym al-Iṣbahānī (d. 430/1038), *Hilyat al-awliyā’*, less often in other standard biographical dictionaries (10).

One must always beware of later generations’ having projected a given saying back onto a famous early figure. Fairly seldom does this appear to be a problem in the *Ṭabaqāt* of al-Sulamī. First, this biographical dictionary begins after the earliest period, where such projections seem to be thickest. (Contrast the earlier volumes of Abū Nu’aym). Second, al-Sulamī’s chief tendency must have been to demonstrate continuity between the Sufis of his day and the ascetics with whom he begins: if the sayings of the earliest figures suggest rather discontinuity, it seems unlikely that he has projected the ideas of his own time back to theirs. Finally, quotations of the earlier figures do, for the most part, suggest coherent, individual outlooks, not mere literary types (although it is not the

(7) For the ethical ideal of *zuhd*, see Leah Kinberg, “What Is Meant by *Zuhd*,” *Studia Islamica*, no. 61 (1985), 27-44.

(8) Roughly contemporary with classical Sufism in Baghdad there developed the Karrāmiyah and Malāmatiyyah in Khurasan, for whom see Jacqueline Chabbi, “Remarques sur le développement historique des mouvements ascétiques et mystiques au Khurāsān,” *Studia Islamica*, no. 46 (1977), 5-72. Sahl al-Tustarī and after him the Sālīmiyah constituted a rival movement in Basra. From the thirteenth century C.E., there developed rivals to Sufism of the Qalandari type, for whom see Ahmet T. Karamustafa, *God’s Unruly Friends (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1994)*.

(9) Al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyah*, ed. Johannes Pedersen (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960). Also available as edited by Nūr al-Dīn Sharībah (Cairo: Jam‘at al-Azhar lil-Nashr wa-al-Ṭibā‘ah, 1953).

(10) Al-Sarrāj, *K. al-Luma’ fī al-taṣawwuf*, ed. Reynold A. Nicholson, E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Ser. 12 (London: Luzac, 1914); Abū Nu’aym, *Hilyat al-awliyā’*, 10 vols. (Cairo: Maṭba‘at al-Sa’ādah, 1932-1938).

main purpose of this essay to reconstruct those outlooks – rather, simply, to weigh their ascetical and mystical elements)⁽¹¹⁾.

Almost without exception, the earliest figures of al-Sulamī's first generation seem pronouncedly ascetical. The earliest of all is Ibrāhīm ibn Ad'ham (d. 163/779-780?), most of whose sayings indicate an other-worldly but ascetical outlook; for example, "Love of meeting people is part of the love of the world, while leaving them is part of leaving the world"⁽¹²⁾. Reports of the way he lived further suggest an ascetical temperament: austerities like continual fasting, winter clothing of only a fur with no undershirt, and no shoes or headcover⁽¹³⁾. Likewise, his career as a frontier raider (by one account, he died fighting in Upper Mesopotamia) suggests a man of struggle – of action rather than contemplation⁽¹⁴⁾. When he speaks of coming close to God, he maintains an ascetical emphasis on God's personality: "It is impossible that you should become close to him (*an tuwāliyah*) without his becoming close to you"⁽¹⁵⁾.

The piety of al-Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyād (d. Mecca, 187/803), too, is overwhelmingly ascetical. His servant Ibrāhīm ibn al-Ash'ath said, "When he heard mention of God or... heard the Qur'ān, fear and sadness overcame him, his eyes filled up, and he wept"⁽¹⁶⁾. Abū 'Alī al-Rāzī declared⁽¹⁷⁾,

I was disciple to al-Fuḍayl ibn 'Iyād for thirty years and never saw him laugh or smile save the day his son 'Alī died. I asked him about that, so he told me, "God (mighty and glorious is he) loved this matter, and I have loved what God loved".

Most of his recorded sayings drive at the cultivation of a serious and single-minded devotion; for example, "Blessed is he who flees from people, keeps company with his Lord, and weeps over his sin"⁽¹⁸⁾.

Shaqīq ibn Ibrāhīm (d. Kūlān, 184/810) was said to be the first to speak of the states (*ahwāl*) in Transoxania, anticipating the usage of mystics⁽¹⁹⁾. However, actual quotations emphasize divine predestination, on the one

(11) For a sustained attempt to characterize the major figures of the early period, see Massignon, *Essai*. On the apologetic purposes of the tenth- and eleventh-century biographers, see Chabbi, "Réflexions", 55.

(12) Abū Nu'aym, 8: 19.

(13) Abū Nu'aym, 7: 373.

(14) Abū Nu'aym, 8: 9.

(15) Abū Nu'aym, 8: 36. It is probable that the large collection of his sayings does include many inventions reflecting the piety of a later date. Especially dubious are circumspect attributions through later mystics like the series that al-Sulamī quotes from al-Kharrāz, 16-21 - Sharībah, ed., 31-35 (henceforward "Sh.").

(16) Abū Nu'aym, 8: 84.

(17) Abū Nu'aym, 8: 100.

(18) Al-Sulamī, 12 = Sh., 14.

(19) "States" and "stations" became Sufi technical terms for landmarks along the mystical

hand, mourning and insecurity, on the other, betraying a thoroughly ascetical outlook ; for example ⁽²⁰⁾,

One who is self-possessed (*'āqil*) never departs from these three particles : first, that he be afraid on account of sins that have gone before ; second, that he know not what will be made to come to him from one moment to the next ; and third, that he fear the obscurity of the outcome.

Shaqīq died fighting the pagan Turks ⁽²¹⁾.

Ma'rūf al-Karkhī (d. 200/815-816) was a prominent Baghdadi ascetic, concerned with al-Fuḍayl to devote himself wholly to God. For example, when Ma'rūf was asked about the hallmark of the friends (of God ; *awliyā'*), he answered, " their concern for God, their preoccupation with him, and their flight to him " ⁽²²⁾. He adds a definite and thoroughly ascetical emphasis on good works ; for example, " Seeking paradise without works is one of the sins. Awaiting intercession without a cause is a species of delusion. Hoping for mercy from one who is disobeyed is ignorance and stupidity " ⁽²³⁾. Equally ascetical appear to be the rest of the earlier names in al-Sulamī's first generation : the Basran preacher Maṣū' ibn 'Ammār (d. Baghdad, early 200's.ca. 820 ?), the Kufan immigrant to Antioch 'Abd Allāh ibn Khubayq (d. early 200's/ca. 820 or after ?), Aḥmad ibn 'Aṣim al-Anṭākī (d. 220/835), the famous Baghdadi Bishr al-Ḥāfi (d. 227/841), and the Syrian traditionist Ibn Abī al-Ḥawārī (d. 230/844-845).

Around the middle of the ninth century, we see a change : some of the later figures in al-Sulamī's first generation are still predominantly ascetical, like the earlier, but an equal number are mystics. Al-Muḥāsibī (d. Baghdad, 243/857-858) pursued thorough self-purification with the object of knowing only God : " When love is made firm in the servant's heart, he has nothing left over for remembering man or *jinn*, heaven or hell-nothing but the recollection (*dhikr*) of the beloved " ⁽²⁴⁾. In such oblivion there might seem to be something like a mystical transcendence of opposites ; notice, however, that al-Muḥāsibī does not speak of God's loving the servant, but only of the servant's loving God ⁽²⁵⁾. Ascetical, too,

path. Some masters assigned them a definite order, or distinguished between transient " states " and permanent " stations ", but usage was not uniform. See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn. (Leiden : E.J. Brill, 1960-), s.v. " Ḥāl ", by L. Gardet.

(20) Al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 55 - Sh., 63.

(21) Abū Nu'aym, *Hilyah* 8 : 64.

(22) Al-Sulamī, 79 - Sh., 90.

(23) Al-Sulamī, 78 - Sh., 89.

(24) Abū Nu'aym, 10 : 78.

(25) To be sure, the Qur'ān itself speaks of God's loving his creatures (5.55 is oft cited), and al-Muḥāsibī devoted a treatise to the love of God. The apparent extract in Abū Nu'aym, 10 : 76-79, tends to press the difference, though, between God's love and the worshipper's. God loves in spite of having no need of the worshipper, whereas the worshipper's love springs

seems al-Muḥāsibī's attention to the external concomitants of inward purification : " Whoever has corrected his interior by means of self-observation and sincerity will ornament his exterior with striving and following the Sunnah (the precept and example of Muḥammad, leading source of Islamic law) " (26).

Sarī al-Saqaṭī (d. 253/867 ?), another Baghdadi, appears to be closer the ascetical pole. As with others before him, his concern for pure devotion to God alone makes him anti-social : " Do not ask anything of anyone, do not take anything of anyone, and have nothing of which to give anything to anyone " (27). He seems anxious about impeccable performance of his ritual duties : " If part of my *wird* prayer escapes me, I can never make it up " (28). Perfectly ascetical seems his concern to complement good works with orthodoxy : " A little according to the Sunnah is better than much with heresy " (29).

Our early sources quote Abū Turāb al-Nakhshabī (d. Hijāz, 245/859-860) as giving advice like that of earlier and contemporary ascetics, directed mainly at paying attention to God, not men, yet ever preserving the gulf between the worshipper and God ; for example, " True wealth is that you be able to do without one who is like you, while true poverty is that you want not one who is like you " (30). Later sources associate him with miracles, usually an indication of the mystical outlook ; however, these stories seem to date from the tenth century (31).

from gratitude toward God (76). Moreover, quite in the ascetic tradition, love (*ḥubb*) is expressly equated with longing (*shawq*), a felt lack (79), which cannot be felt by God.

(26) Abū Nu'aym, 10 : 75. Josef van Ess, *Die Gedankenwelt des Ḥarīṭ al-Maḥāsibī*, Bonner orientalistische Studien, n.s., 12 (Bonn : Orientalischen Seminars, 1961), is thorough and reliable, and often refers to al-Maḥāsibī as a mystic ; however, van Ess does not use the term to distinguish between al-Muḥāsibī's piety and an ascetic's. I assert not that van Ess is wrong but only that the elements of al-Muḥāsibī's piety that justify calling him a mystic do not outweigh those that make him an ascetic.

(27) Al-Sulamī, 42 = Sh., 49.

(28) Al-Sulamī, 43 = Sh., 50 ; Abū Nu'aym, 10 : 124. The *wird* is a private prayer to be performed at a specific time but outside the five daily prescribed prayers.

(29) Al-Sulamī, 45 = Sh., 52. The Islamic tradition may, on the whole, stress orthodoxy less than orthopraxy, and " Sunnah " may be translated " orthopraxy " ; however, I interpret Sarī's statement in the light of several by his older contemporary Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal ; e.g., " Orthodox reprobrates are the friends of God, while heretical ascetics are the enemies of God *fussāq abl al-sunnah awliyā' Allāb wa-zubbād abl al-bid'ab a'dā' Allāb* " (*apud* Ibn Abī 'Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābilāb*, ed. Muḥammad Ḥāmid al-Fiḳī, 2 vols. [Cairo : Maṭba'at al-Sunnah al-Muḥammadiyah, 1952], 1 : 184). The heresies that bothered Aḥmad were above all the propositions 1) that the Qur'ān was created and 2) that its pronunciation was – propositions he never connects with unconventional practice. For a sensible study of Sarī al-Saqaṭī, see Tawfiq ibn 'Āmir, " Al-Sarī al-Saqaṭī wa-nash'at al-madrasah al-baghdādiyah fī al-ṭaşawwuf ", *Hawliyat al-jāmi'ah al-tūnisīyah* 16 (1978) : 187-225. Tawfiq finds him a transitional figure between " pure asceticism " (*al-zubd al-mabd*) and " mysticism " (*al-ṭaşawwuf*) ; 214 f).

(30) Al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 139 = Sh., 150.

(31) See al-Qushayrī, *al-Risālah*, *Bāb fa-mā al-ghālib*... = Cairo : Muṣṭafā al-Bābī

Aḥmad ibn Khidrawayh (d. 240/854-855), originally of Balkh, seems to be a transition figure difficult to characterize. His program of single-minded devotion to God was probably similar to that of his ascetical contemporaries and predecessors : “ The truth of knowing is love of him with the heart, recollection of him with the tongue, and cutting off concern for everything but him ” (32). Yet Aḥmad also hints at confidence in abundant grace, a trait of mystics notably absent in ascetics like Shaqīq ibn Ibrāhīm : “ The way is clear, the truth is shining, and the caller has been heard : what confusion can there be after this save from blindness ? ” (33)

The earliest to seem clearly from his own sayings more mystical than ascetical is the Nubian Dhū al-Nūn al-Miṣrī (d. Giza, 245/860-246/861). His advice to one who would be humble has all the characters of the mystical outlook (34) :

let him direct his soul to the greatness of God, for then it will dissolve and become pure. Whoever regards the power of God, his own power goes away, for all souls are poor next to his awesomeness.

So has Dhū al-Nūn’s advice to seek revelation by looking at finite things : “ Knowing (*maʿrifah*) is gotten by three : regarding affairs, how he has administered them ; things ordained, how he has ordained them ; and things created, how he has created them ” (35). Dhū al-Nūn’s involvement with alchemy and, syncretistically, ancient wisdom, agree well with a mystical outlook (36). It does not appear that Dhū al-Nūn applied the term “ Sufi ” to himself, but R.A. Nicholson seems justified in regarding Dhū al-Nūn as virtually the founder of theosophical Sufism (37).

The preacher Yahyā ibn Muʾadh al-Rāzī (d. Nishapur, 258/872) might be interpreted as either an ascetic or a mystic. His practical advice to think only on God sounds not unlike that of earlier ascetics. On the other hand,

al-Ḥalabī, 1318), 200 ; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt al-sbāfiʿiyah al-kubrā*, ed. ʿAbd al-Fattāh Muḥammad al-Ḥulw and Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Ṭanāhī, 10 vols. (Cairo : ʿIsā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1964-1976), 2 : 308. Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghḍādī tells a similar story of Dhū al-Nūn : *Tārīkh Baghdād*, 14 vols. (Cairo : Maktabat al-Khānī, 1931), 5 : 214.

(32) Al-Sulamī, 96 - Sh., 105.

(33) Al-Sulamī, 96 - Sh., 105.

(34) Al-Sulamī, 25 f. - Sh., 20.

(35) Abū Nuʾaym, *Ḥilyah* 9 : 39.

(36) Al-Qifṭī, *Tārīkh al-ḥukamāʾ*, ed. Julius Lippert (Leipzig : Dieterlich’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1903), 185.

(37) Nicholson, “ Historical Enquiry ”, 309. A manuscript from the 7th/13th cent., *K. Miʿyār al-taṣawwuf*, Kastamonou 2713, does present definitions of Sufism from Dhū al-Nūn (122b, 123b), but equally from figures like Jaʿfar al-Ṣādiq (89b) and Abū Ḥanīfah (124b), casting doubt on the historicity of every attribution. On the ms., see Fuat Sezgin, *Geschichte des arabischen Schrifttums*, 9 vols. (Leiden : E.J. Brill, 1967-), 1 : 646. The attribution to al-Kharrāz is impossible.

he also has much to say about spiritual hierarchies that sound mystical ; for example, ranking lowest the *abdāl*, associated with miracles, next the people of love, associated with blessings, highest the knowers, in perpetual recollection (*dhikr*)⁽³⁸⁾.

Unquestionably mystical is Abū Yazīd al-Baṣṭāmī (d. 261/875 ?)⁽³⁹⁾. His celebrated *shajāḥāt* – such scandalous outbursts as “ There is nothing in this garment but God ” – are classic examples of the mystical sensibility⁽⁴⁰⁾. With Abū Yazīd, at last, the servant is aware that God reciprocates his love : “ The wonder is not my love for you, when I am a poor slave : the only wonder is your love for me, when you are a mighty king ”⁽⁴¹⁾.

Abū Ḥaḥṣ al-Naysābūrī (d. 270/883-884 ?) is presented as virtually the founder of classical Sufism in Khurasan. Characteristically mystical is his recognition of special times and places : “ Sufism (*al-taṣawwuf*) is a matter of etiquette (*adab*). For every time there is an etiquette, for every state there is an etiquette, and for every station there is an etiquette ”⁽⁴²⁾. Significantly, Abū Ḥaḥṣ is the first in al-Sulamī’s collection to identify his way as “ Sufism ”. Dhū al-Nūn speaks of the people of truth (*ahl al-ḥaqq*) and the lover of God (*muḥibb Allāh*), Abū Yazīd of the friends (of God ; *awliyā*), but not of “ Sufis ”. Earlier references to “ Sufis ” by figures in *Ṭabaqāt al-ṣūfiyāh* tend to be depreciative ; for example, Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī, “ I have seen only one Sufi who was any good, ‘ Abd Allāh ibn Marzūq ”⁽⁴³⁾, and Yaḥyā ibn Mu‘adh al-Rāzī, “ unlike ignorant would-be

(38) Al-Sarrāj, *Luma*, 327. Contemporary traditionists (collectors of hadith reports) used the term *abdāl* (“ substitutes ”) to indicate the most saintly traditionists. For later Sufi usage, see *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn., s.v. “ Abdāl ”, by I. Goldziher.

(39) Often “ Bisṭāmī ”, but see al-Sam‘ānī, *K. al-Ansāb*, E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Ser. 20 (Leiden : E.J. Brill, 1912), 81a.

(40) See Carl W. Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy in Sufism* (Albany : State Univ. of NY Press, 1985), part I.

(41) Abū Nu‘aym, 10 : 34. Of course, as noted earlier, the Qur‘ān speaks of God’s love for his people, and earlier figures than Abū Yazīd did not fail to notice. According to al-Sulamī, Ibn Abī al-Ḥawārī said that God must have loved his servant before his servant can love God ; yet, characteristically, the sign of loving God, Ibn Abī al-Ḥawārī begins, is obedience to God (al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 90 - Sh., 90).

(42) Al-Sulamī, 110 - Sh., 119.

(43) Abū Nu‘aym, 9 : 260. Cf. the remark of Yūnus ibn ‘ Abd al-A‘lā (d. 264/877), an Egyptian student of al-Shāfi‘ī’s : “ I have seen no self-possessed man (*‘aql*) among the *ṣūfiyāh* save Idrīs ibn Yaḥyā al-Khawḷānī ”, *apud* al-Dhahabī, *Siyar a‘lām al-nubalā*, 25 vols. (Beirut : Mu‘assasat al-Risālah), 10 (ed. Muḥammad Nu‘aym al-‘Araḳasūstī, 1982) : 166. Abū Nu‘aym does relate a story in which Dhū al-Nūn meets, in the mountains near Antioch, an apparent madwomen who is clad in wool, although not called *ṣūfiyāh*. She enjoins disinterested obedience to God (Abū Nu‘aym, 9 : 340). The earliest *ṣūfiyāh* in Egypt were rowdies in Alexandria who “ enjoined the good ” and rejected the governor’s authority in the year 200/815-816, according to al-Kirdī, *The Governors and Judges of Egypt*, ed. Rhuvon Guest, E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Ser. 19 (London : Luzac, 1912), 162. Louis Massignou cites early references to *ṣūfi*, *ṣūfi*, and *ṣūfiyāh* in *Essai*, 131-133.

Sufis" (*al-mutaṣawwifab al-jābilūn*)⁽⁴⁴⁾. In Abū Ḥafṣ, al-Sulamī recognized a mystic like himself⁽⁴⁵⁾.

Al-Sulamī's second generation of Sufis comprises mainly mystics. The earliest of this generation are the brothers Ibn Abī al-Ward, whose other-worldliness is still ascetical. "Whose soul does not love the world", declared Muḥammad (d. Baghdad, 263/877?), "the people of the earth will love him. Whose heart does not love the world, the people of heaven will love him"⁽⁴⁶⁾.

Sahl al-Tustarī (d. Basra, 283/896?) likewise seems to fall mainly on the ascetical side of the spectrum, recommending avoidance of wrongdoing over active good works: "As for works of piety, the pious and the reprobate alike perform them, whereas no one avoids acts of rebellion save the righteous (*ṣiddīq*)"⁽⁴⁷⁾. He sees a constant danger of condemnation: "There is no heart or soul save that God is watching over it night and day. Any heart or soul in which he sees a need for other than him, he gives power over it to the devil"⁽⁴⁸⁾. Still, like al-Muḥāsibī, Sahl was led by his concentration on God alone towards something close to mystical communion; for example, "The heart will not deem anything greater than, preferable to, or more magnificent than its beholding God (mighty and glorious is he), its listening to him, and its talking with him"⁽⁴⁹⁾.

Al-Kharrāz (d. Baghdad, 277/890-891?) was disciple to Dhū al-Nūn in Egypt as well as to the Syrian Abū 'Ubayd al-Busrī, Sarī al-Saqāṭī, and other Iraqis. An experience he describes in his *Kitāb al-Sirr* seems clearly mystical⁽⁵⁰⁾:

(44) Al-Sulamī, 104 - Sh., 113.

(45) Chabbi observes that the biographer al-Ḥakīm al-Naysābūrī applies the term "*ṣūfi*" to no one earlier than Abū Bakr al-Wāsiṭī (d. after 320/930), suggesting to her that Abū Ḥafṣ was a Malāmatī who would not have made such remarks about Sufism as al-Sulamī attributes to him: "Remarques", 31, 40f, 62-64. Al-Sulamī's attribution is justified by the story of Abū Ḥafṣ's travelling to Baghdad and meeting al-Junayd (for which see note 55). Whether or not we accept al-Sulamī's quotation of Abū Ḥafṣ, Iraqi mystics must have applied the term to themselves in about the 260's/873-883.

(46) Al-Sulamī, 248 - Sh., 250.

(47) Al-Sulamī, 202f - Sh., 209; cf. Abū Nu'aym, *Hilyab* 10: 197. Cf. also Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *apud* Ibn Abi Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābilah* 1: 325. When asked whether the Prophet's enjoining and forbidding (*amr, naby*) where not the same, Aḥmad answered, "Yes, but his forbidding is more severe (*ashadd*)".

(48) Al-Sulamī, 200f - Sh., 208; Abū Nu'aym, 10: 194.

(49) Al-Ṣāqalī (d. ca. 423/1031-1032?), ed., *Kalām*, Köprülü (Istanbul) 727, 3a. The overall tone of al-Ṣāqalī's collections (Sezgin, 1: 647) is fully as ascetical as the much smaller selections of al-Sulamī and Abū Nu'aym. On al-Tustarī, see Gerhard Böwering, *The Mystical Vision of Existence in Classical Islam*, Studien zur Sprache, Geschichte u. Kultur des islamischen Orients, n.s. 9 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1980). Like van Ess concerning al-Muḥāsibī, Böwering often refers to al-Tustarī as a mystic, with like justification; that is, not to distinguish him from ascetics but rather on the basis of the mystical elements in his outlook.

(50) *Apud* al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād* 4: 277.

If one of them was asked, "What do you know?", he would say "God". When he talked he would say "God", when he looked he would say "God", and if his limbs spoke, they would say "God", for his members are filled with God.

It was he who first spoke of *fanā'* (annihilation) and *baqā'* (remaining) to describe the contemplative's first losing all consciousness of his own finitude, then subsisting in contemplation⁽⁵¹⁾.

Al-Nūrī (d. Baghdad, 295/907-908), the second name in al-Sulamī's second generation, is plainly in the mystical camp. Because it drew down persecution on him, he is famous for saying, "I love God and God loves me" (*a'sbaqu Allāh wa-Allāh ya'sbaqunī*)⁽⁵²⁾. Al-Sulamī's quotations tend to be clever rather than clear, but one of the most direct is typically mystical: "Joining with the Truth is parting from everything else, as parting with everything else is joining with it"⁽⁵³⁾. Al-Nūrī is the earliest figure in al-Sulamī's *Ṭabaqāt* to speak of this joining (*jam'*): others might speak of longing for God, but al-Nūrī of substantial satisfaction.

Al-Junayd (d. Baghdad, 298/911?) was a disciple of Sarī al-Saqaṭī and al-Muḥāsibī, whom I have reckoned among the ascetics; however, al-Junayd lectured on the ecstatic *shataḥāt* of Abū Yazīd⁽⁵⁴⁾ and entertained Abū Ḥafṣ al-Naysābūrī⁽⁵⁵⁾. The extant writings of al-Junayd are many but difficult: as A.J. Arberry says, "His style is involved to the point of obscurity"⁽⁵⁶⁾. Still, he clearly refers to mystical experience when he speaks, for example, of being "transported by gnosis (*ma'rifah*) whither knowledge (*ilm*) never transported them – to an infinite aim"⁽⁵⁷⁾. He was once disabled by ecstasy in Mecca⁽⁵⁸⁾. He always speaks respectfully of the law, yet did not require a high standard of all his associates: "I would rather be kept company by a good-natured debauchee than an ill-natured ascetic"⁽⁵⁹⁾.

It appears, then, that a transition from asceticism to mysticism took place at about the middle of the ninth century CE. This has been no exhaustive survey. Some notable figures are missing from al-Sulamī's list;

(51) Al-Sulamī, 223 - Sh., 228.

(52) Al-Sarrāj, *Pages From the "Kitāb al-Luma"*, ed. A.J. Arberry (London: Luzac, 1947), 5.

(53) Al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 153 - Sh., 166.

(54) Al-Sarrāj, *Luma'*, 346.

(55) Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, 12: 221f. On a session for trading definitions at which al-Junayd and Abū Ḥafṣ were the most prominent speakers, see al-Sulamī, 107f - Sh., 117f.

(56) *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, new edn., s.v. "Djunayd", by A.J. Arberry.

(57) Al-Junayd, "The Book of the Cure of Souls", ed. & tr. A.J. Arberry, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1937, 220 (Ar.), 226 (tr.).

(58) Abū Nu'aym, *Hilyab* 10: 270.

(59) Al-Sarrāj, *Luma'*, 177. On *qārī'* as "ascetic", see Ignác Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law*, tr. Andras and Ruth Hamori (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1981), 127, n. 35. Roger Deladrière has pointed out the characteristic humor of al-Junayd's teachers in his introduction to al-Junayd, *Enseignement spirituel* (Paris: Sindbad, 1983), 26f.

for example, the heresiarch Ibn Karrām (d. Palestine, 255/869), his teacher Aḥmad ibn Ḥarb before him (d. Nishapur, 235/849-850), and his followers after (60). So are figures of the earlier ninth century who did call themselves Sufis. However, nothing suggests that it was part of al-Sulamī's and the other biographers' apologetic purpose to conceal early tendencies toward mysticism. Therefore, the absence of suspected heretics should not affect the location of a transition to mysticism.

In the *Ṭabaqāt*, al-Sulamī omits to mention any women, but his lost *Tārīkh al-ṣūfiyah* evidently mentioned a number, and an extract concerning them has recently been discovered and published (61). There, he tells of notable female ascetics like Rābi'ah al-'Adawiyah (d. Basra, 185/801-802?), celebrated by Western scholars for many sayings about the love of God, Fāṭimah al-Naysābūriyah (d. on the way to Mecca, 223/837-838), consulted by both Dhū al-Nūn and Abū Yazīd, and Rābi'ah al-Shāmīyah (d. Damascus, 229/843-844), who had visions of heaven. Were there mystics among them? Rābi'ah al-'Adawiyah has been cited as inventor of a new love mysticism. On sober examination, though, her sayings plainly express just the common, ascetical concern for single-minded devotion to God (62). The reported sayings of Fāṭimah al-Naysābūriyah are likewise entirely consistent with ascetical concern for single-minded devotion to God (63).

Rābi'ah al-Shāmīyah, wife of Ibn Abī al-Ḥawārī, sounds the closest to mysticism. For example, there is the story of her apologizing to Ibn Abī al-Ḥawārī, "I was prevented from answering you by my heart's being filled with joy at God (be he exalted), so I was unable to answer you" (64). I have taken it as a sign of mysticism that al-Junayd was once disabled by rapture. However, Rābi'ah al-Shāmīyah never quite speaks, as a mystic would, of reciprocal love between herself and God, nor of close communion. Other sayings, like her being constantly reminded of the Last Judgment, are perfectly ascetical. In sum, neither she nor any other female ascetic sounds far in advance of her male contemporaries in developing an Islamic mysticism (65).

(60) See Massignon, *Essai*, 260-272, where Yahyá ibn Mu'adh is included among them; also Chabbi, "Remarques", 30.

(61) Al-Sulamī, *Dbīk al-niswāh al-muta'abbidāt al-ṣūfiyāt*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad al-Ṭanāḥī (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1993).

(62) See R. Caspar, "Rābi'a et le pur amour de Dieu", *IBLA* (Tunis) 121 (1968): 71-95. Cf. Margaret P. Smith, *Rābi'a the Mystic & Her Fellow-Saints in Islam* (London: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1928); David P. Brewster, "The Study of Sufism; Towards a Methodology", *Religion* 6 (1976): 31-47; *Encyclopedia of Religion*, s.v. "Sufism", by Peter J. Awn.

(63) Al-Sulamī, *Dbīk al-niswāh*, 61f.

(64) Al-Sulamī, *Dbīk al-niswāh*, 60.

(65) Ruth Roded similarly finds these women outstandingly ascetical: *Women in Islamic Biographical Collections* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 1994), 94f. For a discussion of the

It may be objected that the very technical terms of later, full-blown Islamic mysticism appear very early, in the eighth century: "stations", "states", and so forth. Do these not indicate a mystical sensibility at the same early date? I would answer "Not necessarily". Mystics are well known for finding esoteric meaning in the given tradition⁽⁶⁶⁾. Therefore, we must not assume that even terms like "stations" and "states", not used in the literature of jurisprudence, were always mystical. The Mamluk traditionist and biographer al-Dhahabī (d. Damascus, 748/1348) clearly remarked the difference⁽⁶⁷⁾:

The original Sufis meant by them (*fanā'* and *baqā'*) the forgetting of created things and leaving them, the lower soul's completely leaving pre-occupation with what is not God.

This is ascetical single-mindedness as opposed to mystical communion⁽⁶⁸⁾.

If a predominantly mystical Islamic piety did appear for the first time in the ninth century, it will be asked from where it came. An Indian connection has been proposed for Abū Yazīd, but seems untenable⁽⁶⁹⁾. The idea of a Persian connection has recurred, but Massignon's dismissal remains persuasive⁽⁷⁰⁾; moreover, it can hardly explain Dhū al-Nūn, or even al-Kharrāz. I would suggest that self-mortification at the individual level conduces to the experience of mystical states. As Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī said "If the servant goes to an extreme in *zuhd* (renunciation), that will put him into *tawakkul* (reliance)"; that is, ultimately, the complete dependence that is arguably the essence of mystical religious experience⁽⁷¹⁾.

Finally, we should have a social explanation to account for the widespread expression of mystical experience at a certain time. The evidence

two Rābī'ahs as figures of legend, see Julian Baldick, "The Legend of Rābī'a of Basra: Christian Antecedents, Muslim Counterparts", *Religion* 20 (1990): 233-247.

(66) See Steven T. Katz, "The 'Conservative' Character of Mystical Experience", pp. 3-60 in Katz, ed. *Mysticism and Religious Traditions* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1983).

(67) Al-Dhahabī, *Sīyar* 15 (ed. Ibrāhīm al-Zaybaq, 1983): 393.

(68) Of course, ascetical single-mindedness never left Islam, or even (*pace* al-Dhahabī) Sufism. William Chittick has recently gone from here to assert that, "In most cases, Sufi life and practice have nothing to do with mysticism". This is based on an excessively narrow identification of mysticism with passivity and "strange psychic phenomena": William Chittick, *Faith and Practice of Islam*, SUNY Series in Islam (Albany: State Univ. of New York Press, 1992), 168-173, esp. 173.

(69) See, for example, Marijan Molé, *Les Mystiques musulmanes*, Mythes et religions (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1965), 24f; Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1975), 47f.

(70) Massignon, 63-69. Cf., for example, Ḥusayn Murūwah, *al-Naza'at al-Maddiyah fi al-falsafah al-'arabiyah al-Islāmiyah*, 2 vols. (Beirut: Dār al-Fārābī, 1979), 2: 177.

(71) Abū Nu'aym, *Hilyah* 9: 256. Later, Abū Hamzah says, "If the heart is pure of the love of the world, *zuhd* will enter it, and if *zuhd* enters, that will bequeath to it *tawakkul*":

is exiguous, and the two suggestions I offer are admittedly tentative. First, concentration of arbitrary political power has often seemed to encourage mysticism, checks on the concentration of political power to encourage asceticism (72). Probably, the increasing political power of soldiers over the ninth century encouraged a turn toward mysticism. Ḥamdūn al-Qaṣṣār (d. Nishapur, 271/884-885), who lived exactly at the turning point, expressly admonished a follower of his who was troubled by having to deal with soldiers, "If you know for certain that you are better than they, do not deal with them" (73). In other words, one normally ought to deal with them, as a sign of proper humility. Toleration of sinners and the mighty of this world, together with the cultivation of humility, are characteristic of the mystical outlook.

Second, it seems likely that the development of a fully mystical piety followed from the development of institutions for the material support of religious specialists. As Weber points out, the mystic characteristically relies on others' working in the world in order for him to leave it (74). Already in a warning from Abū Turāb al-Nakhsabī (d. 245/859-860), the *khānqāh* appears as a special place for ascetics not only to meet but to receive alms (75):

Whoever of you has worn the *muraqqa'ab* (distinctive patched garment) has begged; whoever of you has sat in the *khānqāh* or the mosque has begged; whoever of you has read the Qur'ān from the (public) bound copy or so that people might hear has begged.

By the later ninth century, at least, the ascetics of Isfahan could expect regular stipends administered by the qadi (76).

he probably does mean *tawakkul* in the mystic's sense of unquestioning trust (al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 296 - Sh., 296). Richard Gramlich has made a full, careful collection of sayings by Abū Sulaymān: "Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī", *Oriens* 33 (1992): 22-85. Tor Andrae mentions Abū Sulaymān among Sufis who had transcended the earlier ascetic religion: *In the Garden of Myrtles*, tr. Brigitta Sharpe, Muslim Spirituality in South Asia (New York: State Univ. of New York Press, 1987): 57-60. His is a delightful book, but, like many treatments of Sufism and its antecedents, lacking rigor in chronology and terminology.

(72) Cf. Guy Swanson, *Religion and Regime: A Sociological Account of the Reformation* (Ann Arbor: Univ. of Mich. Press, 1967).

(73) Al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 116 - Sh., 125.

(74) Weber, *Economy and Society*, 547.

(75) Abū Nu'aym, 10: 46.

(76) See al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* 13 (ed. 'Alī Abū Zayd, 1983): 434.

II. Conflict Between Mysticism and Asceticism

Growing difficulty between ascetics and mystics confirms that something new was afoot by the middle of the ninth century. To be sure, difficulties there had been for some time. Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī was expelled from Damascus for saying that he had seen angels and been addressed by them. Ibn Abī al-Ḥawārī was later forced to flee from the same city for saying he preferred the friends (of God; *awliyā'*) to the prophets. Possibly led by a Māliki jurist, the people of Old Cairo repudiated Dhū al-Nūn and accused him of secret unbelief⁽⁷⁷⁾. Aḥmad Ibn Hanbal accused Sarī al-Saqāṭī of unbelief⁽⁷⁸⁾. Abū Yazīd was expelled from Baṣṭām for saying that he had made a heavenly ascension like the Prophet's, and went into exile for several years⁽⁷⁹⁾. Abū Ḥamzah (d. Baghdad, 269/882-883) was expelled from Tarsus for recognizing the voice of God in the cawing of a crow⁽⁸⁰⁾. Al-Kharrāz was forced out of Old Cairo for writing of mystical experience, of Mecca for slighting the goodness of ordinary believers⁽⁸¹⁾. Even the usually ascetical Sahl al-Tustarī was forced to flee from Tustar to Basra, where he died, on account of relating conversations with angels, jinn, and devils⁽⁸²⁾.

One indication of growing difficulty between ascetics and mystics is the appearance of warnings against antinomianism. "Whoever asserts that esoteric knowledge contradicts the exoteric rule", said Sarī al-Saqāṭī, "he is mistaken"⁽⁸³⁾. Most often, such warnings come from the early mystics themselves. "Every esoteric insight that contradicts an exoteric (rule) is null", proclaimed al-Kharrāz⁽⁸⁴⁾. "Whom you see claiming a state

(77) Al-Sulamī, *Miḥān al-ṣūfiyāh*, apud Ibn al-Jawzī, *Naqd al-'ilm wa-al-'ulamā' aw Talbis Iblis* (Cairo: al-Tibā'ah al-Muniriyyah, n.d.), 161 - *Talbis Iblis*, ed. Khayr al-Dīn 'Alī (Beirut: Dār al-Wa'y al-'Arabī, n.d.), 187. Ibn al-Jawzī names 'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam as leader of the opposition to Dhū al-Nūn, but the seems very early (d. 214/829). Probably, his yet more prominent son, Muḥammad (d. 268/882), was the leader in question. Al-Suyūṭī, likewise drawing on al-Sulamī, names 'Abd Allāh ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam but adds the detail that he denounced Dhū al-Nūn to the caliph al-Mutawakkil (r. 232-247/847-861), a plain anachronism: *Tarīkh al-khulafā'* (Beirut: Dār al-Thaqāfah, 1970?), 378.

(78) Ya'qūb al-Ḥanbalī, *K. al-Ḥurūf*, apud Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān "al-Mizān"*, 7 vols. (Hyderabad: Majlis Dā'irat al-Ma'ārif, 1329-1331), 3: 14. Ya'qūb may have been an associate of al-Muḥāsibī's: v. Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābilab* 1: 233, l. 2 from bottom.

(79) Al-Sulamī (*Miḥān*), apud al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-'itidāl*, ed. 'Alī Muḥammad al-Bajāwī, 4 vols. (Cairo: 'Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī, 1963), 2: 347.

(80) Abū Nu'aym, 10 321.

(81) For Egypt, see Ibn al-Jawzī, *Naqd* (Cairo), 164 - ed. 'Alī, 190. For Mecca, see Ibn 'Asākir, *Tabaḥib "Tarīkh Dimashq"*, abr. 'Abd al-Qādir Badrān, 7 vols. (Damascus: Rawḍat al-Shām, n.d.), 1: 429.

(82) Ibn al-Jawzī, *Naqd* (Cairo), 162 - 'Alī, 197; Böwering, *Mystical Vision*, 59-63.

(83) Abū Nu'aym, *Hilyab* 10: 121.

(84) Al-Sulamī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 226 - Sh., 231.

with God that pushes him outside the Law, do not go near”, warned al-Nūri⁽⁸⁵⁾.

Difficulty between ascetics and mystics in Baghdad finally came to a head at the Inquisition of Ghulām Khalil. Ghulām Khalil (d. Baghdad, 275/888) was a traditionist and popular preacher who came from Wāsīt to Baghdad at the beginning of 264/Fall 877 and whose Inquisition took place the same year⁽⁸⁶⁾. A conflict was already under way in Basra between traditionalist ascetics (*nussāk*, *abl al-ḥadīth*), used to enjoining the good and forbidding the bad, and “the people of love” (*abl al-maḥabbah*). The people of love asserted that their love of God was such that fear had fallen away from them⁽⁸⁷⁾.

In Baghdad, Ghulām Khalil began to preach against the people of love, asserting that one might love fellow creatures but that God must be feared. He appealed to both the court and the general, who admired him for his austerity⁽⁸⁸⁾. At last, Ghulām Khalil prevailed on the mother-in-law of the shadow caliph, al-Muwaffaq, to make the *muḥtasib* follow his orders, so he provided him with a list of seventy-odd Baghdadis to be arrested. Most of them hid, some were arrested and imprisoned. Stories are told of al-Nūri’s addressing the qadi so graciously that he became unwilling to execute them, then addressing the caliph such that he released them altogether⁽⁸⁹⁾. The happy ending is cast in doubt by al-Nūri’s leaving Baghdad to reside in al-Raqqah for fourteen years, as we shall see.

Carl Ernst has explained the Inquisition of Ghulām Khalil by contemporary political crises like the Zanj rebellion, which presumably created a climate of fear⁽⁹⁰⁾. Thus, he says, the Inquisition is not evidence of hostility toward mysticism. Destructive as these political crises were, though, our sources for the Inquisition do not mention them – only the religious issues. The religious issues alone can explain both the Inquisition

(85) Abū Nu’aym, 10 : 252f.

(86) Al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* 14 (ed. Akram Būshayyī, 1983) : 71, quoting Abū Nu’aym, although the date is not in *Ḥilyab* 10 : 250, nor the same passage as quoted by al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād* 5 : 134.

(87) This account of the Inquisition and its Basran antecedents based on Ibn al-A’rābī, *Ṭabaqāt al-nussāk*, *apud* al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām wa-wafayāt al-mashāḥiẓ wa-al-a’lām*, ed. ‘Umar ‘Abd al-Salām Tadmuri, 40 vols. to date (Beirut : Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1987-), 20 (A.H. 261-280) : 212, 277 ; cf. al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* 13 : 284.

(88) Ibn al-Nadīm lists Ghulām Khalī among the Sufis in his *Fihrist*, ed. Gustav Flügel, with Johannes Roediger and August Mueller (Leipzig : F.C.W. Vogel, 1872), 186, while al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī reports that he ate only vegetables, 5 : 80. “The general” is a good English term that works so well to translate *al-‘ammab* (recall “’Twas caviare to the general”, *Hamlet* II.ii.465) that I will endeavor to revive it.

(89) Abū Nu’aym, 10 : 250 f. There are similar stories of Dhū al-Nūn before the caliph al-Mutawakkil ; e.g., al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, 8 : 393-395.

(90) Ernst, *Words of Ecstasy*, 101.

in Baghdad and the expulsions of Abū Sulaymān from Damascus, Abū Ḥamzah from Tarsus, and al-Kharrāz from Old Cairo and Mecca⁽⁹¹⁾; moreover, only the predominance of the religious issues can explain the central role played by ascetics, not policemen⁽⁹²⁾. In all, it seems safer to stress religion than politics. If the 870's was about when full-blown mysticism first appeared in Iraq, it should not surprise us that numbers of older-style ascetics should be upset.

III. al-Junayd's Reconciliation

One mystic who escaped arrest at the Inquisition was al-Junayd. He asserted that he was not a Sufi at all but a student of jurisprudence, specifically that of Abū Thawr⁽⁹³⁾. Some scholars have credited him with going on to develop a Sufism of sobriety: the normal state of the Sufi was not *sukr* (drunkenness) but *ṣaḥw* (sobriety), and Abū Yazid's drunken style was not to be imitated⁽⁹⁴⁾. It seems dubious, though, to oppose al-Junayd to Abū Yazid as proponents of fundamentally different paths, for al-Junayd admired Abū Yazid and lectured on his *shāṭaḥāt*⁽⁹⁵⁾. It would be more accurate to say that al-Junayd (and, no doubt, the circle around him) converted Abū Yazid's mysticism into something unthreatening to ascetics.

What they did was, on the one hand, to develop a language to deal with mystical experience that would not offend. I have already mentioned the difficulty of al-Junayd's language. A leader of the Mu'tazilah could praise him⁽⁹⁶⁾:

(91) Also, later, Muḥammad ibn al-Faql (d. 319/932) from Balkh (al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* 14: 525), al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī (d. after 318/930) from Tirmidh (Ibn Ḥajar, *Lisān* 5: 308), & al.

(92) Controversy in Basra; the Inquisition of Ghulām Khalīl; in Rāyī, it was expressly the ascetics (*zubbād*), who led the outcry against Yūsuf ibn al-Husayn, according to al-Sulamī (probably *Miḥān al-ṣāfiyab*), *apud* al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* 14: 250.

(93) Ibn 'Atā', *apud* Ibn al-Jawzī, *Naqd* (Cairo), 167 - ed. 'Alī, 193.

(94) The tradition goes back to Hujviri (d. Lahore, 465/1072-73?), *Kashf al-mahjūb*, ed. Valentin A. Zhukovskii (Leningrad, 1926; repr. Tehran: Mu'assasah-i Maṭbū'ātī Amir-i Kabīr, 1957), 230, 235 - tr. Reynold A. Nicholson, E.J.W. Gibb Memorial Ser. 17 (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1911), 185, 189.

(95) Al-Sarrāj, *Luma'*, 346, noticed by Ernst, 11, 50.

(96) Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārikh Baghdād* 7: 243. The Mu'tazili was Abū al-Qāsim al-Kā'bi (d. Balkh, 319/931?), on whom see Sezgin, *GaS* 1: 622f. The relation between Sufism and Mu'tazilism, both of which matured in the late ninth century C.E., calls for further study. Abū Ḥaṣṣ al-Naysābūrī may have been a Mu'tazili: A.J. Arberry, "New Material on the Kitāb al-Fihrist of Ibn al-Nadīm", *Islamic Research Association Miscellany*, Islamic Research Assoc. ser., 12, 1 (1948): 34n. See also Josef van Ess, "Une Lecture à rebours de l'histoire du Mu'tazilisme", *Revue des études islamiques* 46 (1978): 182, 192f, 226.

I have seen a shaykh for you in Baghdad. He is called al-Junayd, and my eyes have not seen his like. The *katabab* (writers⁽⁹⁷⁾) go to him for his locutions (*alfāz*), the *falāsifab* (philosophers) for the subtlety of his concepts, the *mutakallimūn* (theologians) for the mastery of his learning.

The less sophisticated ascetics must often have found abstruseness to the point of impenetrability, hence al-Junayd became invulnerable to their criticism.

Moreover, al-Junayd and his school put a new stress on outwardly acceptable behaviour and self-description. Triads like separation-union-separation (*farq-jam'-farq*) and subsistence-annihilation-subsistence (*baqā'-fanā'-baqā'*) replaced the old dichotomies. Hence the Sufi might go so far, as before, as to lose consciousness of himself (an upsetting development to ascetics, used to emphasizing divine transcendence) but then return to a transformed consciousness of reality, now described (reassuringly to ascetics) as sobriety.

On the other hand, al-Junayd and his school seem to have pushed mysticism in an inward direction, offering a style of mystical piety that would not interfere so clearly with the collection of hadith reports, the study of jurisprudence, and so on⁽⁹⁸⁾. Hence, for example, his five principles of right living begin with austerities but end with an inward attitude of trust: "to fast by day, to stay up by night (to pray), to act with total sincerity, to control one's actions by constant vigilance, and to commit oneself to God with confidence in all circumstances"⁽⁹⁹⁾. Here, *tawakkul* (reliance on God) has left behind both the stern purgation of the ascetics (e.g., Ibrāhīm ibn Ad'ham) and the foolish trust of the early mystics (e.g., Abū Ḥamzah, who refused to call for help when he had fallen into a well, waiting for a lion to rescue him⁽¹⁰⁰⁾). It was now compatible with, say, supporting a family⁽¹⁰¹⁾.

(97) "I.e., the eloquent (*al-bulagbā'*)," glosses al-Dhahabī (*Sīyar* 14 : 67); however, "state secretaries" seem more likely to have been meant.

(98) On inner-worldly as opposed to other-worldly mysticism, see Mueller, "Asceticism", 74.

(99) Al-Sarrāj, *Luma'*, 228.

(100) Abū Nu'aym, *Ḥilyab* 10 : 320f. Also said to have befallen Abū Ḥamzah al-Khurāsānī (d. 290/902-903), for which see Ibn Manzūr, *Mukbtasar "Tārīkh Dimashq"*, ed. Rawḥiyah al-Nahhās, & al., 29 vols. (Damascus : Dār al-Fikr, 1984-1989), 28 : 245.

(101) Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal regretted only one feature of Bishr al-Ḥāfi's lifestyle, his failure to marry : al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, 7 : 73. For the evolution of *tawakkul* from an outward, ascetical dependence on God to an inward, mystical dependence, see Benedikt Reinert, *Die Lehre vom Tawakkul in der klassischen Sufik*, Studien zur Sprache, Geschichte u. Kultur des islamischen Orients, n.s. 3 (Berlin : W. de Gruyter, 1968), 226, 264-266. Reinert does not propose to locate a general transition from asceticism to mysticism, as I do, but his location of the change in *tawakkul* at the late ninth century, particularly in the circle around al-Junayd, confirms my location of a general transition.

Not all the Sufis of Baghdad acclaimed al-Junayd's deferential style. Opposition from old-style mystics, unconcerned to mollify ascetics, seems to be crystallized in a number of stories about al-Nūrī. Al-Nūrī complained to al-Junayd, "You have cheated them, and so they have given you the place of honor. I counselled them, and so they threw stones at me" (102). Al-Junayd visited al-Nūrī when he was ill, later al-Nūrī visited al-Junayd when he was ill; however, al-Nūrī not only sat by his bedside, but cured his illness, as well (103). The underlying issue was probably, as Massignon guesses, the contrast between the frankness of al-Nūrī's language and the disarming dissimulation of al-Junayd's (104).

("Giving counsel" and "cheating" may have had special reference to condemning bad behavior: the later Ḥanbali leader al-Barbahārī [d. 329/941], disciple at one time to Sahl al-Tustari, asserts, "It is not licit for anyone to refrain from giving counsel [*naṣībah*] to any of the Muslims, righteous or otherwise, in the matter of faith. Whoever refrains has cheated [*ghashsha*] the Muslims" (105). Several stories associate al-Nūrī with daring acts like breaking wine jars bound for the caliphal palace. Therefore, he may have objected to al-Junayd's quietism as well as his evasive language).

Indeed, al-Junayd and his circle spoke so different a language from that of al-Nūrī and the old-style mystics that al-Nūrī could scarcely communicate with them. The Sufi biographer Abū Sa'īd Ibn al-A'rābī (d. Mecca, 340/952?) relates a discussion of terminology that passed between him and al-Nūrī in 270/883-884, when al-Nūrī was still a refugee in al-Raqqah. Al-Nūrī asked about al-Junayd, so Ibn al-A'rābī told him of the new talk of second separation and sobriety. Al-Nūrī affirmed that the so-called second separation was really an aspect of joining. In other words, al-Junayd had merely coined new words to describe the familiar mystical experience (106).

Eight years later, Ibn al-A'rābī and two friends spotted al-Nūrī in Baghdad. The older mystic was initially reluctant to associate with Sufis. Memories of betrayal at the Inquisition must have rankled. However, they

(102) Abū Nu'aym, 10 : 251f.

(103) Al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, 5 : 1132.

(104) Louis Massignon, *The Passion of al-Hallāj*, tr. Herbert Mason, Bollingen ser. 98, 4 vols. (Princeton : Univ. Press, 1982), 1 : 79. A.J. Arberry's characterization of al-Junayd's prose has been quoted already : "involved to the point of obscurity". I have found similar obscurity in al-Sulami's selection of the sayings of al-Nūrī; however, al-Nūrī's treatise *Maqāmāt al-qulūb* is far more lucid than anything of the sort we have from al-Junayd : Paul Nwyia, ed., "Textes mystiques inédits d'Abū-l-Ḥasan al-Nūrī (m. 295/907)", *Mélanges de l'université Saint-Joseph* (Beirut) 44 (1968) : 117-154.

(105) *Sharḥ "Kitāb al-Sunnab"*, apud Ibn Abī Ya'lā, *Ṭabaqāt al-ḥanābilah* 2 : 26.

(106) This and the following based on Ibn al-A'rābī, *Ṭabaqāt al-nussāk*, apud al-Dhahabī, *Siyar* 14 : 74f.

eventually persuaded him to come to their mosque, where they spent the night. On the next Friday, they took a boat to where al-Junayd was. At first, everyone welcomed al-Nūrī, and he and al-Junayd traded reminiscences and jiked with each other. Then all the Sufis sat for a formal discussion. Al-Junayd urged al-Nūrī to address the first question, but al-Nūrī declined, saying "I am just come, and prefer to listen". Al-Junayd and the others spoke a while longer, then again pressed al-Nūrī to talk, but he said, "You have used terms (*alqāb*) that I do not know, and talk in a fashion I am not used to : let me listen and get to know what you mean". Al-Junayd's terminology was unfamiliar to him.

At last, someone asked him about the separation (*farq*) that comes after the joining (*jam'*), what its signs were, and what was the difference between it and the first separation. Al-Nūrī resorted to ambiguity : "It is not one aspect of joining", he said, "nor is it sobering up from joining, but they return to what they know". The Sufis Ruwaym and Ibn 'Atā' complained that al-Nūrī was asserting something and its contrary. Al-Junayd begged them not to be unkind to al-Nūrī, who might have become senile. In the upshot, concludes Ibn al-A'rābi,

Abū al-Husayn (al-Nūrī) withdrew from all of them and spurned them. He became ill and went blind. He stuck to the deserts and graveyards.... I have heard a number say that for anyone who had seen al-Nūrī since his return from al-Raqqah without having seen him before that might as well not have seen him at all, on account of his changing (God have mercy on him).

Such was the pitiful end of a mystic who could speak only of joining and drunkenness, not knowing how to speak the sophisticated new language of the second separation, the second sobriety, and so on.

Al-Junayd's new language mollified ascetical Muslims : it now remained to change the outlook of the mystics. That is, if ascetics were now appeased by a mystical language that stressed steadfastness and sobriety, the mystics would have to be shown some reason to respect ascetics. For example, al-Junayd may have taken over the new terminology of *fanā'* and the second *baqā'* from the mystic al-Kharrāz in the interest of appeasing ascetics, but he must have wished to discourage mystics from boasting as al-Kharrāz had, provoking his expulsion from Mecca : "The sins of those brought near are the good qualities of the pious" (107). He cannot have wished to provoke ill will. As a mystic, besides, he must have found it easy to overlook the obtuseness of the ascetics, to love them in spite of it.

In an unpublished work, the *Wasāya*, it appears that al-Junayd did come up with something for the mystics, mainly a tripartite division of

(107) See above, note 81.

the Muslims that establishes a place for them alongside the others⁽¹⁰⁸⁾. Al-Junayd distinguishes three groups. The first comprises those who have chosen ritual worship and fear (*al-'ibādāt wa-al-takbawwuf*); the second those who have chosen renunciation, longing, and austerity (*al-zubd wa-al-shawq wa-al-taqashshuf*); the third, finally, those who have chosen poverty and Sufism (*al-faqr wa-al-taşawwuf*). These last have had their hearts filled with love as the hearts of the servants have not been, and they speak of the truths of the unseen⁽¹⁰⁹⁾. The three groups correspond precisely to the ordinary devout like Ghulām Khalīl, the earlier ascetics like al-Muḥāsibī and Sari al-Saqāṭī, and finally the speculative mystics around al-Junayd. There is no doubt that the Sufis enjoy favors above the rest, but equally they are part of the same grand scheme, the same community of the faithful.

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(108) Reşit Efendi (Istanbul) 1218/1. See Sezgin, *GaS*, 1 : 649, no. 19.

(109) Al-Junayd, *al-Waşāya*, 1b, 2a.